



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume 25
Issue 602

The Blessing of Hardness

by — J.R. Miller (1840-1912)

Therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ (II Timothy 2:3).

Children are really most fortunate who have everything done for them – who have no *hardships* to endure, no *difficulties* to encounter, no *obstacles* to surmount. They are envied by those who lack what they possess.



Many others sigh and say, “If I only had their fortune.” Yet these “fortunes” are by no means to be *envied*. Weak lives come from such *pampering*.

Those who lack the ease, plenty and luxury are the ones with the really fine opportunity in life. The *necessity* which sends them to their tasks – and keeps them at them early and late – is a most friendly condition in their lives, although they may think it just the reverse.

The parents who try to save their children from *struggles* and *work* irreparably cripple them so that they can't fight life's battles with any measure of success. Those who stand up – strong, wise, victorious – are those who have been brought up in the *school of hardness*. They learn in the *fields of adversity* how to live. They learn lessons in failures.

There is a wonderful Scripture which shows the *divine interest in human struggle*, and tells us how and when the interest is shown (I Corinthians 10:13). God does not promise to save us *from* struggle and hardship, for in no other school could He make spiritual men of us. Nor does He promise to make the *hard way* easier for us, for that would be to lower the standard of heavenly attainment which He has set for

us. However, He has promised, when the stress is growing too sore, to give us *strength*, that we fail not.

Life is full of sudden changes in which hardness comes unexpectedly to many people. By some difficult experience they are tossed out of the *cozy nest* in which they had been so happily nourished and, without warning, are called to endure the world's cold and hardness almost unaided by human help.

We naturally pity those who seem to bear burdens too heavy for their frail shoulders and to face circumstances of hardship and peril, but our pity is changed to admiration as we watch them and see with what quiet courage they pass through it all. What, it had seemed to us, must destroy all that was lovely in them has really made them nobler.

We are always *at school* in this world. God is teaching us the things we need to learn. Those, therefore, who find themselves in what may seem *adverse conditions* – compelled to face hardship, endure opposition, and pass through struggle – should quietly trust in Christ for guidance and strength, go firmly and courageously forward, conscious that they have now an opportunity to grow strong in divine qualities of lasting worth and heavenly nobility. ■

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Editor's Desk

Genealogy:

The Old and New Humanities

The Pilkingtons



We have a small collection of books on the Pilkingtons. The family name is an old English one (similar to Washington). Our Pilkington name-

sake is traced back to Alexander de Pilkington, Lord of Pilkington Manor, town of Pilkington, Lancashire, England. Pilkington is a compound word, broken down thus:



A map of ancient Pilkington in Lancashire England

“Pilk” (or “Pylk”) the root surname, being Teutonic¹, Celtic and Saxon;

“ing” (or “in,” both short for “ingas”) meaning “offspring”;

“ton” (or “town”) meaning dwelling-place.

Put together, then, Pilkington² is,

1. Teutonic is “related to a people who lived in Jutland [the continental portion of Denmark and the northern portion of Germany] in the 4th century B.C. and fought the Romans in France in the 2nd century B.C.” (*Oxford Dictionary*).
2. “In ancient records some variation in the spelling of the name is met with, ‘y’ being frequently substituted for ‘i’ [Pylkington, Pilkington] and the letter ‘g’ occasionally being dropped [Pylkinton, Pilkinton].” – John Pilkington, *The History of the Lancashire Family of Pilkington and its Branches from 1066 to 1600*, Thomas Brakell LTD, 1894

It is easy for us to trace our family roots, since once we work our way back to British records, they comprise one of Europe’s royal lines. The Pilkingtons were said to have been ranked “among the great families of the county.”⁴

By some accounts we can trace our direct parental ancestry through a line of distant kings as far back as 300 B.C., to my 82nd great-grandfather. We have direct parental ancestors who were Sirs, Knights, Lords, Dukes, Earls, Barons, Counts, Viscounts, High Sheriffs, Princes and Kings.

