



# Bible Student's Notebook™

## The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume 24  
Issue 593

## Interpreters of Culture

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

**D**o you know how to read culture? Paul did.

Some seem to think that we should live a monastery-type life, and that somehow that's what the Bible talks about when it speaks of holiness. This is what I learned growing up in church: I shouldn't watch TV or go to the movies; I shouldn't read non-Christian books or listen to secular music.

Major elements of the Christian religion attempt to absorb itself in an artificial environment, surrounded by its own language and customs. How sad that believers attempt to isolate themselves from the culture of the world around them, fearing that somehow they will be contaminated by it.

Before Paul went to Athens in Acts 17, he acquainted himself with their culture. He had already discovered how he could make a connection with them, despite their being pagan or heathen. He found something that provided him with an opening for the truth.

God has literally filled every culture with an abundance of such "openings" as it were – "openings" where the truth is constantly passing through. They are the persistent, uncontainable *intersections* with the truth.

Believers possess a divine insight to locate these *portals*. As Paul knew well, these *entry points* for the truth are often found in the artistic parts of culture. Paul understood this when he quoted a Greek poet



in his message on Mars' Hill:

*As certain also of your own poets have said, "For we are also His offspring" (Acts 17:28).*

Interestingly, Paul doesn't quote the Scriptures once in his appeal to the Athenians. Instead he quotes to them their Greek philosopher and poet – a pagan and heathen as it were – in order to "open" the portal for truth. Paul used one of their own trusted sources as a basis of presenting a better understanding of the true God.

Many of the trusted sources of our culture are the poets, songwriters, musicians, artists and storytellers of our day. We don't have to agree with them – that's just who they are; and hidden in their songs, books and movies are these amazing "openings" where the truth comes shining through. They are simple lines of thoughts, ideas, statements, pictures and metaphors that speak the truth of God that His universe can't conceal.

As in Paul's day, these "openings" stand waiting, ready to be interpreted. As everything else in His universe, they belong to God: they are His *portals*, and we are Father's *porters*, ushering others to the truth.

(see *INTERPRETERS*, page 5148)

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# God's Chains of Gold

## Designates – Calls – Justifies – Glorifies

by — Frank Neil Pohorlak (1907-1988)

Whom He **designates** beforehand, these He **calls** also, and whom He calls, these He **justifies** also; now whom He justifies, these He **glorifies** also (Romans 8:30, Concordant Literal Version).

The golden chain of God for our life has four links.

1. Designates
2. Calls
3. Justifies
4. Glorifies



gether with Him also, be graciously granting us all? (:32).

God's best gift was His only Son Whom He did not spare. Nothing else can compare with Him. Therefore, if God gave His best, think you that He will withhold any good thing from us?

These four links cannot be torn asunder. He *designates* us: that began in heaven. Two of the links drop to the earth to *call* and *justify* us. The fourth sweeps us back through the celestials, *glorified*.

So we see how securely fastened to God we are. Our salvation from start to finish is with Him and He cannot fail in one word of promise, since,

*God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? Or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?* (Numbers 23:19).

This is echoed by Paul, who writes,

*What, then, shall we assert to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?* (Romans 8:31).

What is there that can take precedence over the sublime consciousness of a place in God's heart: if He is for us, even those who *would* be against us, work our weal. No one *can* be against us. He goes on and gives the reason.

*Surely He who spares not His Own Son, but gives Him up for us all, how shall He not, to-*

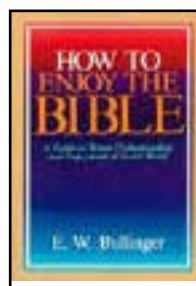
To ask the question is to answer it, since the greater includes the less. We can challenge the universe to find a single thing against us for,

*Who will be indicting God's chosen one? God is the Justifier. Who is the condemner ...?* (:33-34).

Surely it cannot be,

*Christ Jesus, the One dying, yet rather being roused, Who is also at God's right hand, Who is pleading for our sakes!* (:34).

Whatever we may think we are in ourselves, in Him God has justified us. Allow these words to be apprehended and meditated upon by our spirit; even in all our weaknesses and failures, we can still have boldness.



### **How To Enjoy the Bible**

by – E.W. Bullinger (1837-1913)

464 pp., PB

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A unique introduction to your study of God's Word. You're guided in the adventure of open and honest study of the Scripture from within – allowing it to speak for itself. Twelve practical principles make inductive Bible study come alive.



