



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume XI
Issue 257

The Sovereignty of God Leading to the Cross of Christ

Matthew 26-27

by – A.E. Knoch (1874-1965)

The cross of Christ is the touchstone of humanity. Not only is the cowardice of Pilate and the perfidy of the priests exposed to the gaze of all, but His own little band all find their true value in its vicinity. What should we not expect from His Own apostles who have been with Him and have seen His mighty power and have felt the attraction of His love? Judas, who was entrusted with the funds, turns traitor. Boastful Peter forswears his Lord. All the rest, who but a short time since were loud in their protestations of loyalty, desert Him at the first approach of danger.



show of force to take an unarmed Man Who never did anything but good? It is often difficult to account for the foolishness of human wisdom and action. Yet here we have the key. The Scriptures of the prophets must be fulfilled, and they are given for the revelation of God. Every human action will one day be accounted for and justified by putting it in its right relation to God.

It is necessary that snares should be coming (Matthew 18:7). The Lord *deliberately* chose one of His apostles for the essential duty of betraying Him. He knew from the beginning that Judas was a traitor.

It is most difficult to receive evil from the hand of God. The disciples evidently could not understand how this could be of God. Their highest thought was to escape evil through divine protection. Yet our Lord assures them that, however easy it might be to enlist the legions of heaven, it is not His present plan to escape the clutches of His enemies. Evil must needs be, and God controls it so as to accomplish His beneficent purpose.

In the daylight they were afraid. They wanted the mantle of darkness to hide their evil deeds. Nothing could have been simpler than to have the temple guards arrest Him in the sanctuary. Why all this

Can there be any greater contrast than comes before us in this scene before the chief priest? Christ, the Chief Priest after the new order of Melchisedec, sworn in by God Himself, holy, harmless, undefiled, and higher than the heavens, is about to offer Himself for the sins of the world. Yet He stood alone, forsaken even by His Own, charged with blasphemy and liable to death.

Caiaphas was appointed for political reasons by the Roman power. He was crafty, deceitful, blasphemous, unfit to officiate at God's altar. Yet such a man dares to condemn the Son of God! Quite shamelessly he seeks for testimony against Him,

(see **SOVEREIGNTY**, page 2399)

The Sovereignty of God Leading to the Cross of Christ.....	2397
Orthodoxy	2401
Being a Comfort to Others.....	2402
If You Want to Be Happy (Quote).....	2403
Our Mailbox.....	2404

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).

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).

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

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SOVEREIGNTY (continued from page 2397)

and accepts what everyone knew was false. No one had heard Him say that He would destroy the temple of God. He said that *they* would do it, and now their very accusation is itself the crime with which they charge Him! They tried to fasten on Him the destruction of the empty house on mount Moriah. They actually accomplish the destruction of the true Temple, His body.

As the Sacrifice, the Lord was a sign to the priests, for He acted as the animal they were accustomed to lead to the altar (Isaiah 53:7):

Evil must needs be, and God controls it so as to accomplish His beneficent purpose.

*He is hard pressed, and He is humiliated, yet
He is not opening His mouth:*

He is fetched as a flockling to the slaughter,

*and as a ewe before its shearers is mute, so
He is not opening His mouth.*

When the chief priest invoked the presence of God, Christ was not slow in testifying to the truth, so that all of the actual testimony against Him was the great truth to which the priests themselves and all of their service in the sanctuary and the temple testified. Yet we must not forget the divine side. The Scriptures must be fulfilled. God's purpose must be served. The business of the priesthood is to slay the sacrifice. All of the victims hitherto had been vain repetitions that could only cover sin. They could not take it away. Shall not the priests, therefore, slay the great Antitype, the Lamb Whose blood will yet change all sin into righteousness, all enmity into reconciliation? In the wisdom of God their hatred and malice simply are a knife to slay the true Sacrifice. Can we not see that, in a very real sense, they were carrying out the will of God? Then, if this is true of the sin of sins, is it not quite possible that God will justify all sins in the same way?

Poor Peter! Where is his bravado now? He was quite ready to defend his Lord against the world

– but not against a serving maid. His very vehemence betrays him. Now was his opportunity of witnessing for his Lord, and of standing by Him in His trial. He should have shouted “Yes!” and moved forward to take his place beside his Master – but no: he refuses to acknowledge Him. He slinks back to the portal to escape further questioning. Yet another maid awaits him there, so he adds an oath to his denial, and by his Gallilean brogue betrays himself again. Then his exasperation is so

great that he actually damns and swears that He is not at all acquainted with the Lord. The cock crows. Its simple sound is the voice of God to Peter. He becomes acquaint-

ed with himself, and is sadly disillusioned. Instead of the brave, trusty, faithful disciple and apostle he thought he was, he finds himself to be a cringing, craven coward. He laments bitterly.

