



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume XII
Issue 277

Tailor-Made Trials

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

All is of God (Romans 11:36).

The steps of a man are ordered by the LORD (Psalm 37:23).

All things work together for good to them who love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28).

So, you're in a rough spot? No worries: it is a place especially designed for you by God. Your trial has been tailor-made just for you by the loving hands of your Father. He knows exactly what you need to bring you to the next place in your growth and life. After all, it is He Who has been steadily working on you since day one. For you are "His workmanship," "His achievement" (Ephesians 2:10); and what He has started He will faithfully finish. We are, therefore,



Confident of this very thing, that He Who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:6).

What a place of rest faith brings us to. We are exactly where God wants us to be – always have been, always will be. The trial in which you now find yourself has been carefully tailor-made for you. God is continuing the steady development of His molding of your life. He is smart, really smart; He knows exactly what He is doing; He always has, He always will. He also knows exactly what you need at this

moment in your life – way more than what you think you need. This trial you endure, as hard as it may appear to be, is not an accident; it is not a mistake; it is not some foreign intrusion into your heart and soul to do you harm, for which Father must deliver you. No, this trial is His master-work specifically designed to meet your needs. You are His "good work" and He is skillfully employing "all things" – the "good" as well as the "evil" – to bring about His grand purpose in you, resulting in a glorious finish.

Relax. Rest. Thank Him for His wisdom in placing you in this tailor-made trial. Revel in His all-encompassing, never-failing love for and care of you. Remember that Father knows best.

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Bible Student's Notebook™

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

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This weekly publication (52 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation of God's purpose to 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 since the world began" (Romans 16:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the church, the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Romans 11:13);
- 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 forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14);
 - identity 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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The Coming Judgeship of the Saints

by – F.E. Howitt
Hamilton, Ontario (1914)

Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world? (I Corinthians 6:2).

Do you not know that we shall judge messengers? (I Corinthians 6:3).

These verses form the basis of the remarks that I wish to share with you. They bring before us the subject of the coming judgeship of the saints. Notice, first of all, how Paul the apostle introduces this statement: “Do you not know?” as though he would say, “Is it possible that you have forgotten this truth? Is it possible that you have overlooked the fact that there is this wonderful destiny in store for you, the rulership of the world?” If Paul showed his great surprise at the forgetfulness of the Christians at Corinth, what would he say, I wonder, if he came amongst us today?

THE IMPORT OF THIS JUDGESHIP

The first question that comes before us is this: What are we to understand by that term “judge”? What is the function implied in the rulership spoken of here? I think it means, first of all, the exercise of *judicial* power; that is, the natural conclusion we should come to, and I think it is quite legitimate to say that it does mean that the saints will be called upon by-and-by to exercise judgeship.

You will remember that at one time in Israel’s history God appointed “judges.” We read in Acts 13:20,

God gave them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years.

The judges that God gave to Israel of old were practically rulers. They were not merely judges who tried cases and adjudicated matters, but they were actual rulers, almost kings. This significance also is involved in Paul’s statement. The saints are to be not only the judges, but rulers.

I think we may go a step further. When we look at the New Testament we discover that this rulership is

to be jointly held with Jesus Christ.

And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17).

The saints of God are to be rulers with Christ, administrators under Him. Oh, what a prospect that holds out to us!

Possibly you have heard the story of Queen Victoria, when she was a child. There came a time when her parents felt that it would be wise for her to know that possibly she might someday be Queen of England. Her governess, the Countess Lehzen, therefore, was instructed to make that fact known to her. She took this method of leading her to that knowledge: she inserted in her history lessons a list of the Hanoverian Kings, at the end of which she wrote the name Victoria. When in her study, the Princess came upon the insertion, the Countess, her governess, watched the effect closely. The Princess read down the page, and finally her eyes came upon her own name. She observed it very attentively. Then, looking up at the Countess, she said, “Can it really be that I am to be Queen of England?” The Countess replied, “Yes, in all probability that will be true.” After a moment’s pause the Princess said, “Then I will be good.”

She had not been an apt scholar before; she rather rebelled against the tediousness of study; but now that she realized how necessary it was that she should learn, how absolutely necessary it was that she should qualify herself to be the Queen of England, then it was no hardship, and she began to apply herself with all her power and ability.

