



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume 25
Issue 624

Divine Lockup

Part 5:

Christ "Captures Captivity"

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Ascending on high, He captures captivity (Ephesians 4:8, Concordant).

OUR CURRENT SUBJECTION TO BONDAGE IS SUBJECTED TO HOPE

All that binds creation in shackles will find its demise in Christ: sin, failure, vanity, emptiness, unfulfillment, uselessness, the law, alienation, againstness, condemnation, unbelief, obstinacy, rebellion, stubbornness, humiliation, corruption, decay and death – to name a few.

By the complete success of Christ, He "captures captivity."¹ He takes prisoner all that has locked us up in slavery, and it is all as good as done! Divine revelation calls "what is not [yet] as if it were" (Romans 4:17, *Concordant*).

All that binds us is summed up in the word "captivity," and our Lord Jesus Christ captured it. He took all that captures us and made it captive. Christ has



already conquered all of our enemies, including the last one – death. Having fully captured all that holds us captive, He has insured our release. According to the passage, He did not do this while He was dead, but after His resurrection, when He ascended up "on high."²

Ascending on high, He captures captivity.

OUR DELIVERANCE IS IN CHRIST

Concerning this deliverance from captivity found in Ephesians 4:8, John H. Essex (1907-1991) writes,³

Paul well knew what captivity meant. At the time he wrote these lines, he was incarcerated in Rome. He was aware also of a perpetual battle within himself, a struggle between flesh and spirit, in which the flesh would always have the tendency to lead him into captivity to the law of sin which ►

1. This is "an idiomatic Greek phrase 'He captured captivity.'" -Robert G. Bratcher, Eugene Nida, *A Translator's Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Ephesians* (1982), page 98.

"A description of the powers of evil that held us captive, now made captive by Christ's redemptive triumph." – Norman B. Harrison, *His Very Own: Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians* (1930), page 110.

"Expressive of Christ's conquests and triumph over sin, Satan, the world, death, and the grave; and indeed, every enemy of His and His people." – John Gill (1697-1771), *Exposition of the Entire Bible* (1746).

– "He captures captivity" (*Concordant*),
– "He captivated captivity" (*Diaglott*),
– "He captured the enemy" (*Message*).

2. For a look at this "on high" ascension see:

– *Far Above All*, Charles H. Welch, *Bible Student's Notebook* #544.

3. Contrary to orthodox theologies, there is nothing in Ephesians 4:8 that even suggests the pagan idea that Christ went to *Hades* and transferred Old Testament saints out of paradise into Heaven.

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was in his members (Romans 7:23). Likewise, he was well versed in the Mosaic law, which had the effect of captivating all who were under it. To say that Christ “*captures captivity*” is another way of saying, “*For freedom Christ frees us*” (Galatians 5:1). Elsewhere Paul speaks of “*the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus*” (Romans 3:24).⁴

VICTORY’S TRIUMPH!

In Ephesians 4:8 Paul cites Psalm 68⁵ which is a reference to victory’s triumph over the enemy. Here again are Essex’s comments:

Paul was well acquainted with the Sacred Scriptures and, quite often guided by God’s spirit, quotes passages from the Hebrew writings (“Old Testament”), applying them to the presentation of the evangel he was commissioned to dispense. Here he quotes from Psalm 68, which is a song of triumph.

TOTAL FREEDOM

The work of Christ has secured for *all* creation⁶ deliverance from *every* bondage which has enslaved it.

If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed (John 8:36).

GLORIOUS FREEDOM!

Every limitation, every oppression, every burden, every inadequacy, every encumbrance, every affliction, every insufficiency, every shortfall, every handicap will be permanently removed, for,

The creation itself, also, shall be freed from the slavery of corruption into the glorious freedom of the children of God (Romans 8:21, *Concordant*).

4. *Unsearchable Riches*, Volume 78, January 1987.
5. “David writes in this Psalm of an historic incident during his own reign as king over Israel ... The point for us to observe is that Paul saw in this Old Testament Scripture our Lord Jesus Christ, the antitype of the story, in His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension (4:9-10).” – Lehman Strauss, *Devotional Studies in Galatians and Ephesians* (1957), page 174.
6. Thus, “*the evangel to the entire creation*” (Mark 16:15, *Concordant*; “*every creature*” KJV).