The Pilkington Crest



The Pilkington family crest is that of a mower with a scythe. We use this on the masthead of the *Bible Student’s Notebook* and as a logo for *Bible Student’s Press*. As story has it, a royal ancestor of our family, being sought during the Norman Conquest, disguised himself as a lowly mower, performing the monotonous job of clearing the meadows to deceive the enemy into thinking he was of no importance. One of the crests captions read, “The master mows the meadows.”⁵

Maternal Ancestry

Through our maternal line we trace our heritage to the Stewards of Scotland, and King James our cousin, who united the Scottish and English crowns and commissioned the self-serving version that would bear his name. Through another branch of our maternal line we are also distant cousins of the House of Windsor, current Royal family of England.

Back in 2011, only months before my mother’s death, during the weeks leading up to royal wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, William and Kate, she would lightheartedly “wait” each day for the

3. “Each Teutonic chief received his share of land at the time of the Saxon invasion, and the name of the locality often becomes composed of the patronymic for the family or race.” – Thomas Wright, *The Celt, the Roman, and the Saxon*
4. John Brownbill, William Farrer William (1911), *A History of the County of Lancaster: Volume 5* (1911).
5. John Pilkington, *Ibid*.

mailman to deliver her wedding invitation for her cousins at Westminster Abbey. It would bring a smile to our faces. To no one's surprise, it never arrived.

Far Removed from Royalty

While our family tree can trace back to royalty, we are far removed from such nobility. My father was a simple man, a carpenter and farmer. My grandfathers on both sides for generations were farmers, some sharecroppers. Neither I, nor my siblings, nor any of our recent past generations graduated from college. None of us have held any position of power or honor. So, more recently our heritage has been quite a humble one, and not surprisingly so,

For you are observing your calling, brethren, that there are not many wise according to the flesh; not many powerful, not many noble, but the stupidity of the world God chooses, that He may be disgracing the wise, and the weakness of the world God chooses, that He may be disgracing the strong, and the ignoble and the contemptible things of the world God chooses, and that which is not, that He may be discarding that which is, so that no flesh at all should be boasting in God's sight (I Corinthians 1:26-29, Concordant Version).

**Not Many Wise
Not Many Powerful
Not Many Noble**

God's revealed method is to choose from the lowly, ignoble. This magnifies Him – His wisdom, His Power, His Majesty. However, this passage has no particular reflection on those who happen to be "wise," or "powerful," or "noble." These are merely not normally God's primary choice in servants.

Throughout my life I have heard and read where Queen Victoria, longest reigning monarch of the British Empire, supposedly said to the Archbishop of Canterbury, "I thank God for the letter 'M'."

Intrigued, he inquired as to her meaning. She then quoted I Corinthians 1:26, saying, "You'll notice it does not say, 'not *any* noble.' It says 'not *many* noble.' I'm thankful for that 'M'."

Whether this story is true or not, and whether Queen Victoria had faith or not, one thing is for certain, any who have divine calling among the "wise," or "powerful," or "noble" by world's standards must indeed be thankful for the letter "M."

Gaining Ancestral Perspective

It can be mind-boggling how quickly ancestral trees can grow as you go back. Think about it, we all have two parents, four grandparents, eight great-grandparents; and the number grows exponentially, generation after generation.

Look at it this way:

2 – Parents
4 – Grandparents
8 – Great-Grandparents
16 – Great, Great-Grandparents
32 – Great, Great, Great-Grandparents
64 – Great, Great, Great, Great-Grandparents
128 – Great, Great, Great, Great, Great-Grandparents

After going back 7 generations we all have 128th great-grandparents. This means that in the early 19th century there were 128 people living that would make up, as it were, 1/128th of who each of us are today.

However, watch what happens once we go back even just another five generations.