All judgment has been committed to the Son, the very One Who died for us, and even now, at this very moment, is at the right hand of the Father pleading for our sakes against any charges from *the Accuser of the brethren*. Do you know what Christ's plea is? That we are guiltless, spotless, righteous and blameless.

Therefore, no charge that can even imply guilt in us can stand before Him. God, Who is the Judge of all, pronounced the verdict in our case: "Not Guilty!" It is Christ Who alone now has the right to condemn, and He is our Savior. Since there is no higher tribunal than His, we need never fear that the Adversary will contest the verdict in another and have the decision of the Supreme Court of the Universe reversed.

Oh how we should praise Him for His wisdom! So Paul naturally asks,

*What shall be separating us from the love of God in Christ Jesus? Affliction, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ... No! In all these we are more than conquering through Him Who loves us (:35, 37).*

The love of God never lets us go, for when,

*Jesus being aware that His hour came that He may be proceeding out of this world to the Father, loving His own who are in the world, He loves them to the consummation (John 13:1).*

What an unlovely group to love! Doubting Thomas, cursing Peter, betraying Judas, thundering James and John, and the rest – all disciples who would shortly forsake Him and flee. Such is His love.

The trials and tribulations we are called upon to face and endure are not to be looked upon as though they were an evidence of His displeasure. They are tempered by a loving heart. A deep abiding trust and consciousness of His watch-care over us in the midst of our distresses will enable us not only to endure but to enjoy them.

Paul knows the sweet taste of victory that God can press out of seeming adversities and give His saints to drink in the midst of their sorrows for he says,

*I take pleasure in my infirmities (II Corinthians 12:10).*

Only the grace of God can find and take pleasure in the trials of God.

*For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor messengers, nor sovereignties, nor the present, nor the future, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:38-39).*

Here all of the forces of the universe are marshaled and paraded by God: they loom on the horizon, assuming gigantic proportions as they draw near. Then as they fade away into the distance, a deep peace falls on our spirits as we realize that not one, nor all of them combined, can come between us and the unconquerable love of our God as displayed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Life may at times lead us far from Him but never beyond the circle of His love. The things that we are called upon to face today perplex us, that which is in the future fill us with fear – but only when we ►

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take our eyes from Him Who is the Inaugurator and Perfecter of faith. Everything in the universe is subject to Him. Nothing above or beneath, nothing at all, has the power to break the bond that fastens the humblest and most unworthy saint to His great throbbing heart.

This is more than salvation from sin. This is reconciliation. This is peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. God's promise is that He will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Him (Isaiah 26:3).

The Adversary is subtle, and knowing this, wants you to be looking away from Him to yourself. The

Slanderer wants you to think of how unworthy you are; for, in thinking of how unworthy you are, you cannot be thinking of how worthy Christ is!

It fortifies my soul to know  
That though I perish, Truth is so;  
That howsoe'er I stray and range,  
Whate'er I do, Thou dost not change.  
I steadier step when I recall  
That if I slip, Thou dost not fall.

— A.H. Clough

— *Unsearchable Riches*, Volume 31, pages 196-197  
(abridged & edited)

INTERPRETERS (continued from front page)

Without such interpretation of culture, the truth lies there undiscovered, precious glimpses going unnoticed, as a heap of apparent worthlessness. Listen and look, and literally you will see these intersections of opportunity everywhere. In almost every song you hear, every movie you see, every book you read, you will see the uncontainable truth of our Father pressing through everywhere.

After all, as the sons of God, aren't we able to see His hand everywhere? Isn't "ALL of God," isn't *everything* a Godsend? Aren't we the ones who can actually see the way things really are, the way that they are meant to be seen?

For us who know Father, there is nothing "unclean"

of itself: *everything* is divine, and every area of life is sacred. We can see Father everywhere.

Paul's approach on Mars' Hill is very helpful for you and me. Paul presents God in an all-encompassing way.

*He is not far from every one of us: for in Him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, "For we are also His offspring" (Acts 17:27-28).*

May Father teach us to let go of religious culture and interpret the one to which He has called us to be a light.



258 pp., PB

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## ***World Affairs and National Politics***

### ***And the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus***

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

When did nationalism begin? What is God's purpose for nationalism? Is the United States a Christian nation? Does any government have *Favored Nation Status* with God today? Should believers support Israel? What did Paul have to say about our citizenship? What is our role in relation to nations? Is our job to rid the world of evil? What should the believer's attitude be toward earthly authority? Should all obedience to earthly magistrates be absolute? Are believers to pay their taxes? Where does voting and jury duty fit in? Why was the apostle Paul executed?