The chief priests, by buying the freehold, which previously had been acquired by Judas but not paid for (Acts 1:16-19), join the betrayer of our Lord in an unlawful act which manifests their lack of faith in God. True believers, who were looking for the kingdom and the consequent redistribution of the land, would not waste money on a freehold which would be worthless in that day. Instead, they sold their freeholds (Acts 4:34), and gave the money to the apostles. The account in Acts views this transaction from the standpoint of Judas, and tells why he was rejected from being an apostle. He made arrange-

ments not only to betray His Lord (Who, he supposed, would use His power to circumvent His enemies), but he arranged to use the “wages of unrighteousness” for buying a freehold, contrary to the

law. The chief priests and elders, instead of repudiating this illegal act, confirm it by hypocritically refusing to put the money in the temple offerings, and by using it to complete the purchase which Judas had begun. The death of Judas is passed over briefly in Matthew, but elaborated in Acts. He hung himself, but the rope broke and he fell so hard that his bowels spilled out. Thus worked the woe pronounced upon him by the Lord.

The priests should have been models of justice and truth, for they had the form of truth in the law. The governor had no divine light to guide his steps. Yet Pilate is far more just than the priests. He knew very well that they would not demand the death of a Jew who conspired against his government. They would aid him. His suspicions of their motive were confirmed by the Lord's silence. No ordinary man would stand and hear such charges against him without a reply. At no time did the chief priests deceive Pilate. He thought the easiest way out would be to put it to the people, who, he supposed, would release the prophet. He was so sure of their verdict that he was caught in his own device.

Barabbas is another contrast with Christ. A murderer, a leader in sedition, he was just what the chief priests represented the Lord to be. His name is very striking. In Aramaic it means "son of the father." Christ was the Son of the Father, God. Barabbas was the son of another father, the Slanderer.

Of all the actors in this tragedy, only one really pleads the cause of Christ, and this one is the most unlikely that could be – [Pilate's wife]. It seems almost incredible that, when His Own nation is against Him, His Own disciples afraid to speak a word in His favor, an alien woman steps in to plead the cause of a just Man she may never have heard of before. True, it was the direct effect of divine intervention; but every other act and attitude in this scene can, in its last analysis, be traced to God's foreordination. It must remain a marvelous intimation of God's ways that she alone should voice a solemn protest against the travesty of justice in which Pilate was weak enough to become involved.

The chief priests were aware that they had failed to convince the governor by fair argument, so now they propose to foil his plan of freeing the Lord by persuading the people. It is not necessary to have facts or truth to move the mob. It is the most unjust and unreasonable appeal possible. Had the priests not interfered they undoubtedly would have shouted for His release, as Pilate anticipated.

Now that the priests have caught him in his own device, he tries to persuade the mob. Evil or no evil, they want His blood.

Pilate had the power to release Him, but expedience and selfishness are always more potent in human governments than justice.

In mockery, our Lord went through the mimic ceremony of being invested with imperial dignity.

In the wisdom of God their hatred and malice are simply a knife to slay the true Sacrifice.

The shining attire with which Herod clothed Him (Luke 23:11) may have been intended to mark Him as a candidate for royal honors. Pilate's

soldiers put on Him the scarlet mantle, a sign of His having attained the imperial throne, and add the crown of thorns and the reed for a scepter, and offer Him the homage due to such exalted rank. Little did they dream of His high honors as earth's Suzerain and heaven's Supreme Head! Little do His saints discern that this is the essential ceremony of investiture for the King of kings and Lord of lords. He never could assume the place Supreme unless He had descended to the depths. Suffering and shame are the divine preliminaries to joy and honor. Those who suffer – they shall reign.

The crucifixion of Christ is a holy of holies, where speech seems sacrilegious, and silence sacred.

The whole scene is vibrant with the presence of God, not only in the Victim and the feeble few who followed, but in the very words of those who hated

Every act and attitude in this scene can, in its last analysis, be traced to God's foreordination.

Him. They spoke great truths which they could not comprehend. They were demolishing the true Temple of God. They needed salvation – but it

could never come if He saved Himself or descended from the cross. The chief priest could not have uttered a more pregnant or more precious truth. How gladly we echo their words! We only change the note of derision into a song of triumph. "Others He saves: Himself He cannot save!" Surely they were inspired!