Concerning this glorious freedom it has been written:

The creation itself shall, in a glorious sense, be delivered into that freedom from debility and decay in which the children of God, when raised up in glory, shall expatiate; into this freedom from corruptibility the creation itself shall, in a glorious sense, be delivered.⁷

The creation has been involved in the treadmill of corruption through the sin of man. We are associated with the creation on the physical side. When our bodies are delivered from their present slavery and death at our Lord’s descent from heaven, He will transfigure them to conform them to His body glorious (Philippians 3:21). Later, when we are unveiled, the creation will be set at liberty from the bondage which now enthalls it. How it ought to comfort us to know that the patient, suffering creatures,⁸ who had no hand in their own degradation, will yet find a real release from the pain and sorrow from which they have no escape now! Its physical aspect waits until our Lord’s return.⁹

TOPICS:

Major: Ephesians; Christ; Captivity; Freedom
Minor: Creation; Animals; Redemption


7. Jamieson, Faucet & Brown Commentary, Romans 8.

8. See the following material:

– *Redemption of the Lower Creation*, A.E. Knoch, *Bible Student’s Notebook* #375;

– *All Creatures – The Lot of Animals in God’s Ultimate Plan*, Rick Longva, *Bible Student’s Notebook* #437.

9. A.E. Knoch, *Concordant Commentary on the New Testament*, Romans 8, (see order form).



Restitution of All Things
by — Andrew Jukes (1815-1901)
194 pages, PB
See order form.
The author, who wrote *Four Views of Christ* and *The Law of the Offerings*, also penned this work in 1867. It brings the reader into an aspect of the author’s later ministry which may surprise some. In it he examines the Scriptures regarding the destiny of the human race.

The Wonderful Book

by — Alan Burns (1884-1929)

The Bible is a wonderful book, and a book of wonders. First of all, it is wonderful in that we have it at all, and then it is even more wonderful in that we have it in so perfect a state considering the experiences through which it has passed.

Men have tried to exterminate it. It has been outlawed, burned by fire, hacked by criticism; men have hated it and hunted it, but in spite of all of this it is with us today bearing its witness to the God Whose book it is.

The antagonism of its enemies and the indifference of its friends; the implacable hatred of the church of Rome and the but lukewarm interest of the Protestant sects have alike failed to accomplish the Satanic design that the Book of books – this wonderful Book – should be forgotten by the human race.

As well might the arch-enemy have tried to blot the stars from the vaults of heaven – those stars whose courses are appointed by God – as quench the light that gleams upon the page of Holy Writ. Not once, not twice, but many a thousand times has human authority in one of its various forms (religious authority, philosophical authority, etc.) sealed the tomb in which it supposed it had laid the lifeless corpse of the Book, but scarcely had they interred it to their own satisfaction than their seals were broken.

We speak of wonderful poems, such as those of Shakespeare or Milton, but these writings were wonderful because their *writers* were wonderful. But the Bible is a wonderful book, not because of its writers *but in spite of them!* These writers were but as pens in the hand of God, and bad pens, too, we might think some of them to be; but God wrote His wonderful Book in spite of the badness of the pens He had to write it with!

Some of these human pens, because of the qualifications they might be deemed to have, might be likened to fine, delicate-pointed pens; but others that God used in His inscribing were as stub-points compared to these. Notwithstanding, stub-points and fine were alike used to write the some message. The Master-Workman never quarreled with His tools.

We must pause a moment to note the *growing* wonder of the Book. Its wonder defied the bitterness of its enemies, the apathy of its friends, and could not be dimmed or lessened by reason even of those who were used to compile it!

Its writers (for it had many writers, but only one Author) were drawn from every rank and station in life: the palace and the herdsmen's hut; the Egyptians courts and the fisherman's boat, and yet through the writings of all flows the same, unsullied ever-broad-
(see **BOOK**, page 5413)



83 pp., PB

See order form.

Studies in Ecclesiastes: The Words and Works of God and Man

by — Vladimir Gelesnoff (1877-1921)

Many current versions of the Bible often translate the same Hebrew word in various ways. In this way a veil of mystery has been thrown over many a passage, and a certain amount of human opinion and guesswork has been imported into God's truth. The Book of Ecclesiastes has severely suffered from inconsistency in translation – no sacred book has ever been so much misunderstood in its whole aim and spirit. Our aim should always be to adjust our thoughts to the facts, and never to adjust the facts to our thoughts.

Applying this principle to the matter in hand, our prime concern is to ascertain what the book of Ecclesiastes has to say about itself. The book aims at achieving a threefold object: (1) Recognition of God as God; (2) Reception of His revelation; (3) Regulation of life in view of a future rectification or judgment.



Editor's Desk

Facsimile Project

I am certainly thrilled to report the launching of a new publishing endeavor: the *Facsimile Project*. We have now begun an extensive re-printing of out-of-print materials.

Since the inception of *Bible Student's Press*¹ we have focused our attention on printing new books (from author's such as myself) as well as re-typesetting valuable books from other authors of the past (such as E.W. Bullinger.)

