



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume 37
Issue 917

Things I Misunderstood

Part 1

3 Things I Misunderstood about God

Personal Reflections by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

What I knew about God was simply what I had been taught from childhood. Like the pagan idol worshippers on Mars Hill, in many ways I worshiped the “Unknown God” for most of my early life.



core of Who He is. I would grow to learn that His very essence is **LOVE**, and that *all* of His attributes were subject to the beck and call of His love.

After all, the Scripture plainly declares:

God is love (I John 4:8, 16).

[Divine] *Love never fails* (I Corinthians 13:8).

I would come to see quite a different view of God, as well as His purposes – one that has brought me great peace: peace with myself, and peace with and for others as well.

Love is not just one of His attributes – it is Who He is, and His love *never* fails. It never quits, it never stops, it never falters, it never gives up, it never expires, it is never frustrated, it never falls short of its goal. This is because, more succinctly, *God Himself* never fails!

Therefore, God’s judgments are *ever* subjected to His love, they are *always* remedial. Divine judgment is never an end unto itself, but instead, a means to an end – and a gloriously loving end at that!

#1 – I Misunderstood God’s LOVE

I had misunderstood God’s greatest attribute to be His holiness and righteousness. I would learn that if this is our starting point it can lead to some very mistaken places in our understanding and experience.

I thought that, because of God’s holiness and righteousness, there was an enormous wedge between Him and me. Of course, He loved me, and if I loved Him back, by responding properly to Him, He would keep on loving me. But I thought that His love and acceptance were conditional. God was keeping track of my sins and failures. I needed to keep a “short account” with Him. It was my responsibility to keep my slate clean, through self-efforts of continual confession of sins and repentance. Otherwise, I could rekindle His wrath.

I would come to understand that God loves everything that He makes – and why wouldn’t this be so? After all, everything God makes is His own design and fulfills His own purpose.

I would come to see that holiness and righteousness were not the starting point, that these were not at the

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God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good (Genesis 1:31).

Not only does He look at everything that He has made and says, “Very good!” – He also loves what He makes. He has a desire and passion toward His handiwork. Again, why wouldn’t He? This is why Job says, concerning God,

You have a **desire** to the work of Your hands (Job 14:15).

... You **yearn** for the work of Your hands (EB).

Arthur P. Adams (1847-1920) reminded us that it is God’s loving desire toward all of His creation that is in fact *The True Basis of Redemption*.¹

I would also come to understand that God is “Father” – not just the “Almighty God” of the Universe, but our *loving Father!*

Jesus Christ came to reveal God’s true identity and nature as “Father.” This was an advanced revelation concerning God, super-abounding that of any previous one.

With radical boldness Christ called Him “Father,” and to His listeners, that God was “our Father.”²

Paul pressed this glorious truth to its grand ultimate, that God was the “Father of all.” Listen to Paul’s bold declaration:

One God and **Father of all** (Ephesians 4:6, CV).

Whose “Father” does Paul say that He is? He is the Father of “ALL” – without exception: no one excluded!³

He is not “Father” in any cold, formal, aloof sense. But, in the most tender and intimate way possible – He is “Abba, Father.”

2. Matthew 6:9; Luke 11:2.

3. For more information, see:

– [We Call Him “Father”](#) on the [order form](#) under “Clyde Pilkington.”

1. The reprint of Adam’s book from 1885 is available at [StudyShelf](#) (see the [order form](#) under “A.P. Adams”)

Bible Student’s Notebook™

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

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Scripture education in a weekly format!

This free electronic publication is dedicated to:

- the absolute sovereignty and deity of God (Romans 11:36);
- 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 through the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the universality of death and resurrection (I Corinthians 15:21);
- the unique gospel of Paul – which he calls “my gospel” (Romans 2:16; 16:25; II Timothy 2:8; I Corinthians 15:1-4; Acts 13-28; Acts 20:24);
- the “preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret in ages past” (Romans 16:25);
- the epistles of the present Secret Administration being Ephesians & Colossians (Ephesians 3:2, 9; Colossians 1:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the One Body (Ephesians 4:16);
- the Secret Administration, being the operational revelation for today (Ephesians 3:9);
- the unprophesied, Celestial hope and calling of the One Body (Colossians 3:4);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Ephesians 3:1-3);
- 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 and ascended seated position among the celestials (Romans 6; Ephesians 2:6);
- adult sonship position (Ephesians 1:5).