There were four others crucified with Christ. Two were malefactors. Two were robbers. One of the

(see **SOVEREIGNTY**, page 2403)

Orthodoxy

by – A.P. Adams (1845-1925)

Ifrequently use the words orthodox and orthodoxy to express the generally received faith among all classes of Christians. For instance, *endless torment* is an orthodox doctrine; i.e., it is held by the great mass of professing Christians throughout the world; so of the *Trinity* and the *immortality of the soul*. These are all so-called orthodox doctrines, being embraced in the faith of the majority of Christendom.



Strictly speaking, "orthodoxy" is a word that soundly applies only to the truth; its etymological meaning is "straight doctrine," i.e., true, correct doctrine. In this sense the writer claims to be orthodox; but the word has come to have a technical sense with the meaning already explained.

The use of the term "orthodox" by those who claim the exclusive right to use it is really absurd since, as a matter of fact, the standard of orthodoxy shifts and changes from generation to generation, from decade to decade, and almost from year to year. That standard in Protestant churches in the days of Jonathan Edwards was very different from what it is today, even in those denominations that are most conservative and non-progressive.

Thus does this word, which ought to denote something fixed and permanent, really signify that most changeable of all terrestrial things – human opinion; and the various branches of the nominal church really make themselves ridiculous in their lofty claims of orthodoxy, and appear hypocritical in their often times vehement condemnation of "heresy," though at other times, for reasons of expediency, they condone it.

The fact is that no "church" has a right to set itself up as a fixed standard of truth. It is simply impudent presumption to use orthodox in the manner in which it is used by certain of the sects, and it shows a sad lack of the Spirit of Christ and of that charity that "*covereth all things*" (I Corinthians 13:7).

Who art thou that judgeth another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth; yea, he shall be holden up, for God is able to make him stand (Romans 14:4).

In former writings I have not hesitated to refer in very plain terms to the absurdities and monstrosities of the popular theology. I make no apology for these criticisms; if I could, I would make them more emphatic, for to me it appears that the prevalent religious beliefs are, to a very great extent, horrible caricatures of the truth, contradictory, senseless and, in some cases, actually blasphemous. I would make no compromise with these dogmas that outrage reason as well as Scripture. In the light of Scripture as well as the actual state of things around us the entire outward visible organized "church" is plainly a poor, fallen, corrupt institution.

There are many in the "church" who see this wretched condition of affairs and denounce it unsparingly, but still they think that the "church" may yet be saved, i.e., the organization may be saved. To me this seems impossible; disintegration is inevitable.

I say the "church" as an outward, visible, human institution! Yet the true *ecclesia* is God's jewel, scattered throughout the land – they have no outward organization, no visible bond of union, but the "*unity of the Spirit*" binds them together in inseparable fellowship.

We may be sure that, whatever human institution may fail,

Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, "The Lord knoweth them that are His" (II Timothy 2:19).

I will pass on now to notice some of the particular forms of error, most prominent and harmful in the nominal "church."

One chief cause of the "church's" present condition is that they have wandered away from the plain path of truth into the winding and devious ways of error. Those who make the exclusive claim of orthodoxy are very far from holding straight doctrine, but on the contrary are exceedingly crooked in their faith, which is in fact the very opposite of the truth.

(see **ORTHODOXY**, last page)

Being a Comfort to Others

by – J R. Miller (1840-1912)

In one of his epistles, Paul speaks of certain of his friends as “*men that have been a comfort unto me*” (Colossians 4:11). He was in prison, and in his loneliness these men had cheered and strengthened him. They had been kind to him, and their kindness had comforted him.

Aristarchus

He mentions by name three men who had specially helped him in this way. The first was *Aristarchus*, whom he calls “*my fellow-prisoner*.” Perhaps he voluntarily stayed with Paul in prison. No doubt he showed his love in many ways. Someone has defined a *friend* as “the person who comes in – when all the world has gone out.” That is what Aristarchus had been to Paul.

Mark

Another who had been a comfort to him was *Mark*. We are glad to have Paul write this, for many years before Mark had failed him, and the apostle would not trust him again. It is pleasant to know that Mark lived long enough and well enough – to win again his old friend’s confidence and affection.

Justus

There is another name in this list of honor, “*Jesus who is called Justus*.” Not a hint is given of the way he had been a comfort to the apostle. Perhaps he had just been *kind* to him, doing nothing that could be written down – and yet no doubt his life was full of little gentle ministries that helped Paul more bravely and cheerfully to endure his chains. At least this man had been his friend, and just being a friend when one needs friends is something gloriously worthwhile. Someone has said, “The greatest thing that a man can do for his Heavenly Father is to be kind to some of the Father’s other children.”

