# Bible Student's Notebook

The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume XVII Issue 425

# Solid Comfort for the Bereaved

by — A.E. Knoch (1874-1965)

od is a God of consolation, not the diabolic fiend of Christendom. Hear! all who mourn their dead! Have you lost an innocent child? Do you grieve for a husband, a wife or a beloved relative who never showed any signs of faith in Christ, or a knowledge of God's salvation? Does the fate of infants and of the heathen lie heavy on your heart? Dry your tears and lift up your head! They are in the hands of a living, loving God Who is the Savior of all mankind (I Timothy 4:10), Whose heart is far bigger than ours. He is not the mean and hateful god of Christendom. He is infinitely good and gracious, even when He sends us evil and sorrow and death. These are only the means He uses to draw us to His heart. Our dead are in the hands of a living, loving God Who wants to win their hearts for Himself and to become their All. He is able to do it, even if they hate Him.

Men have corrupted God's holy inspired Word. The Bible has been mistranslated to agree with the damnable doctrines of degenerate men. They have changed Him from a God of boundless love Who wills the salvation of all (I Timothy 2:4) and is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will (Ephesians 1:11), to a demon of damnation, more dreadful than all of the idols of the heathen. They have altered God's temporary discipline by which He makes us His humble and loving friends forever, into endless punishment and eternal torment; but they have not succeeded in blotting it all out. The Bible still teaches that all shall be saved (I Timothy 4:10) and justified (Romans 5:18) and vivified<sup>1</sup> (I Corinthians 15:22) and reconciled (Colossians 1:20), and thus contradicts the false "hell" and the fictitious fire of eternal torment.

#### HELL IS OBLIVION

Christ's soul went to hell after His life of perfect obedience to God and His sacrificial death for man (Acts 2:27). Did He deserve to be punished? Hell is not a place of punishment! At death man's spirit returns to God, whence it came (Ecclesiastes 12:7); his body returns to the soil from which it was taken (Genesis 3:19); his soul returns to the unseen (hades or sheol). That is, at death the circumstances are the same for man's soul as they were before he was born. "Soul" is the sensation resulting from the combination of an organic body with breath or spirit (Genesis 2:7; 1:21, A.V. "creature").

Hades does not mean "the unseen world," but simply "the unseen," or that which is no longer seen. When God withdraws man's spirit (his power of action, life and intelligence), he dies and returns to the soil (Psalm 104:29). The phenomena of bodily sensation which was clearly seen in life is, of course, unseen in death. Even as the city of Capernaum subsided to the unseen, thus also man's soul disappears in death (Matthew 11:23). "And for the dead there is no knowing aught" (Ecclesiastes 9:5); there is "no doing or devising, or knowledge, or wisdom ... in the unseen" (sheol, Ecclesiastes 9:10). Figuratively, death is a state of sleep (I Corintians 15:18-20) or utter unconsciousness. Our unsaved dead do not suffer in hell, any more than Christ did. God does not punish men before He tries them. He simply puts them to sleep until the day of His just judgment.

(see Comfort, page 3801)

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#### Bible Student's Notebook

Paul Our Guide - Christ Our Goal ISSN: 1936-9360 Volume XVII, No. 425 - December 3, 2013

This free weekly electronic 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
- 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 freedom from 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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# God's Chain of Command

by — Stephen Hill

or six years, I served in the Army National Guard. If there's one thing of value I learned firsthand during my service, it's that organization works and disorganization doesn't. This seems obvious enough, but much of the world hasn't yet caught onto this simple truth. Rather than accept and fulfill their proper roles, people fight to obtain what they consider to be a superior role. As a result, the system cannot function and inevitably breaks down. Nowhere is this truth more apparent than with the family structure in modern America.

Every organization has a chain of command. Companies have a Chief Executive Officer, or CEO, at the top of the chain who functions singularly as the highest point of authority. Beneath the CEO is a collective of a few other key leaders, such as a Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and Chief Operations Officer (COO), who manage those beneath them but answer to the CEO. Beneath these leaders is a larger management team composed of managers who manage large departments or teams within the corporation. The chain, then, exists as a pyramid; the bottom of the pyramid, or company, is the largest segment, composed of the most workers. As the chain moves up, it gets increasingly smaller until its singular top – the President or CEO. The higher individuals are in the chain of command, the more responsibility they have, and the more they are compensated for that responsibility. At each stage of the pyramid, or chain, lower ranking members submit and answer to those immediately above them in the chain. Since each leader takes direction from a higher authority, disobedience to an immediate supervisor is considered disobedience to a higher one. If each member of the corporation accepts and fulfills his unique role, the system runs like a well-oiled machine; if not, it falls apart.

