



# Bible Student's Notebook™

## *The Herald of His Grace*

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

Volume XVII  
Issue 411

## *Entrusting Others to God*

**Acts 20:32**

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

*I commit you to God (Darby).*

*I entrust you to God (Moffatt).*

*I give you into the care of God (BBE).*

When Paul left the saints at Ephesus he committed them to the care of God. Too often there are those who attempt to play “God” in peoples’ lives. Paul was not one of them. He not only entrusted the saints to God, but he did so to “*the Word of His grace*” which he knew was “*able to edify*” them.



you can’t judge the finished product when seeing it in some stage of its development. This is true of you and me, of our loved ones, of our friends, and fellow members of Christ’s Body – in fact, of all of God’s creation!

God, Who works “*all things after the counsel of His Own will*,” finds no challenge with our circumstances and lives – or of the lives of others.

Nothing poses an obstacle to Him – after all, He is the Almighty God.

Simply put, Paul trusted God with the saints. He trusted that they were *His* handiwork – *His* achievement. He trusted that God’s Word – and not just *any* word, but His Word of **grace** – was enough. He did not seek to lord over them or their faith.

Maturity, through acquaintance with God and His grace, brings one to a place of trust in God – that He is “*able to edify*” by His grace. It enables one to give others over to the care of God – to trust them *to* Him.

Some carry the heavy weight of others on their shoulder, as if somehow they were responsible for the direction and outcome of their lives, that somehow they were supposed to lead and guide their lives. Being “God” to someone is an especially hard job if you are not qualified. There is only One qualified for such a daunting task, and He already has all things squarely under His control. So, relax.

God is good at His job. Just like with any other work,

Relax with those whom God has placed in your life. God is God; He is in charge. He loves them just as unconditionally as He loves you. He is molding them, as surely as he is you – day-by-day – into *all* that He intends for them to be, regardless of what we may think we currently see.

Do not be tempted to play “God” in the lives of others. Entrust them to God. ■

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## **Bible Student's Notebook™**

*Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal*

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This free weekly electronic 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:
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  - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6);
  - adult sonship position (Galatians 4).

This publication is a joint effort of a few members of the body of Christ. It is a product of our individual lives and ministries together. We do not claim infallibility for its contents. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

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# The Spirits in Prison

## Part 2

by — A.E. Knoch (1874-1965)

*Wherefore He is saying, Ascending on high, He captures captivity and gives gifts to mankind. Now the He ascended, what is it except that He first descended also into the lower parts of the earth? He Who descends is the Same Who ascends also, up over all who are of the heavens, that He should be completing all. And the same One gives these, indeed, as apostles, yet these as prophets, yet these as evangelists, yet these as pastors and teachers (Ephesians 4:8-11).*

### CHRIST'S ASCENT AND DESCENT

I was taught that Christ, when He ascended up on high, led a multitude of captives with Him – that is, He descended into the lower parts of the earth, into one compartment of Hades, where the souls of the just were temporarily confined; and, in a hazy way, this was linked up with His so-called “descent into hell” to preach to spirit beings also. Yet as I came to know the Scriptures better, [the thought would not leave me,] What has this to do with Ephesians? Christ's actions are closely connected with the measure of grace given to each one of us. The passage goes right on and to the ecclesia, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers. Why introduce such utterly foreign ideas by “wherefore?”

It occurred to me that the quotation from Psalm 68:18 might account for the introduction of such incongruous matters by my teachers – but this was no help.

Instead, I found that the Psalm said nothing of captives, but rather of *captivity*. The only captivity suggested by the context is that of the law, since the passage reads,

*Jehovah is among them on Sinai in the holy place. Thou dost ascend on high. Thou dost capture captivity. Thou dost take gifts among mankind, And, indeed, the stubborn are for a tabernacle of the LORD, God.*



### THE CAPTIVITY OF THE LAW

On Sinai the people of Israel were brought into bondage. Through our Lord's descent and ascension they will not only be delivered from it, but receive added gifts, which, in Paul's case particularly, was for “the rebellious also.” But it was impossible to see any descent into the infernal regions in the song of the psalmist.

### THE LOWER PARTS OF THE EARTH

The psalmist, however, says nothing regarding “*the lower parts of the earth*.” Where are these located? I can find no hint anywhere that Christ ever went into any subterranean region, especially not during His death, except that His body was in a tomb about three thousand feet above sea level – certainly not a low part of the land. The myth that He left His body behind is a sorry deception. His spirit was with the Father. His soul was in the unseen. He was *dead*, before He was vivified on the Sabbath morning of His resurrection.

Recently I spent several months on the shore of Lake Galilee. I lived about five hundred feet above the surface of the lake. Still, the sign board, “sea level,” was about two hundred feet above my room. I was much impressed with the thought that the ministry of our Lord was largely accomplished in a region below the level of earth's waters. Not many portions of the earth's surface are below sea level. Death Valley

(see *SPIRITS*, page 3690)

# *The Chief Men of this Eon Are Being Discarded*

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

*Yet wisdom are we speaking among the mature, yet a wisdom not of this eon, neither of the chief men of this eon, who are being discarded (I Corinthians 2:6).*

**T**he fashion of this world is passing away (I Corinthians 7:31), and along with it, all of the world's wealth, wisdom and nobility. In fact, the chief men of this eon are specifically being discarded by God.

In discarding prominent ones, God has chosen instead from among the weak, ignoble and contemptible those whom He will use to display His wisdom and glory. God's point in it all is the complete removal of human boasting (I Corinthians 1:26-29).