This publication is the product of humble efforts of ordinary men intended to stimulate the earnest study of Scripture. We do not claim infallibility for the contents of this publication; thus they are not meant to imply finality on any subject discussed, or that further research would not add further light from the Word of God. God’s storehouse of truth is inexhaustible, so draw on its wealth by prayerful study. 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.”

We are always open for discussion, but never for disputation. – André Sneidar

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For definitions of abbreviations/acronyms, see the [online key](#).

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The word “Abba” is found three times in Scripture.

2 – I Misunderstood God’s JUSTICE

Christ called God, “**Abba, Father...**” (Mark 14:36).

I had mistakenly believed that justice was *retribution*. We’re talking about *punishment* here. After all, someone had to pay for all of the wrongs in this world. God’s holiness demanded it! At least that is how I understood it.

Paul extends this intimacy between Christ and God to us. God is our *Abba* as well.

You have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but you have received the Spirit of Sonship, whereby we cry, “Abba, Father” (Romans 8:15).

However, in time I would come to see that *true* justice and *divine* judgment are NOT about punishment at all, but about making things right – about fixing things that are broken and correcting things that are wrong.

Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, “Abba, Father” (Galatians 4:6).

Punishment can’t resolve or correct anything, and in fact, it only increases the damages. How can retribution solve any injustice? It can’t. It can only increase the injustices.

God is the same to us as He is to Christ. He’s our “Abba” as well.

“Abba” is Aramaic, corresponding to our familiar “Papa” ... Just as the little Hebrew child would lisp its “Abba” in the familiar Aramaic household speech, or, as our children say trustingly, “Papa,” so we are without constraint in the august presence of the Divine Majesty. — A.E. Knoch (1874-1965), *Concordant Commentary on the New Testament*⁴

Yet, I would have to contemplate what was really behind all of the wrong and brokenness in this world. The answer to this question would be essential.

We were born under sin’s dominion, under subjection to vanity (frailty, weakness, imperfection, etc.), in a disrupted world, with a body of humiliation. No one asked for any of this. It was all against our will.

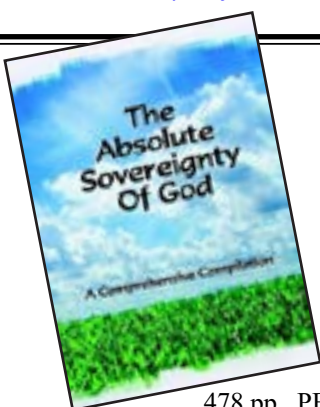
I would learn that, if I ever had any difficulties with any title of God, I could just put “Father” in front of it and it would all make perfect sense, bringing absolute peace (*i.e.*, Father King; Father Judge).

*For the creature was made subject to vanity, **not willingly**, but by reason of Him Who hath subjected the same in hope* (Romans 8:20).

*For, unto vanity, hath creation been made subject—**not by choice*** (REB)

4. Available at [StudyShelf](#), see the [order form](#) under “A. E. Knoch.”

*made subject to imperfection – **not by its own***



478 pp., PB

See [order form](#) under “Compilations.”

The Absolute Sovereignty of God (A Comprehensive Compilation)

This quintessential book victoriously celebrates and convincingly proclaims the absolute sovereignty of God. Sadly, religion has veiled the truth of the God of the Bible, making Him either an aloof deity, indifferent to the condition of the creation, or one who is at the worst cruel or at the least unloving and uncaring. Yet the loving Deity of Sacred Scripture always has had and will have sole and complete control over His entire creation. This ultimate collection of 100 works by 34 authors spans nearly 175 years. It is an extensive reference work that is essential for every library.

choice (TCNT)

*subdued to vanity **against their will*** (TNT)

*fell into subjection to failure and unreality, **not of its own choice*** (WT)

subjected to futility – not willingly (HCS)

*subjected to futility, **not voluntarily*** (MLV)

*subjected to frustration but **not by its own choice*** (GW)

*For it was **not the fault** of creation that it was frustrated* (GNT)

I would come to see and understand that we're not to "blame." Everything is going perfectly according to God's plan, and in due course He is going to fix everything! I would know this, of a surety, for here is the entire context:

For the premonition of the creation is awaiting the unveiling of the sons of God. For to vanity was the creation subjected, not voluntarily, but because of Him Who subjects it, in expectation, that the creation itself, also, shall be freed from the slavery of corruption into the glorious freedom of the children of God. For we are aware that the entire creation is groaning and travailing together until now. Yet not only so, but we

ourselves also, who have the firstfruit of the spirit, we ourselves also, are groaning in ourselves, awaiting the Sonship, the deliverance of our body (Romans 8:19-23, CV)

#3 – I Misunderstood God's SOVEREIGNTY

I grew up thinking that somehow God's hands were tied. There were so many things that He wanted to do, but His creation would not let Him. I thought that God was reacting, instead of acting. I understood Him to be a responder, instead of the controller.