In the military, the chain of command functions no differently. The base of the pyramid consists of hundreds of thousands of enlisted soldiers who answer to a smaller segment of non-commissioned officers, who in turn answer to an even smaller segment of commissioned officers, who answer to a handful of Joint Chiefs, and finally to the singular President of the country – the "Commander in Chief."

As one of the majority of enlisted soldiers, I frequently lamented the fact that I was at the bottom of the chain. I was confident that I could do a better job than many of the sergeants I answered to and many of their superior

officers as well. Had I acted above my rank or disobeyed orders, though, I would have hindered the singular purpose that had been passed down throughout the chain of command. It was crystal clear that in order for the mission to succeed, I had to know my role and act accordingly, regardless of how I felt.

We often associate the chain of command structure with the secular world, but when we examine Scripture we discover that this is God's model, not man's. Throughout the eons, God has organized His structure as a pyramid consisting of many at the bottom and one at the top. This is true for Israel, the Body of Christ, and, on a smaller scale, the family unit. Each of these three demands a discussion all on its own, but for our purposes here I will focus on the family structure alone.

God's chain of command for the family is as follows (from top to bottom):

God Himself

Christ

Husband

Wife or Wives

Children

Paul lays out this model clearly in Ephesians 5 and 6 where he instructs,

Let the wives be subject to their own husbands, as to the Lord, for the husband is head of the wife even as Christ is Head of the ecclesia, and He is the Savior of the body. Nevertheless, as the ecclesia is subject to Christ, thus are the wives also to their husbands in everything (Ephesians 5:22-24).

Paul then moves further down the chain and says,

Children, be obeying your parents, in the Lord, for this is just. "Honor your father and mother" (which is the first precept with a promise), that it may be becoming well with you, and you should be a long time on the earth (6:1-3).



God's purpose for this model in the family is to ensure that His will for the family is passed down and carried out effectively. Wives are instructed to submit to their husbands because their husbands are instructed to submit to Christ. In the same way, children are instructed to obey their parents because both parents are to obey Christ. Christ Himself, then, submits to the Father.

Many argue that God's model for the family is, in reality, often ineffective because husbands are imperfect and do not always submit to Christ. As a result, wives attempt to usurp their husbands and take on the husband's Godgiven role. In the same sense, husbands, overwhelmed with their increased responsibility and eager to avoid arguing, often allow their wives to take on the role of husband via role reversal. In either case, the family cannot function as intended.

Without a doubt, women are justified in their claim that most men today do not live in submission to Christ. What is the answer to this dilemma, if not to take on the husband's role?

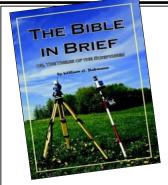
As a soldier, I was required to obey every order I was given, unless the order was clearly unlawful. If I obeyed an unlawful order, I was subject to correction just as if I had disobeyed a lawful order. Many orders were somewhat questionable, but very few were clearly unlawful. In fact, in my entire career as a soldier, I was never once given an obvious unlawful order. Thus, ninety-nine percent of the time, obedience is required and right.

The same is true for marriage with a faithful husband. When the husband earnestly seeks God's will in submission to Christ, the wife will rarely (if ever) be justified in not submitting. To do so would be to refuse submission to Christ. On the other hand, if a husband lives in constant rejection of God's ideal for his family, the wife finds herself in a tough spot. In such a case, she may be obeying an "unlawful" order if she submits. Should she refuse to submit, take on the husband's role, both or neither?

When we understand the chain of command, questions like this become much easier to answer. The husband, wife and children of a family all have God-given roles that do not change as long as the family remains intact. If a wife is unable to submit to an unfaithful husband, she is still able to fulfill her role as a wife and mother. In the absence of a believing husband, she can still submit to Christ herself and lead her subordinate children in godliness. In doing so, she is not ruling over her husband, but is instead fulfilling her own role as she should.

The feminist movement has swept the nation in recent decades due to the feeling of inferiority women have toward their husbands and men in general. They feel that a lower position on the chain equates to a position of less importance.

The pyramid structure seems to support this notion. After all, the CEO of a company earns the most money in a corporation, and God gets the most glory in the family structure. What most fail to realize, though, is that in order for the organization to function efficiently, the higher ranking members must take care of the lower



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1-800-784-6010 www.StudyShelf.com ranking members. A CEO won't last long in his position if he doesn't take care of the many workers who are in the field every day working hard to manufacture, market and sell the company's products. Likewise, the family will not function if its immediate head, the husband, doesn't take care of his family. This is why Paul instructs husbands to love their wives as their own bodies (Ephesians 5:28), and says that a husband who does not provide for his family has disowned the faith and is worse than an unbeliever (I Timothy 5:8).

If there's one thing I've learned over the years, it's that it's much easier to be happy with less responsibility. As a child, I hated being under my parents' authority and longed for the day when I would become an adult, free to make my own decisions. When I became an adult, I quickly realized how foolish that desire was and wished I could be a kid again, under my parents' authority but with less responsibility and more freedom to have fun.

