



# Bible Student's Notebook™

## The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume 38  
Issue 947

# Characteristics of the Church of the Mystery

## (and those Believers Outside of the Church of the Mystery)

by — Stanislas Van Mierlo (1888-1962)

### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CHURCH OF THE MYSTERY

It is according to the purpose of God BEFORE the casting down of the world (Ephesians 1:4; 3:11).

It begins with the revelation of the great mystery by Paul (Ephesians 3:2-9; 4:11-12; Colossians 1:25-26).

The "middle wall" has been broken down. Israel has been set aside as God's people, with no distinction between them and the nations (Ephesians 2:11-15; 3:2-9. Colossians 3:11).

It interrupted the fulfillment of prophecy and the announcement of Israel's Kingdom (Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:13, 25-26).

It has Christ as its Head (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18).

Its place is in the "supreme heaven" (regions), "far above" everything (Ephesians 1:3, 20-23; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12; Philippians 3:17-20).

The ordinances have been nullified. There are no forms, holidays, priests; no earthly temple (Ephesians 2:5-6, 12-15; Colossians 2:14-23; Philippians 3:2-3).



It has Spirit baptism only, and true spiritual circumcision alone (Ephesians 4:4-6; 5:18; Colossians 2:11-13.)

It is a newly created joint-body, not the development of an earlier one (Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:15; 3:2-9).

Its members are no longer called Jew and Gentile. Nor are the non-members divided into Israelites and nations (Ephesians 2:12-14; 4:17).

It is a firstfruits to the condition where there is no sin (Ephesians 1:4; 22-23; 2:16).

It is the recipient of abundant grace (Ephesians 1:7; 2:5-6:8).

It has no history, for it does not belong to this world.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BELIEVERS OUTSIDE OF THE CHURCH OF THE MYSTERY

[Those prior to the Secret Administration]

(see CHARACTERISTICS, page 8000)

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### 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*

### Bible Student's Notebook™

PO Box 265, Windber, PA 15963

Office: (800) 784-6010 – Local: (814) 701-0063

[bsn@studyshef.com](mailto:bsn@studyshef.com)

Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr. – Editor

André Sneidar – Executive Editor

Associate Editors: J. Blake Botner, Steve Martin, Mark Peters, Mark Vogt

Assistant Editors: James Fine, Gary Ingison

### Managers and Assistants

Clyde L. Pilkington, III, Nathan H. Pilkington, Stephen Hill

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# “The God of All Comfort”

## Part 8

by — Hannah Whitall Smith (1832–1911)

### Key Points:

To all words of discouragement, this is the answer: “I will be with thee.”..... 7996  
We can only be strong in him when we are weak in ourselves..... 7997  
The question is not whether we are unable, but whether God is

because we are not the ones who have to fight..... 7997  
Discouragement is not a fruit of humility, but of pride..... 7998  
There is only one argument that can meet discouragement, and that is the argument of God..... 7999

### Sources of Discouragement

*The soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way* (Numbers 21:4).

#### DISCOURAGEMENT RISING FROM OUR INABILITIES

Either inwardly or outwardly, and oftentimes both, things *look* all wrong, and there seems to be no hope of escape. Causes for discouragement seem so legitimate to the short-sightedness of our own incapacity.



Moses seemingly had plenty of cause for discouragement. Yet notice how the Lord answered Moses. He did not try to convince him that he really was eloquent, or that his tongue was not slow of speech. He passed by all of this as being of no account whatever, and simply called attention to the fact that, since He had made man’s mouth, He would Himself be with the mouth He had made, even if Moses did have all of the infirmities of speech of which he had complained.