Would to God we could all get that same inspiration! If I could only impress upon you the fact that God is calling you to be kings and queens! If I could only

make you believe it, it would transform many lives. It would make us all far more zealous than we are, and would give us a deeper interest in the things of God. It is a fact that God is calling us to this high destiny; therefore let us seize the opportunity, and prepare ourselves, qualify ourselves, by His grace to share in it.

THE SCRIPTURAL BASIS FOR THIS JUDGESHIP

When we turn to the Word of God we find that this is not an isolated passage. There are a great many intimations throughout the Scriptures that refer to the coming kingship, the coming rulership of the saints.

Beloved, I think there is no doubt we have not entertained this hope more vividly than we have, simply for the very same reason that the Corinthian believers did not entertain it. Doubtless they had not studied the Word of God as they should; but there was more excuse for their lack of study than there is for us today, because everybody may study the Bible today; Bibles can be had anywhere for almost nothing, and if any of us are ignorant about this wonderful fact, it is only our own fault.

THE OCCUPANTS OF THIS JUDGESHIP

The question arises, "Who will reign?" It is a very important question, a very solemn question. It should be a most searching question, and I do hope and pray that God will enable me to impress it upon everyone here, because, beloved, it will mean so much to you individually if you will only think of it and act upon it. Who are to reign with Jesus Christ? All of the saints? Oh no, by no means. Let us turn back again to that eighth chapter of Romans, looking now at verse 17:

And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ: if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

There will be no glorification, and there will be no ascent to the throne; there will be no crowning and there will be no kingdom for us unless we do suffer with Jesus Christ.

The easy modern ideas of the present day are not calculated to bring about such a wonderful consummation; and Christians today are content to take things very easily. The Lord wants us to be sharers in His work; and it will be those who are willing to share in it and those who are willing to suffer in sharing in it, upon whom this wonderful privilege will be bestowed.

Look at another text.

*Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus **with** eternal [eonian] glory (II Timothy 2:10-12).*

Not all of the saved will reign; but the salvation that we should desire and seek after diligently is salvation with eternal [eonian] glory. Let us read on:

It is a faithful saying: "For if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him: if we deny Him, He also will deny us."

Without the suffering there will not be the reign. No cross, no crown.

Look at the picture, the type in the case of David. You remember the persons who went after David, to the cave of Adullam. You find the story in the twenty-second chapter of I Samuel. Read it a moment!

David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him. And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men.

A wonderfully significant number! Notice the three "d's" by which these men are distinguished. They were those who were in *debt*, in *distress*, and *discontented*.

Look at the twenty-third chapter of II Samuel. ►

Here you have a wonderful statement of what happened when David finally reached the throne, and was publicly acclaimed king. What did he do for those men? He made them the chief rulers in his kingdom. Look at this verse for a moment:

These are the names of the mighty men whom David had.

Then he goes on to name them; and you read in :13,

Three of the thirty chief men went down, and came to David in the harvest time unto the cave of Adullam: and the troop of the Philistines pitched in the valley of Rephaim.

So these very men who went to David in the hour of his *distress*, in the day of his *rejection*, who were willing to *suffer with him*, who were willing to do anything *for his sake*, were the very ones who, when David came to his throne, had bestowed upon them the high positions in the administration of his kingdom. So will it be, beloved, when Jesus comes.

THE TEST FOR THIS JUDGESHIP

For we are laborers together with God: you are God's husbandry, you are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire (I Corinthians 3:9-15).

You understand the figure the apostle is using here. He is comparing our life work to a building. He says we are all builders, building every day of our lives. He tells us that when the building is completed, there

will come a great inspection. All of our life actions will be brought under review in the presence of God. I fancy that the fire which is to try every man's work is just the presence of God. Our God is a consuming fire; and when we stand in the light of the Holy One, and that light searches us through and through, it will reveal the actual character of everything we have done, thought and said.

Let us examine for a moment how we ought to build. You notice that the apostle speaks of various kinds of material with which we can build: gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay and stubble. Three of these are imperishable material, and three are perishable. Fire will destroy wood, hay or stubble. Fire only makes gold and silver more pure, and precious stones more radiant and beautiful.

We do not want to build with wood, hay and stubble. What are they? These are all dead things. You know, the apostle speaks of "*dead works*" – not "*wicked works*," but "*dead works*" – works that are good in themselves, but which are dead in the sight of God, utterly useless and powerless. There are thousands of Christians who are only doing "*dead works*" today. Much, very much, I might almost say by far the greater amount, of our "*Church work*" is simply an accumulation of "*dead works*," and it is not producing the fruitage God wants it to produce.