Comfort (continued from front page)

#### JUDGMENT IS GOOD AND BENEFICIAL

When the unbelieving dead are roused for judgment they are brought before Christ, the most just, the most kindly, the most compassionate Man Who ever lived. He died for them. They will be saved by His blood. To be sure, they must be judged. Wrongs must be righted. To those who have sinned much it will mean much indignation and fury, affliction and distress (Romans 2:8-9). What do you think He will do to the infants? Roast them in the church's hell? You would have trusted Him with them while He was on earth. Then they brought the little children to Him and He blessed them (Mark 10:16). No fear for our blessed babes where He is the Judge! He did not treat the children the same as the hypocritical Pharisees then, nor will He in the judgment. Why, I would rather have my child in His care, even in judgment, than in my own! I might punish unjustly. He corrects and disciplines only for good. Even hardened sinners who have often cursed Him, will be thankful for the strokes that bring them back to God.

Men have made the judgment so unjust and diabolical that they shrink from the thought of infants and innocent children appearing there. Their teaching concerning it is so horribly fiendish that they do not know what to do about the heathen who have not even heard of Christ. They dump all – infants, children, idiots, ignorant, and the heathen who have never heard – into eternal torment, no matter how much or little they have sinned. Ask your preacher how he explains this! The answer is simple. Each one gets only what is good for

No doubt, many wives feel the same way regarding their husbands.

It's true that "with great power comes great responsibility." Headship is indeed a position of honor, but it is a position most would gladly give up to avoid its burden. Once a husband recognizes his responsibility to submit to Christ, and his wife recognizes that her position is only different – *not inferior* – to her husband's, the marriage can thrive as God intended.

If you struggle with accepting your God-given role as a husband or wife, consider the chain of command. Forsake the faulty view that your role is less important, and commit to *fulfilling* your role as God intended. If you are a husband, commit to leading your family with a fixed commitment to submit to Christ in all things. If you are a wife, submit to your husband in everything, for in doing so you are submitting to Christ.

him in the judgment, not to damn him forever, but to prepare him for God's salvation.

#### THE LAKE OF FIRE IS DEATH REPEATED

Yet what of the lake of fire? It is the second death (Revelation 20:14). Except for the three greatest enemies of God (the Adversary, the Beast and the False Prophet – Revelation 20:10), it is not a place of suffering, but of oblivion, death. The insane idea that there is consciousness in death is found in the Bible only in figurative passages. It calls death sleep (Daniel 12:2). The unsaved dead are roused from the sleep of death in order to right all wrongs. They are put to sleep once more until the end of the eons or ages (commonly mistranslated "forever," "everlasting" and "eternal"). Then all of the dead, our children, our relatives, our friends, everybody will (see Comfort, next page)

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# Mankind's Greatest Revival

by — E.W. Bullinger (1837-1913)

They worshipped the dragon because he gave the authority to the Beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, "Who is like unto the Beast! And who is able to make war with him!" (Revelation 13:4).

It is clear from this that everything is combined in this man to make him not only acceptable to the world, but to call forth their wonder, admiration and praise. He is not in any way a terror to men, but full of blandishments, attractions, allurements and activities which all will be put forth in the interests of human greatness and happiness. It will be Satan's brief millennium, in which mankind will, by every art and artifice, be made happy. It will be a time of peace and progress for the whole world.

Great secrets of nature will be discovered; evil angels will be the teachers, and deceiving demons the guides of mankind. Great inventions and discoveries will be made and turned to the utmost possible ac-

count. Philanthropy will be the governing principle of the world and of the "Church."

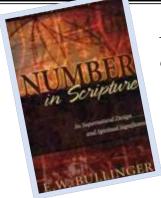
The great ethical revival is at our doors. Its advent is announced by the foremost preachers of the day. All of this is preparing the way for the man of sin, and the lawless one, who shall be a law to himself and to the whole world. Men will delight in him, and regard him as the greatest benefactor the world has ever known. Kings will gladly owe him suzerainty; and behind all will be Satan himself, swaying the hearts, tongues and energies of thousands of willing agents.

— The Apocalypse, or The Day of the Lord, 1935 (3<sup>rd</sup> edition, London), p. 426

#### Comfort (continued from previous page)

receive endless life in Christ (I Corinthains 15:22). Then sin and sorrow and death will be banished. Then God will be All in every one of the creatures He made for Himself! Bless and praise His holy Name!

Don't worry about your child, your husband, your wife, your friend! Leave them in the hands of our grand, our gracious, our glorious God, Whose heart is more concerned about them than you are, and Whose hand is able to bring them back to His bosom.



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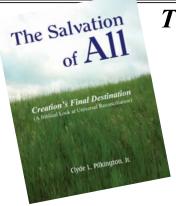
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