I would come to rejoice in the truth that what God wills, He accomplishes. That He was sovereign, absolutely sovereign.

*Declaring the end from the beginning ... saying, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do **all** My pleasure"* (Isaiah 46:10).

*... The purpose of Him Who works **all** things after the counsel of His own will* (Ephesians 1:11).

What would I eventually learn that it is that He "wills"? *To save all mankind!*

Who wills that all mankind be saved and come into a realization of the truth (I Timothy 2:4, CV)

(see *MISUNDERSTOOD*, page 7758)



116 pages, PB

See order form.

After the Thousand Years: The Glorious Reign of Christ as Son of Man in the Dispensation of the Fullness of Times

by — George F. Trench (1841-1915)

In Revelation 20 the closing period of the Millennium is foretold as one of general insurrection against Christ as King, thus revealing the true condition of the population of the world, taken as a whole, throughout the thousand years. A Kingdom such as this cannot be the KINGDOM described in the epistles of Paul. According to I Corinthians 15:24, our Lord will not reign forever, but will deliver up His mediatorial KINGDOM to God at its end, that God will henceforth be "All in all." If the reign of Christ in its perfection cannot be millennial, and shall not be eternal, it follows that between the end of the one, the millennial, and the beginning of the other, the eternal state, must of necessity intervene that "dispensation of the fullness of times" (Ephesians 1:10), that KINGDOM of the Son of God's love, that KINGDOM that cannot be shaken, which it is Christ's to enjoy as Heir of all things, and Head of the new creation. George F. Trench was an associate of Dr. E.W. Bullinger.



Editor's Desk

Curriculum

Last year I received this communication from a brother who has spent the past few decades teaching the Scriptures:

I feel as though I am getting a quilt-like mosaic of learning, without the connective tissue to lend a more cohesive understanding. I suppose what I am looking for is an A-Z curriculum that builds in understanding and comprehension.

As I read this, I was reminded that there are so *many* gaps in the believer's education. I am often amazed when I talk at length with many who share some of our basic understandings, at how little they really know, even among those who are actually teachers of the Scriptures.

For 33 years we have been publishing the *Bible Student's Notebook*, resulting in over 7,700 pages of significant study material thus far. In the past few years we have published 34 ground-breaking compilation book series on key scriptural themes. Through *Bible Student's Press* we have published and republished 515 titles. We have hundreds of hours of videos, audios and *Daily Email Goodies* recordings.

Yet, with all of these available resources, it must be quite an intimidating undertaking to try to navigate one's way through it all to acquire the neces-

sary comprehension to transition from old religious paradigms toward a true biblical framework of understanding. This situation has been a long, ongoing burden of my heart.

We certainly have no lack of material available for a comprehensive educational curriculum that would systematically build cohesive understanding in the saints – it just desperately needs organizing. We'd need to create a detailed list of subjects, and then begin to arrange them in some logical order of progression.

To be honest, producing such a project of progressive study guides would be a daunting undertaking. We already have so much work going on here that it seems we can *barely* keep up with the basic tasks that are daily before us. If such a curriculum would materialize, it will be because helpers arose, and/or that we completely readjust our priorities and repurpose our direction and schedule.

Only God knows.

Humbly, yours,

Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.
The Pilkington Abbey
Paint, PA

TOPICS:

Major: Curriculum; Editor's Desk; Study

Minor: The BSN "Rightly Dividing Paul" Correspondence Course



Who Is Jesus? A Plea for a Return to Belief in Jesus, the Messiah

by — Sir Anthony Buzzard

A work dispelling the error of the Trinity.

48 pp., PB

See order form.

MISUNDERSTOOD (continued from page 7756)

I would come to find out that He was in fact the God of action, not reaction. He was *never* playing catch up with His creation.

I would also come to understand that He was not writing our stories as He went along ... waiting to see what we're going to do. No! All of our stories were pre-written – long before we were ever even born.

My days, all of them were written in Your book; the days, they were formed when there was not one of them (Psalm 139:16).

I would come to cherish what I would eventually term the Divine Cycle.⁵

Out of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all (Romans 11:36, BSV).

Here's the simple, glorious truth that would bring me wonderful peace:

1. All is *out* of God – He's the Origin of all!
2. All is *through* God – He's the Process of all!
3. All is *to* God – He's the Consummation of all!