The wood, hay and stubble are all dead things. Wood is dead tree, hay is dead grass, stubble is dead wheat stalks. Hay or grass is the symbol of the flesh – "*all flesh is grass*." Chaff and stubble, you know, are the constant symbols of Satan and his work.

I am persuaded better things of you than that which is perishing.

In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor, and some to dishonor (II Timothy 2:20).

The Sleep of Death

And the Awakening of Resurrection

by – Joseph E. Kirk

With death on a rampage endangering everyone and laying so many low there is real comfort in knowing what God has revealed concerning the state and future of the dead. Assurance of understanding (Colossians 2:2), assurance of faith (Hebrews 10:22), and assurance of hope (Hebrews 6:11), spring from the truth on this subject.

Throughout the Scriptures death is referred to as sleep. Of the martyr Stephen it is written,

*And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." And when he had said this, **HE fell asleep**. Now Saul was consenting to his death. ... and devout men buried Stephen, and made great lamentation over him (Acts 7:54-8:3).*

Again it is written:

*For David, after he had in his own generation served the counsel of God, **fell asleep**, and was laid unto his fathers and saw corruption (Acts 13:36).*

To give comfort concerning the dead in Christ it is written in Thessalonians:

*But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning those who **fall asleep**; that you sorrow not, even as the rest, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so those also who have **fallen asleep** will God through Jesus bring forth with Him (I Thessalonians 4:13-14, literal translation. See also verses 15-17).*

The Psalmist prayed,

*Lighten mine eyes, lest I **sleep the sleep of death** (Psalm 13:3).*

Other references to death as a sleep may be found in I Corinthians 11:30; 15:6, 18, 51; II Peter 3:4; Jeremiah 51:39, 57, etc.

Conversely, throughout the Scriptures resurrection is referred to as an awakening. To His disciples the Lord Jesus said,

*"Our friend Lazarus is **fallen asleep**; but I go that I may **awake HIM out of sleep** ..." Now Jesus had spoken of his death: but they thought that He spake of taking rest in sleep. Jesus therefore said unto them plainly, "Lazarus is dead" (John 11:11-14).*

God's Word to Daniel along this line was,

*And many of them that **sleep in the dust** of the earth shall **awake**, some to age-during life, and some to shame and age-during contempt (Daniel 12:2, literal translation).*

Notice how the awakening of resurrection is made necessary unto the age-during life and age-during contempt. Notice, too, how death is said to be a sleep with reference to the wicked as well as the righteous. See also Jeremiah 51:39, 57 where the word "perpetual" should in both instances be "age-during" as it is the Hebrew word *olam* in the original.

In the New Testament three different Greek words are used in connection with resurrection.

First, *zōopoieō*, meaning "to give life or make alive." It is sometimes translated "*quicken*" (See John 5:21; Romans 4:17; 8:11; I Timothy 6:13, etc.).

Second, *egeirō*, which means “to rouse, stir up, raise.” It is used with reference to rousing the living or the dead (See Romans 13:11; Matthew 8:25; Luke 7:22; I Corinthians 15:52; Matthew 24:7; Acts 13:22).

Third, *anastasis*, which means “to stand up, or arise” usually translated “*resurrection*” (See John 5:29; 11:24, 25; I Peter 1:3, etc.).

All three of these words are used in the following passage:

But now hath Christ been roused [egeirō] from the dead, the firstfruit of them that are asleep. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection [anastasis] of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive [zōopoieō] (I Corinthians 15:20-22).

Two of these words are used by our Lord in John 5:21:

For just as the Father waketh up [egeirō] the dead and quickeneth [zōopoieō] them, in like manner the Son also ... (Rotherham's Translation).

To know that the sleep of death brings rest from the cares, pains and sorrows of this life brings real comfort in the time of bereavement.

Further comfort is to be found in the fact that the sleep of death gives a velocity to time similar to the velocity of light or thought. Sound sleep causes time to pass more rapidly than any other human experience. As far as the consciousness is concerned the moment of awakening seems immediately to follow the moment of falling asleep. So it is with the sleep of death. From the standpoint of the consciousness, the moment of resurrection will seem immediately to follow the moment of death regardless of the lapse of time between.

This means that the return of Christ and the resurrection of the dead in Christ are no further away than the moment of death as far as the consciousness is concerned. That grand reunion

with loved ones and the meeting of the Lord in the air is not far away for those who are Christ's.