As we look at those around us who have the appearance of greatness, respectability and honor, remember that they are in the process of being discarded. Meanwhile, those of us who are called among the feeble, despicable and detestable are being masterfully prepared to be the future rulers of the universe.

Keep your nose to the grind and your eye on the prize. It will be well worth it all when God has completed His discarding. ■

## *We Have It Made!*

When we belong to Christ, we have it made. When bad stuff happens, it works for our good. And when good stuff happens, well, it IS good. Works for good/is good. We can't lose. The only thing approximating this marvel in nature is the grape. No matter what you do to it, it keeps getting better. Just like us. Eventually.

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# The Church in Thy House

## Why “Church” Buildings and Clergy Destroy the Faith

by — Dan Sheridan

“Church” buildings didn’t come on the scene until long after the death of the Apostles. Today they abound. Multi-million dollar buildings have the name “Church” attached to it. I have to be faithful to the truth, so – I say this with love, love and faithfulness to truth – calling a building a “church” is a lie, a perversion of truth. And it’s not a small lie. It’s not an insignificant lie.



Did you ever wonder why people “candidate” for the position? Here’s why: It’s a job, not a calling. It’s a perversion of truth.

Let me pause here to say this: Yes, there are many who hold this evil position who have good motives and love God. However, once they embrace the truth of Scripture, that will determine how “godly” they really are. Most are more concerned about money than faithfulness.

What happens when this lie is embraced? People take up language like, “I’m going to church,” “My church,” “I just got back from church,” “What church do you go to?” And “pastors,” usurping the authority of God, start calling the meeting place “My church!” What’s even more striking is that the modern “pastor” isn’t even a recognized *office* in Scripture. Every time you see a building with the title “Church” on it, or a man taking the *title* “pastor,” say to yourself, “Another piece of evidence that we are in apostasy!”

Some of us have a hard time sympathizing with “pastors” who continue in that evil position. My friend Clyde Pilkington used to be a “pastor.” He left the position in faithfulness to God. He said, “I had a church, God had a church. I was actually in competition with God!” As a former “pastor” I agree with him wholeheartedly. Let Clyde’s words sink down deep. Why would any “pastor” compete with God – in the name of God? Stop competing. Leave the ►

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system. The rewards are greater than your paycheck! Honoring God is much better than having your ego stroked every time someone calls you “Pastor,” or “Reverend,” or any other title that exalts you.

The evil nomenclature mentioned above has ruined truth. The Church is made up of people, not bricks or prefabricated steel. These people are God’s. That’s why it’s God’s church.

Paul wrote to the Church at Corinth,

*Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.*

Notice, he doesn’t mention a “pastor”! He never does. He addresses those in every place who call on the Lord. What are those places? Church buildings? No! They are the homes of believers. If a home wasn’t available, they met next to a river. These early believers were drawn to God and Christ as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. They didn’t need pretty lights and religious surroundings to make God more appealing to them. They didn’t need drama teams or pretty music to “aid” their “worship.” They really loved God. God wasn’t a fad. God wasn’t a program. God wasn’t “their thing.”

When it comes to worship,

We must not think of buildings specially erected for Christian worship as we see around us today. These did not come into being until a much later date. The house of the believer was the home of the church, and we can therefore see why an orderly Christian home was an essential qualification of a bishop or overseer; and warm hospitality a neces-

sary virtue (I Timothy 3:2, 4, 5). – Stuart Allen

This teaches us a great lesson. Christian gatherings are based on love and hospitality. Those who believe in Christ gather in places where people go out of their way to accommodate. What about the elders? Note, not a single “pastor.” There is no such thing as a single pastor of a local church. There are elders – *plural* – who are leaders because they demonstrate love and pursue hospitality; they live out their faith, they are an example for others to follow.

God associates His church with a home! Love and self-sacrifice. Home, Sweet Home.

So, is “your church” in competition with God’s church? If so, leave your church. It’s not *yours* to begin with. “*Thou shalt not steal.*” ■

#### SPIRITS (continued from page 3687)

and Salton Sea, in southern California, are striking examples. I am interested in a ranch seventy-five feet below sea level in Coachella Valley; but none of these compares with the gorge of the Jordan, and especially the once populous shores of Galilee.<sup>1</sup> Here, indeed, are “*the lower parts of the earth*” to which our Lord descended. How fitly it accords with His humiliation! He was low, low physically as well as humble spiritually.


Unlike His descent to the heights of Sinai, where His glory was a consuming fire, He came down below the common level of mankind, *in grace*, not to bring them into captivity to the law, but to deliver them from its bondage. The law demanded obedience, but grace gives gifts. His humiliation is the basis of all of the gifts we receive. In no way could His “descent into hell” bring blessing to us. The apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers certainly do not come from there! So it seems that this passage in Ephesians is of no help to us in considering the subject of spirit beings. ■

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1. The Dead Sea is 1,378 feet below sea level, the lowest surface point on the earth (*Israel Topography*, U.S. Library of Congress. Retrieved 8 April, 2008).



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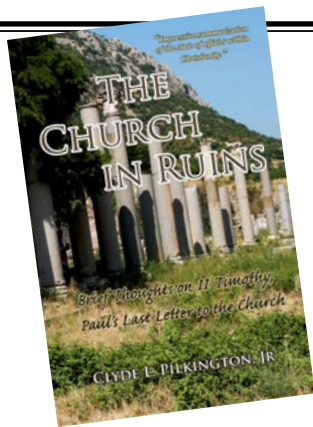


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