The knowledge that “*all*” comes “*out*” of God, that “*all*” operates “*through*” God, and that “*all*” is returning “*to*” God settled my weary heart and brought

5. For a closer look at the Divine Cycle, see:

Bible Basics #1, The Divine Cycle – Romans 11:36, Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.:

- [Article:] [Bible Student's Notebook #838](#);
- [Video:] “Biblical Resources” on [YouTube](#).

peace to my troubled mind.

I would learn that this is a bedrock truth, often repeated by Paul, our Apostle:

God, the Father, of Whom are all things (I Corinthians 8:6).

One God, the Father, out of Whom all is (Concordant).

All is of God (I Corinthians 11:12; II Corinthians 5:18, CV).

I would embrace God as:

Elohim – the “Originator”

Theos – the “Placer”

El – the “Subjector”

God has ORIGINATED “*all*” – that is, He has PLACED “*all*” where they are, and He has SUBJECTED “*all*” to the conditions and circumstances in which they find themselves.

As a result, I find enormous peace in knowing that God will leave no corner of His vast and wonderful universe outside of His sovereign, unfailing, reconciling love. **BSN**

Watch the video version of this study, [Things I Misunderstood About God](#), on our Biblical Resources channel on YouTube.

TOPICS:

Major: God; Justice; Love; Sovereignty

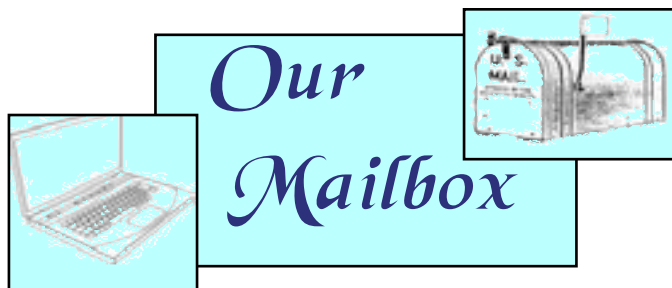
Minor: Peace; Realization; Spiritual Growth



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I enjoyed the theme of [BSN #912](#) that emphasized the understanding of the need to push through the barrier imposed when accepting that all of the writings of our Apostle are directed to us for our current application. That so many of the studious saints from generations ago grew to understand this profound perspective is so very encouraging.

Bullinger's thoughtful undertaking of this deeper understanding, as presented in his Q&A writings from a *Things to Come* issue dated 1913, as well as Russell H. Schaefer's obvious understanding of the need to move beyond Acts in a 1964 article in *Scripture Research* are significant examples from godly men who placed Scripture study at the top of their priorities. Keep up the good work of exposing the logic of this eye-opening understanding. I'm learning again. – *IN*

I've been listening to some of your [YouTube videos](#). We are definitely on the same journey. ... I came into this quest by, first, E.W. Bullinger, and then by Otis Sellers, whose works I consumed. ... This right division has led me to the understanding of Universal Reconciliation – among many other things. – *England*

In "Tidbits #35" [[BSN #912](#)] "Dead TO Sins" by Knoch is FANTASTIC, as is the article "The Delusion of Free Will" by Sam Harris (in the Editor's Desk). It's really sad that only the [Concordant](#) has this translation distinction as it reinforces absolute sovereignty (via pre-down-casting¹ election, which in itself repudiates "free-will"). ... Man's faulty translations disrupt the Light inherent in this flow, bringing in the presumptive darkness of the false perception of human sovereignty over Father's Spirit (breath) of Life which resides in every living creature. It's amazing how easily a translation can be corrupted. – *SD*

1. [*Editor:*] For more information about the "down-casting," see: – [The Disruption of the World](#) (also see the [order form](#) under "Compilations").

I've found your latest two *BSN*'s quite informative and helpful in clarifying God's administrations [*The Seven Administrations*: [BSN #891](#), [BSN #892](#); [Video](#)]. ... Thank you for equipping and building up the Body of Christ. My "realization" continues to ever increase, and your resource materials and books are a major part of that. After spending nearly sixty years neck deep in Christianity/Churchianity, I was given *eyes to see* in the Spring of 2014. It was like somebody reached in and turned on a light bulb in the darkness of my understanding. I can remember the exact moment as vividly as if it was yesterday. ... I can't begin to tell you how greatly I have benefited from your writings and publications. – *MO*

God is sovereign – completely in charge of everything that happens, everything that comes our way. [True and lasting joy] requires that we know God and trust in Him, believing that whatever He brings on our path will in the long run be for our own well-being, even if it is not what we desire at the time. It requires resting in God and being contented in all circumstances. – *South Africa*

I must say that my recent coming to understand that Paul's Acts period Body of Christ group were indeed considered proselytes has really helped me to understand all of Paul's epistles in a different and more clear light.