*And the Lord said unto him, “Who hath made man’s mouth? or Who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.”<sup>3</sup>*

Moses is an illustration of this. The Lord called him to lead the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; and Moses, looking at his own natural infirmities and weaknesses, was discouraged and tried to excuse himself:

*I am not eloquent, but I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue.<sup>1</sup> They will not believe me nor hearken unto my voice.<sup>2</sup>*

When the Word of the Lord came to Jeremiah telling him that He had chosen him to be a prophet to the nations, Jeremiah felt himself to be entirely unequal to such a work, and said,

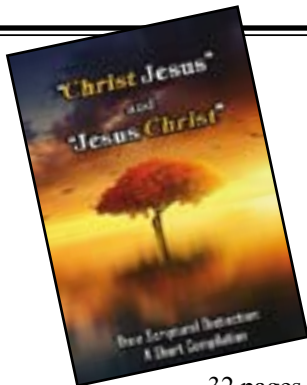
*Ah, Lord God, behold, I cannot speak, for I am a child.<sup>4</sup>*

1. Exodus 4:10.

2. Exodus 4:1.

3. Exodus 4:11-12.

4. Jeremiah 1:6.



32 pages

### “Christ Jesus” and “Jesus Christ” – Their Scriptural Distinction (A Short Compilation)

Most students of Scripture know nothing of the distinction between “Christ Jesus” and “Jesus Christ.” What an eye-opening discovery such a finding is! Authors include: E.W. Bullinger (1837-1913), A.E. Knoch (1874-1965) and Charles H. Welch (1880-1967). See [order form](#) under “Compilations.”

Yet the Lord answered:

“Say not, ‘I am a child’; for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatever I say to thee, thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee to deliver thee,” saith the Lord.<sup>5</sup>

Gideon is another illustration. The Lord had called him to undertake the deliverance of His people from the oppression of the Midianites, and had said to him,

Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hands of the Midianites: have I not sent thee?<sup>6</sup>

Yet, Gideon, looking at himself and his own deficiencies, naturally became discouraged, and said,

Wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house.<sup>7</sup>

Other men, he felt, who had power and influence, might perhaps accomplish this great work, but not one so poor and insignificant as himself.

How sensible and reasonable it seems! But what did the Lord think of it?

And the Lord said unto him, “Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.”<sup>8</sup>

5. Jeremiah 1:7-8.
6. Judges 6:14.
7. Judges 6:15.
8. Judges 6:16.

He gave him simply and only this promise:

*Surely I will be with thee.*

Not one word of encouragement did He give Gideon, nor does He give us, as to our own capacities or fitness, but merely the bare statement of the fact, “I will be with thee.”

To all words of discouragement this is the invariable answer: “I will be with thee.” The omnipresent and omniscient God is our Creator and Redeemer, our Strength and Wisdom, and will be with us through everything.

One would think that, in the face of such assertions as these, not even the most fainthearted among us could find any loophole for discouragement. But discouragement comes in many subtle forms, and our spiritual enemies attack us in many disguises. Our own special make-up or temperament can sometimes be one of the most common and insidious of our enemies.

Other people, who are made differently, can be cheerful and courageous, so we think; but it is right that we should be discouraged when we see the sort of people we are, how foolish, how helpless, how unfit to grapple with any enemies!

There would indeed be ample cause for discouragement if we were to be called upon to fight our battles ourselves. We would be right in thinking that we could not do it. But if the Lord is with us, it puts an entirely different complexion on the matter, and our want of ability to fight becomes an advantage instead



## *The Unveiled Glory*

— Hannah Hurnard (1905-1990)

and

## *My Unexpected Discovery*

— Hannah Whitall Smith (1832-1911)

64 pages

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

Hannah Whitall Smith (1832-1911) was the author of the classic work, *A Christian’s Secret of a Happy Life*. Both famous Christian authors discuss their coming to see and embrace the salvation of all.

of a disadvantage.

We can be strong in Him only when we are weak in ourselves, and our weakness, therefore, is in reality our greatest strength.