256 – 6th Great-Grandparents
512 – 7th Great-Grandparents
1,024 – 8th Great-Grandparents
2,048 – 9th Great-Grandparents
4,096 – 10th Great-Grandparents

With only 12 generations passing there are now 4,096 individuals who join in providing us with our genetic makeup. These ancestors would have been alive during the second half of the 1600s.

You can see then that it might not be all that impressive to have royalty in your family tree. Going back only 1000 years, it could be possible for *anyone* to find a royal link. The only trouble that many ►

might have is simply managing to trace their lines far back enough to identify a royal connection.

With so many great grand-parents in each of our gene pools, we probably all have some earthly nobility in our blood; but rest assured there probably are plenty of peasants too, not to mention those who bring shame to a family tree.

I once heard of someone many years ago who responded to the issue of evolution in this way: “None of my ancestors ever hung by their tails, but some of them probably hung by their necks.”

Endless Genealogies

We can learn a number of things by considering our genealogies. One is how seemingly endless they all are.

*Nor yet to be heeding myths and **endless genealogies**, which are affording exactions rather than God’s administration which is in faith (I Timothy 1:4, Concordant).*

Meaningless Genealogies

Another thing we learn from Paul is how meaningless all genealogies really are. Though there *was* a time when one’s ancestry was important, it *now* has no value whatsoever in our relationship to God or His service.

Note closely Paul’s own testimony in this regard. Though he once had great pride in being “*of the race of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews,*” he quickly went on to say,

But things which were gain to me, these I have deemed a forfeit because of Christ (Philippians 3:5-7, Concordant).

The Closeness of Humanity

Additionally, we are able to see from all of our many generations of great-grandparents how very closely related all of humanity really is.

Interestingly, we are told that within one’s own cul-

ture or ethnicity everyone is related by no greater distance than a 15th cousin; while the farthest relation we may have globally is likely to be no more than a 50th cousin.⁶

Our Common Ancestor

Of course, regardless of our immediate individual ancestry, all humanity traces their lineage back to one common progenitor: Adam. Thus, Adam called his wife’s name “Eve” (חַוְוָה [chavvâh]⁷, i.e., *Lifegiver*), because,

she becomes the mother of all the living (Genesis 3:20, Concordant).

Little wonder Paul wrote,

[God] *giving to all life, and breath, and all things, **He made also of one blood every nation of men**, to dwell upon all the face of the earth – having ordained times before appointed, and the bounds of their dwellings (Acts 17:25-26, Young’s Literal Translation).*

Our New Ancestry

Moreover, just as all humanity can trace its family tree to Adam, we can now trace it to One far greater than he: the Christ. For, what *was* true of us all *in Adam*, is now transversely true of us all *in Christ*.

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive (I Corinthians 15:22).

Or, more literally,

For even as, in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ, shall all be vivified⁸ (Concordant).

Thus, the Christ,

In Himself, [is] creating one new humanity⁹ (Ephesians 2:15).

6. Tim Urban, *Your Family: Past, Present, and Future*.

7. From the Hebrew root word חַוְוָה (châvâh) meaning “to live.”

8. I.e., resurrection beyond the reach of death.

9. “The new humanity is quite a distinct matter from the one body.” – A.E. Knoch, *Concordant Commentary*.

Our New Aristocracy

While some of our own particular families may have lived in castles and palaces (*how far we have fallen!*), these temporal stations pale in comparison to the far grander position that is the destiny of the ecclesia which is *His Body*.

Our citizenship is in the heavens (Philippians 3:20, *Young*).

Our realm is inherent in the heavens (*Concordant*).

Paul teaches us that as members of Christ's Body we have a citizenship, and it's not on earth: it's in heaven. Our true home and government is in heaven; our allotment is there; our King is there; our politics are there.¹⁰

Those of us called today have the celestials as our homeland. It is easy to get caught up in the cross-currents of gentile (national) politics, for truly "the nations rage, and the people imagine a vain thing" (Psalm 2:1; Acts 4:25).