I can't believe it has taken me 14 years to get to a situation where I am actually satisfied when I read the New Testament. This is largely due to all of your hard work and study with the *Bible Student's Notebook*. You have no idea the good you have done. Thanks to you I still have a little hair left on my head. Without you I would have scratched it all off. – *TN*

Thanks for the [Daily Email Goodies](#) about [Religious Fear-Mongers](#). I've heard many of them during my life. Some are outright hilarious. Some spread fear in a subtle way which is usually connected to the subject of religion. When I understood what Apostle Paul meant when Paul said that he completes the Word of God (Colossians 1:25), I now know God has not called any apostles, evangelists, pastors or ministers since Paul's day because of the setting aside of Israel for this era of Grace. ... As such I pay them no attention. – *FL*

I am an avid follower of [Study Shelf](#) and also so appreciate the [Daily Email Goodies](#) as well, thank you! I just watched your very well done, concise and pinpoint explanation of the scriptural content of the [Seven Administrations](#) (dispensations, economies) video you so superbly developed. I am wondering if you have the video in a printed format as it would be a real positive addition not only to my library, but I am sure thousands of others would benefit from the context of the Dispensations in the manner in which you have captured for release. – **ID**

[**Editor:**] The printed format is now available at [StudyShelf](#) (also see the [order form](#)).

Mid-Acts believers magnify “*The Mystery*” as the “be all and end all” of Father’s revelation to Paul, when actually *the revelation of the Pleroma* is the capstone of Paul’s epistles, making “*The Christ*” the glory of Father’s Pauline revelation rather than “*The Mystery*” which is simply requisite foundational truth to a deeper understanding of Christ Himself. He is the “be all and end all”! – **SD**

Prompted by your last couple of *BSNs*, I thought I’d share a little something with you. Sometimes, when I’m reading the *Concordant Version*, or other writings that deal with the Body of Christ as Christ’s *complement*, when I come across the word “*complement*” I read it to myself as “*complementement*.” I am well aware

that “*complementement*” is not a word, but reading it to myself that way helps reinforce in my feeble mind what is actually being said. Thanks again for all that you do. – **MO**

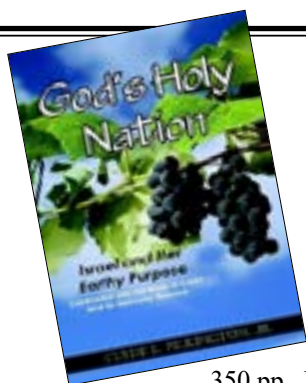
I am blown away at the selection of books and information that you have available. Your operation is much more involved than I understood at first. ... I am learning more than I ever thought. All of those verses in Scripture that I overlooked and that are never mentioned in mainstream Christianity. ...

Your videos are watched sometimes till 3 am. I can’t shut them off. You have a great way of cutting through the technicalities in your presentations. I thought I learned much from Bullinger, and I did, but your books are a “ride on a rocket.”

If so many are saved by believing in Christ’s sacrifice and resurrection according to the Scriptures but lack further understanding, it seems like there will be 99% privates in God’s army for the Celestial campaign.² – **MI**

BSN

2. Yes, you are so right that there are mostly “privates” in God’s Celestial occupation! We will have a lot of educating and training to do, not only among the Celestials, but with our staff (the Body of Christ)! – **CLP**



God’s Holy Nation – Israel and Her Earthly Purpose Contrasted with the Body of Christ and Its Heavenly Purpose

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Israel plays a key role in God’s plan of the ages. Though currently she has been set aside “*until the times of the nations be fulfilled,*” He is by no means done with her.

350 pp., PB

See [order form](#) under
“*Clyde Pilkington.*”

Today, God is operating His purpose in the ecclesia – the Church, the Body of Christ. The Scriptures provide us with the clear, critical distinction between God’s *earthly* nation and Christ’s *celestial* body.

Christendom, however, has diminished Israel’s divine significance in an attempt to advance their artificial homogenization of Scripture’s grand theme, thus obscuring the glorious evangel of our day – “*the Good News of the Happy God*” committed to the trust of Paul, our Apostle.

This work highlights some of the more prominent distinctions which belong to God’s literal, physical, earthly nation. In so doing, it is our desire to allow the reader to see more clearly God’s dealings with God’s favored nation, so that they may in turn embrace a *far greater* calling and purpose.