When Paul, the apostle, looked upon what could so easily have been a great source of discouragement to him, his thorn in the flesh, God told him,

*My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness.*<sup>9</sup>

Listen carefully to faith's resulting declaration:

*Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.*<sup>10</sup>

The children of Israel can give us a lesson here. After the Lord had dramatically delivered them out of Egypt and had brought them to the borders of the promised land, Moses urged them to go up and possess it.

*Behold, the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee: go up and possess it, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged.*<sup>11</sup>

However, the circumstances were so discouraging, and they felt themselves to be so helpless, that they did not believe God would really do all He had said; and they murmured in their tents, and declared that it must be because the Lord hated them that He had brought them out of Egypt in order to deliver them into the hands of their enemies.

They said,

*Whither shall we go up? Our brethren have discouraged our heart, saying, "The people is greater and taller than we; the cities are great*

9. II Corinthians 12:9.

10. II Corinthians 12:9-10.

11. Deuteronomy 1:21.



## *The Tracts of Joseph E. Kirk*

by — Joseph E. Kirk (1903-1974)

94 pages (See [order form](#) under "Kirk.")

Kirk was gifted at condensing Scripture truths into short understandable presentations. This is a collection of his widely circulated tracts. They are great learning tools of truth.

*and walled up to heaven; and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakims there.*<sup>12</sup>

When we read the report of the spies we are not surprised at their discouragement; and we can even see how they would have felt that courage under such circumstances would be only foolhardiness. For, the spies had declared,

*The land through which we have gone to search it is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof: and all the men that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.*<sup>13</sup>

Nothing could have seemed more humble than for them to look upon themselves as poor, good-for-nothing grasshoppers; and true humility would have seemed to teach that it would be the height of presumption for grasshoppers to try to conquer giants.

We also often feel ourselves to be but grasshoppers in the face of the giants of trouble that assail us, and we think ourselves justified in being discouraged. **Yet the question is not whether we are grasshoppers, but whether God is; for it is not we who have to fight these giants, but God.**

Moses reminded the Israelites of this. He assured them that they had no need to be afraid of even the sons of the Anakims, for the Lord their God would fight for them. He reminded them of past deliver-

12. Deuteronomy 1:28.

13. Numbers 13:32-33.

ances, and asked them if they did not remember how that “*in the wilderness the Lord thy God bear thee as a man doth bear his son in all the way that ye went.*”<sup>14</sup>

We too often look at our weakness instead of looking at the Lord’s strength, and become so discouraged as to sink into such “*anguish of spirit.*”<sup>15</sup> Our souls long to enter into divine rest; but giants, and great cities “*walled up to Heaven,*”<sup>16</sup> seem to stand in our pathway.

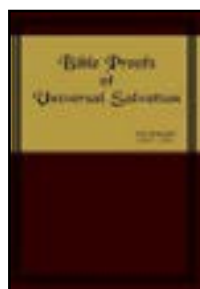
Yet Israel’s psalmist declared by faith,

*Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident ... For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion: in the secret of His tabernacle He shall hide me. He shall set me up upon a rock.*<sup>17</sup>

### DISCOURAGEMENT RISING FROM THE FEAR OF MEN

Another very subtle cause for discouragement is to be found in what is called the fear of man. There seems to exist in this world a company of beings called “they” who lord it over life with an iron hand of control. What will “they” say? What will “they” think? These are among the most frequent questions that assail. At every turn this seemingly omnipotent and ubiquitous “they” stands in our way to discourage us and make us afraid.

14. Deuteronomy 1:31.  
15. Exodus 6:9.  
16. Deuteronomy 1:28.  
17. Psalm 27:3-5.



### ***Bible Proofs of Universal Salvation***

by — J.W. (John Wesley) Hanson

137 pages

This work presents Bible proof of universal salvation, containing the principle passages of Scripture that teach the final holiness and happiness of all mankind. The author attempts to present the prominent considerations that are contained in the Bible in support of the final redemption of all souls. See [order form](#) under “Hanson.”