*These and many other questions are addressed in this groundbreaking work!*

# Six Men Pointing to Christ

by — Walter H. Bundy (1881-?)

All these things as types did happen to those persons, and they were written for our admonition, to whom the end of the ages did come (I Corinthians 10:11, Young's Literal Translation).

"Types" are generally incomplete, merely specimens representing a more complete stock from the great storehouse. God developed and sent forth these "types" from the nation of Israel to point to the perfect Christ.

## ABRAHAM

Abraham was the father of the faithful, pointing to the devotion of father and son, representing on the part of Isaac the complete confidence in the provision of the father, and foreshadowing God's abundant provision through the sacrifice of His Own Son.

## JOSEPH

Joseph was called by Pharaoh, the "savior of the world" who, from degradation and imprisonment, arose to a place on the throne next to Pharaoh himself, and through his work saved Israel and Egypt from famine; pointing to Christ Who went through the degradation of the cross, sold by His brethren, to death; but was exalted to the right hand of God Himself, and will prove the Savior of all Israel and the entire world.

## ELIJAH

Elijah was the judge, who was used to show how God could make evil praise Him; as Elijah exposed the evil and futility of the work of the priests of Baal, but made their efforts redound to the praise of God Himself; so

Christ will use evil as a foil to show the ultimate complete triumph of righteousness and good.

## DAVID

David was the beloved King, pointing to the Royal Seed and Lord of David Who shall rule and reign in righteousness. Just as the young David championed the cause of Israel against the most formidable foe Goliath when the entire nation was facing ruin, so the precious Lambkin came forward when all heaven wept, because no one was found worthy to open the scroll and seal, championing the cause of righteousness and life.

## DANIEL

Daniel was the great revealer of secrets and interpretations concerning Israel, as he was instructed by the Angel of God; pointing to the Greater Revealer of God's secrets that appertain to the Body, the world, the universe.

## JOHN THE BAPTIST

John the Baptist was the herald of the Kingdom and the voice of one crying in the wilderness; pointing to the "Word," the Voice of God, the perfect expression of the invisible Father.

— *Unsearchable Riches*, Volume 31  
(edited)



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## Editor's Desk

### Television, Movies and Music

I'm not a "natural" reader. It's always been one of my weaknesses. On first thought it seems odd that God would, in my weakness, make me both an incessant reader and writer. Of course, then it is not so strange, since this has often been His M.O., using men in their weaknesses.

God has birthed the reading and writing of my life out of passion, not natural ability. I read because I have an insatiable hunger to learn of Him, and a ceaseless motivation to write because of a need to remember what I have learned, and in turn, a heart-felt desire to share it with my family and loved ones. Thus, the underlying thrust of my whole life seems caught up in words: reading and writing them.

Now, I don't read for entertainment purposes. This is by no means meant to be the slightest reflection on those who do. After all, if reading was someone's real quality, why wouldn't they read for entertainment? Perhaps I even "envy" those who do.

I don't read for entertainment for two main reasons, the first being my before-mentioned weakness for reading.

Secondly, since I read substantially for non-entertainment purposes, when it comes to relaxing, I actually need a break from reading. Perhaps that makes sense; regardless, this is who I am, who God had made me to be.

As a result, I really enjoy television, movies and music. I use them to relax. Granted, it seems to me that the more programming that is available, the less quality material there is worth watching. I don't mean to be critical, because this is all partly based on my own personal preferences. What one is enthralled with I might find miserably boring, and vice-versa. What one of us would value as a great movie, or a good program, others would see as a waste of time. I suppose any particular movie or show is enjoyed and appreciated by someone, if not just those who found the satisfaction in producing it.

In this issue's article, *Interpreters of Culture*, we deal with the divine value which is inherent in culture and see how Paul made wonderful use of it. In subsequent editorials I plan to highlight some of the movies, television shows and music that I have really enjoyed, and I will share the small glimpses of God and His truth that manage to make their way into them.

By His grace,

Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

### Bible Student's Notebook™

*Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal*

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This free electronic publication is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation that God will 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 in ages past" (Romans 16:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Ephesians 1:1-3);
- 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);
- union in His death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6);
- adult sonship position (Galatians 4).

We do not claim infallibility for the contents of this publication. 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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