Please let no one think that we are teaching that death is the coming of the Lord, for that is not what we mean at all. The Lord Jesus will come literally and in person one of these days. At that time He will change the living who are in Christ and will raise the dead in Christ (I Thessalonians 4:13-18; I Corinthians 15:50-58). We are only seeking to point out that the sleep of death obliterates time for the dead. The dead have no more consciousness of the time which passes while they sleep in death than they had of the time which passed before they were born.

For those out of Christ the fact that death is a sleep means that their salvation is no farther away than the length of this life plus the length of the life they will live when they are raised unto the judgment of the Great White Throne (Revelation 20:1-15). Their condemnation comes to its climax and consummation in their Second Death. Their vivification at the end of the eons will seem immediately to follow their Second Death.

The wrath of God is something not to be lightly esteemed (Romans 2:1-16); but to exaggerate it and extend it endlessly is to slander every attribute of God and belittle the saving work of Jesus Christ. The greatest comfort God's Word contains with reference to death is the assurance that Jesus Christ will ultimately impart His resurrection life to all and thus completely abolish death (I Corinthians 15:20-28; Romans 5:18-19).

The sleep of death is not of the body only. It is of the person and affects the consciousness. Sleep is not sleep at all except as consciousness fades out. Sound sleep is a complete blackout, or cessation of consciousness. Dreams occur only when a person is not soundly asleep.

The difference between the sleep of the living and the sleep of the dead is not in the state of consciousness. It is in the presence or absence of the spirit which is the life force.

Due to the presence of the spirit the functions of the body do not cease when the living sleep. The organs continue to do their work, but though the spirit is present and active the person is unconscious. This proves that the spirit and the consciousness are not identical.

In the sleep of death the spirit (not the consciousness but the *life force*) returns to God from whence it came at birth. As a result the functions of the body cease and the person is dead. In the words of Scripture,

And the dust returneth to the earth as it was, and the spirit returneth unto God Who gave it (Ecclesiastes 12:7; c.f. Acts 7:59 and Luke 23:46).

The sleep of death blacks out the consciousness until the awakening of resurrection. Hear what the Word of God says along this line:

*Praise ye Jehovah. Praise Jehovah, O my soul. While I live will I praise Jehovah: I will sing praises unto my God **while I have any being**. Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His spirit goeth forth, **he returneth to his earth**; in that very day **his thoughts perish*** (Psalm 146:1-4).

Again:

*Return, O Jehovah, deliver my soul: save me for Thy lovingkindness' sake. For **in death there is no remembrance of Thee**: In Sheol who shall give Thee thanks?* (Psalm 6:4-5).

For sheol cannot praise Thee, death cannot celebrate Thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for Thy truth (Isaiah 38:18).

The dead know not anything (Ecclesiastes 9:5).

*... the dead **lived not** until the thousand years should be finished [or until the time of their resurrection]* (Revelation 20:4-15).

These facts are so out of line with what most of us have had instilled in our minds from infancy

that they are hard to believe. However, if the basis of the popular belief is carefully examined, it will be discovered that it rests upon faulty translation, faulty interpretation and assumptions which are not true.

For example, it is assumed that the Scriptures everywhere teach the immortality of the soul. Exactly the opposite is true. The Scriptures definitely state that the soul dies (Psalm 78:50; Isaiah 53:12).

The word for immortality is found just three times in the original Scriptures. In those places we learn that Jesus Christ is the only One Who now has immortality (I Timothy 6:16), and that those who are Christ's will be made immortal when He returns (I Corinthians 15:51-58). In the *King James Version* the word immortality is found six times altogether because the translators rendered the word for incorruption "*immortality*" three times (See I Timothy 1:17; Romans 2:7; II Timothy 1:10).

An intense desire to live, coupled with the dread of death, make some reluctant to consider honestly and courageously all that God has revealed concerning death. The traditions of men seem more agreeable to the flesh, but they do not satisfy the inner man and they leave the heart and mind with a sense of foreboding and uneasiness.

Death is an ugly enemy with a painful sting (I Corinthians 15:26, 56). It is the condemnation of God (Romans 5:12, 18-19). It is the wages of sin (Romans 6:23). Man seeks to beautify it and make a friend of it. God will rid His creation of it by destroying it (I Corinthians 15:26). God's answer to and cure for death is resurrection (I Corinthians 15:20-28).

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