This form of discouragement is apt to come under the subtle disguise of a due consideration for the opinion of others; but it is especially dangerous because it exalts this “they” into the place of God and esteems “their” opinions above Him. The only remedy here, as in all other forms of discouragement, is the simple reiteration of the fact that God is with us.

*“Be not afraid of their faces; for I am with thee to deliver thee,” saith the Lord.*<sup>18</sup>

*For He hath said, “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.” So that we may boldly say, “Thy Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.”*<sup>19</sup>

### DISCOURAGEMENT RISING FROM OUR FAILURES

There is, however, one sort of discouragement that is very common – the one that arises from our own failures. It was from this sort of discouragement that the children of Israel suffered after their defeat at Ai.<sup>20</sup> So great was their discouragement that it is said, “*wherefore the hearts of the people melted and became as water.*”<sup>21</sup> Discouragement and despair would seem the only proper and safe condition in light of our failures. But the Lord thinks otherwise, for He said to Joshua, “*Get thee up; wherefore liest thou upon thy face?*”<sup>22</sup>

Fenelon says concerning this,

*Discouragement is not a fruit of humility, but of pride, and nothing can be worse. It springs from a secret love of our own excellence. We are hurt at feeling what we are. If we become discouraged, we are the more enfeebled, and from our reflections on our own imperfections, a chagrin<sup>23</sup> arises that is often worse than the imperfection itself. Poor nature longs from self-love to behold itself perfect; it is vexed that it is not so, it is impatient, haughty and out of temper with itself and with everybody else.*<sup>24</sup>

18. Jeremiah 1:8.  
19. Hebrews 13:5-6.  
20. Joshua 7:2 (Ai was a city of Canaan).  
21. Joshua 7:5.  
22. Joshua 7:10.  
23. *i.e.*, embarrassment.  
24. François Fénelon, French theologian and writer (1651–1715).

## DISCOURAGEMENT IS AGAINST GOD

Discouragement, from whatever source it may come, produces many sad results. One of its very worst is that it leads people to murmur, and to speak against God.

When the children of Israel were “discouraged because of the way,”<sup>25</sup> we are told that they “spoke against God,”<sup>26</sup> and asked all sorts of God-dishonoring questions. If we could examine the causes of the murmuring thoughts that sometimes beset us, we could find that they always begin in discouragement. The truth is that discouragement is really, in its essence, a speaking against God, for it necessarily implies some sort of a failure on His part.

The psalmist recognizes this, and says concerning the discouraging questions His people asked in the days of their wilderness wandering,

*Yes, they spoke against God; they said, “Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?”<sup>27</sup>*

## DISCOURAGEMENT IS CONTAGIOUS

Another grievous quality in discouragement is its contagiousness. Nothing is more catching than discouragement. When the spies sent out by Moses brought up, as we have seen, an “evil report of the

25. Numbers 21:4.

26. Numbers 21:5.

27. Psalm 78:19.

land,”<sup>28</sup> and told of the giants there, they so “discouraged the hearts of their brethren” that the people “lifted up their voices and cried,”<sup>29</sup> and utterly refused to go into the very land which the Lord had given them, and which they had started out to possess.

Yet, “Be of good cheer”<sup>30</sup> is the instruction of the Lord for His disciples, always and under all circumstances; and He founded this command on the tremendous fact that He had overcome the world.