This new venture is the facsimile printing of older works. The publishing of exact copies, while at times not as clear a printing result as a re-typeset, affords us some relief from the arduous task of producing an entirely new layout. The obvious benefit is that we will be able to greatly expand our publishing ministry.

We had initially produced two such reproduction works, but we had a number of snags necessitating collaboration to truly get this project underway. In April my editor and friend Andre Sneidar came to the *Pilkington Abbey* for a few days. Among the many publishing projects that were addressed was our *Facsimile Project*. He and my son Nathan were able to re-

solve the technical issues, allowing us to move ahead with the project.

Nathan has taken center stage on this long and eagerly-anticipated endeavor. We currently have over 20 titles available under our *Facsimile Project*. Here are a few examples:

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- *Paul's Ephesians: Part 1, Chapters 1-3* (Loudy)
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 - * *Who are "the Saints" of the Scriptures?*

1. Along with our many other imprints such as *Classic Reprint Press*.

(see **EDITORIAL**, page 5414)

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BOOK (continued from page 5411)

ening stream of wonder!

The Bible does not merely *contain* poetry. It is poetry. When we consider that in its entirety (as shown in such works as the *Companion Bible*¹) it is dominated by a series of structural parallelisms, introversions, etc., we cannot help concluding that it is constituted by such literary architecture as *one huge poem!*

The balanced rhythm of its form hints at the harmony which underlies all of the apparent discords and discrepancies that may seem to lie upon the surface.

The Bible not only has had a wonderful history, but it is a wonderful history. Human productions are mysteries rather than histories, for they describe the fog of human life and happenings but they do not pierce or dispel it. Not seeing the “reason” back of events they can give no reason for them. Such histories merely seek to put the problems upon the blackboard – without the answer.

Human histories have been likened to showers of rain, so many downfalls of unrelated drops, with no real connection between the different writers. Such records are like a quantity of beads separated and unstrung. How different is the history recorded in the wonderful Book! Here events are strung as beads upon the golden purpose of God.

Biblical history is wonderful, not only because of what

1. [Editor:] by E.W. Bullinger, see order form.

it contains but because of what it leaves out. It makes much of Moses and little of Egypt. It gives prominence to Daniel and none to Babylon. It notes Paul the prisoner in a Roman cell and ignores the pomp and glory of imperial Rome. Why? Because it is a history of the things that “mattered.” Moses mattered – Egypt did not. Daniel mattered – Babylon not. Paul mattered – not so Rome. Paul and his fellow-saints were more wonderful than all of the Caesars of Rome.

The Bible is also wonderful because of its prophecies. Prophecy has been called “history written in advance.” It lisps no stammering “perhaps” of events to take place next year, but with the stately majesty of Omniscience² sounding in every syllable it utters events far beyond the life-bounds of a generation. Prophecy is the Voice of the God Who *knows* all; and He knows all because He *does* all.

Yet Paul’s prophecy looks to a time still more wonderful, for the Philippian prophecy deals with a moment when the whole of creation wonders and worships the One Whose name is Wonderful. His presence it is that will make heaven and earth a wonderful place. It is just that which makes the Bible a wonderful book.

Unsearchable Riches, Volume 18 (1927)
(edited & abridged)

TOPICS:

Major: Bible

Minor: Sovereignty

2. [Editor:] “having total knowledge” – *American Heritage Dictionary*.



185 pp., PB

See order form.

Wife Loving: The Husband's Paramount Privilege

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

This book is about Christ-mentored husbandry; a look at husbands’ important and honored role of loving their wives. So lofty and divine is its pursuit, Paul presents none other than Christ Himself as the mentor: “*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church.*”

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“Powerful, powerful stuff! As a woman I am honored by it. I am deeply grateful for your boldness to honor women and to portray the marriage relationship as simply yet profoundly as God intended.” – *CA*

EDITORIAL (continued from page 5412)

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Thanksgiving is offered up to our Father for His giving us such faithful co-laborers through which He provides us the hard work and finances to make these many endeavors possible.



Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Willing to Listen and Consider

It was with some trepidation that we embarked on a line of truth which was sufficiently new and different from accepted creeds to make its reception problematical. We wished to go forward, yet carry our friends with us in our explorations. It is with great satisfaction and profound pleasure that we noted the gracious attitude of our readers. All did not follow at first, some were not convinced immediately, but almost all were willing to listen and consider. This is as it should be.

The result is that few indeed have not found fresh truth, and most of our readers are rejoicing in the satisfactory solution of subjects which they considered so dark and difficult that they were not supposed to be solved in this life, even if they might be in the next.

— A.E. Knoch (1874-1965)
Unsearchable Riches, Volume 16 (1925)

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Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

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- 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).

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This publication is not connected with any "church," "denomination," "movement," "organization," "mission," "creed," "meeting," "school," "conference" or "fellowship."

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