For us, He is our *only* Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords:

... Our Lord Jesus Christ: Who in His times He shall show, Who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords (I Timothy 6:14-15).

A.E. Knoch (1874-1965) writes concerning this verse:

Our citizenship, in contrast to that of Israel, is in the heavens. We have no political privileges where the sovereignty of our Lord has been rejected; but we have high hopes both politically and physi-

cally. We shall reign with Christ in the celestial spheres.¹¹

We have no valid rights on earth. It, with its fullness, belongs to Jehovah, and He has not delegated any of its privileges to us. But why should we wish to meddle here, seeing that God has given us a far more glorious sphere? We are citizens of the heavens. We will not go there as fugitives of earth or as guests dependent on the hospitality of others. We will need no pass, no visa, as though we were foreigners, limited in our rights and restricted in our movements, alien expatriates,¹² despised emigrants of a despicable and death-doomed race. This we would be in ourselves, but in Christ we are entitled to all the rights and privileges which He Himself can claim.¹³

Our Preparation

Just as human monarchs groomed and prepared their progeny to enter into their destined part of their ruling dynasty, so our Father is now preparing us for a matchless celestial enthronement.

God is using the experiences we have in our lifetime as a means of preparing us for our high place and service among the celestials (Ephesians 2:6). — Herman H. Rocke (1908-1996)¹⁴

God is preparing us for glory, a glory as vast as the regions beyond the stars. We should not question God's training program but rather thank Him for it. — A.E. Knoch (1874-1965)¹⁵

Let us welcome our every encounter with evil, by faith believing that it is preparing us for our future place among the celestials (Ephesians 2:6-7). We do not inflict evil, we suffer evil; our feet are shod with the evangel of peace (Ephesians 6:15). — D.M. Johnson¹⁶

10. Related study materials:

- [Citizenship](#) by Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr. (*Bible Student's Notebook* 160).
- [Celestial Citizenship](#) by A.E. Knoch (1874-1965) (*Bible Student's Notebook* 410).
- [Paul's Roman Citizenship](#) by Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr. (*Bible Student's Notebook* 271).
- (Book) [World Affairs and National Politics](#) by Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.
- (Video) [The Government](#) by Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

- 11. *Concordant Commentary*, Philippians 3:20 (abridged).
- 12. Someone who does not live in their own country (Cambridge).
- 13. Studies in Philippians, *Unsearchable Riches*, Vol. 29 (1938).
- 14. *Check Your Panoply*; available through [Study Shelf](#), see order form.
- 15. *Unsearchable Riches*, Volume 52.
- 16. *Unsearchable Riches*; Volume 63, abridged.



The Celestial Reign of Love and Grace

Earthly speaking, if we would learn anything from royal ancestries it would be *what doesn't work*. After all, this is the purposeful lesson of human history. War doesn't work; strong-arming doesn't work; legislation doesn't work; nor does manipulation, tyranny or oppression.

Heavenly speaking, however, we learn what *does* work. Love works. Grace works.

We are going to engage in a celestial overthrowing of evil with good, of corruption with righteousness, of pride and arrogance with humility, of war with peace, of hatred with love. We are going to overcome the strongholds of the heavens with meekness, gentleness, kindness, grace and love.

All that God is now manifesting toward us is the true training-ground of all that we will be manifesting in the heavens.

That, in the oncoming eons, He should be displaying the transcendent riches of His grace in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:7, Concordant).

We're not merely the recipients of "*the transcendent riches of His grace*," we are the channels of it as well. God will use us as His grand celestial showcase. We are now being prepared for such a glorious "display." May God be granting each of us the realization of our lofty position and privilege of being the grand stewards and manifestors of His supreme grace.

Studying from God's Standpoint

Most of us, when we begin to read our Bibles, turn everything possible to our own personal advantage. Later we learn to study from God's standpoint.

— A.E. Knoch (1874-1965)

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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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