## THE SOLUTION FOR DISCOURAGEMENT

There is only one argument that can meet discouragement, and that is the argument of **God**. When David was in the midst of what were perhaps the most discouraging moments of his life, when he had found his city burned, and his wives stolen, and he and the men with him had wept until they had no more power to weep; and when his men, exasperated at their misfortunes, spoke of stoning him, then we are told,

*But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.<sup>31</sup>*

He repeatedly asks himself this question:

*Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me?<sup>32</sup>*

28. Numbers 13:32; 14:37.

29. Numbers 14:1.

30. Matthew 9:2; 14:27; Mark 6:50; John 6:33.

31. I Samuel 30:6.

32. Psalm 42:5, 11; 43:5.



322 pages

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

## The Unselfishness of God and How I Discovered It

The autobiography of Hannah Whitall Smith (1832–1911)

Smith was the author of the famed *A Christian's Secret of a Happy Life* (1875). She was influential in the “higher life” and “holiness” movements. Remarkably, she would come to see and embrace the *salvation of all*. She included a description of this journey and understanding in this autobiography published in 1903.

Not surprisingly, her autobiography would subsequently be republished, but with her accounts of coming to the conviction of the *salvation of all* having been removed. This publication is the complete and unabridged facsimile of the original edition.

Yet each time he answers himself with the argument of God:

*Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise Him, Who is the Health of my countenance, and my God.*<sup>33</sup>

He does not analyze his disquietude, or try to argue it away, but he turns at once to the Lord and begins to praise Him.

33. Psalm 42:5, 11.

**CHARACTERISTICS** (continued from front page)

They have no place in the “supreme heaven.” They have their blessings and kingdom on Earth (Matthew 5:5; John 18:36; Acts 3:25).

Their hope is the resurrection from the dead and Christ setting up the kingdom (Matthew 6:10; 16:27-28; 24:29-31, 37, 39; Luke 20:35-36; John 4:23; 11:25-26; Acts 26:6; 28:20; I Corinthians 1:7; 6:9-10; 11:26; 15:23-24, 51-52; 16:22; II Corinthians 5:1-2; I Thessalonians 2:19; 3:13; 4:15-17; 5:1-6, 23; II Thessalonians 2:8; Hebrews 6:18).

They have *aiōnios* life in their foreground, an expression that does not appear in Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians (Matthew 6:13; 19:16-22; 21:19; 25:46; Luke 18:30; 20:35-36; Romans 6:22-23; Galatians 5:25; 6:8).

They must persevere to enter the kingdom (Matthew 10:22; 24:13-14; Luke 20:35-36; II Thessalonians 1:4, 5-10).

This is the only way. Discouragement flees the omnipresent and omnipotent God.

(to be continued)

For a short biographical sketch of Hannah Whitall Smith, see: – Editor’s Desk, [Bible Student’s Notebook #921](#).

**TOPICS:**

**Major:** Comfort; Discouragement;  
**Minor:** Believer’s Walk

They have the conditional forgiveness of sins (Matthew 6:12; Mark. 11:25-26; I John 1:9). **BSN**

— *The Purpose of the Ages*  
(edited excerpt)

**Stanislas Van Mierlo** (1888-1962), born in Antwerp, Belgium was a student of E.W. Bullinger (1837-1913), an associate of A.E. Knoch (1874-1965) and Charles H. Welch (1880-1967), and co-editor along with G.J. Pauptit (1889-1962) of the Dutch monthly periodical *Uit de Schriften* (*Out of the Scriptures*, 1920-1960), as well the author of several books, including *The Divine Plan and its Realization*, and co-author of *About the Mystery: Some Brief Explanations of the Great Mystery Revealed to the Apostle Paul*.

Material available by Van Mierlo from previous *Bible Student’s Notebooks*:

- *The Present Dispensation*, [BSN 840](#);
- *John’s Gospel and Paul’s Gospel*, [BSN 842](#);
- *The Expectation of the Present Dispensation*, [BSN 922](#);
- *Did Christ Die in Our Place?* [BSN 938](#).

**TOPICS:**

**Major:** Colossians; Ecclesia; Ephesians; Mystery  
**Minor:** Calling



## *I Choose! Living Life to Its Fullest*

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by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

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185 pages

These “choices” are not to be confused with so-called “free will.” At the close of the book the author will reveal that our “choices” are nothing short of God’s sovereign decree in our lives.

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