The friends whom Paul names were a comfort to him, because they sympathized with him with a sympathy that was not obtrusive, not officious, not always reminding him of his chain and prison – but that manifested itself in quiet, unostentatious, inspiring ways. The word *comfort* is from a root-word which means to

strengthen. It is like our noun *cordial*, in its old sense, something that invigorates, exhilarates; something that stimulates the circulation, making the pulse quicker, the life fuller. Paul’s friends were a *cordial* to him, not lessening his sufferings nor lightening his burdens, but making him *braver* and *stronger* for endurance. They were a comfort to him.

Paul himself was a wonderful example of a man who was a comfort to others. What his life, with its rich fullness and its genius for friendship, must have been to those who came into personal companionship with him!

What a privilege it was to his fellow-craftsmen to have him working with them at their tent-making! His presence must have made the work seem lighter and the atmosphere of the shop brighter. We do not begin to realize what it means to us – to live with certain people, to have them for friends, to drink from the fullness of their life.

One wrote of Phillips Brooks, after his death:

“We did not know how much of God was walking with us!”

Just so, men did not know how much of God was walking with them – when they had Paul for their companion, friend, teacher. The more closely we study his life and his words – the more do we find in him and in his teachings of love, of the delicate refinements of love, of all gentleness and kindness.

The thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians is as matchless as a picture. It is like a dream in its beauty, but it was a dream which was realized in the writer’s own life.

Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. Love does not demand its own way. Love is not irritable, and it keeps no record of when it has been wronged.

Some people *praise* this wonderful picture of love, but do not think of *living* it. What a comfort we would be to each other if we really *lived*, in all our common

days, the teaching of this great chapter!

Some people have love in their *hearts*, while in *disposition*, in *speech*, in *expression*, they lack lovingness. Paul teaches us not only to have a kindly heart, but a *gracious manner*.

We condemn lying – as well we may – but we forget that *rudeness* is a sin, too, as are also *thoughtlessness*, *discourtesy*, *censoriousness*, sharpness in speech or tone.

Paul names “*whatever things are lovely*” among the ideal qualities of Christian character. Those who live thus gently, thoughtfully, beautifully, will always be a comfort to others with whom they live.

We may do all of our duties faithfully, conscientiously, bearing our share of the burdens and cares – and yet if we are not *pleasant to live with*, we fail in the most essential quality of love. An unlovely spirit – frowns and chilling looks, sharp, impatient words – outweigh the eager, painstaking service that does so much to help in practical ways. What the person is mars the value of what he DOES.

The ideal life is one that is a *comfort* to others – as well as a *help*. It is gracious and winning in its spirit. It is a blessing to all it touches. It makes one a comfort, not

only in his own home, where even his *dog* has a more pleasant life, but also among his neighbors, and in the office or shop where he works.

Are we a *comfort* to people? Are the boys and girls a comfort to their mothers and fathers? or do they vex them, fret them, keep them awake at night with anxiety? Are husbands and wives a real comfort to each other? Are we a comfort to our neighbors, kindly, thoughtful, obliging, ready always to be helpful and gracious?

It has been named as the mark of a *gentleman* that he never gives pain to another. An English poet called Jesus “the truest gentleman who ever breathed.” He never gave pain to anyone. Love characterized Him in all circumstances and experiences. Even when He was being betrayed, He was still a gentleman. When He was being nailed to the cross – He prayed for His executioners. Love never failed in Him. He was always a comfort to others.

We as members of Christ’s Body should be so full of His spirit, have our lives so permeated with His grace and love that we shall be a *comfort* to all men, and, above all, shall be a comfort to God!

1908

If you want to be miserable,
Look within.

If you want to be distracted,
Look around.

If you want to be happy. Cook UP!

E.W. Bullinger
Short Papers Vol. II
Bible Student’s Press

SOVEREIGNTY (continued from page 2400)

malefactors believed on Him. The robbers reproached Him.

His death was different from all others. He did not linger until life ebbed away, but laid down His soul while still strong by committing His Spirit to God. His body was laid in the tomb. His soul went to the unseen. His work was done, and death was His portion until His resurrection.

The kingdom proclamation closed with the ac-

knowledgment of Peter that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matthew 16:16). His priestly ministry closes with the centurion’s declaration that He is the Son of God. Thus we are given a foretaste of the final effect of both of these ministries. In the day of His return, Israel will exultantly acclaim Him King and the nations of the earth will acknowledge Him their Lord.

Abridged from
Concordant Commentary on the New Testament



I just wanted to say hello and thank you for planting the seed which opened my eyes. I have been trudging and struggling through the mire trying to find the truth, and it has been a long hard journey, and still a long way to go, but I understand the reconciliation of ALL and embrace it.

I must admit that accepting universal reconciliation as truth was VERY difficult for me to do, and I tried to disprove it; however, I have seen the complete insanity of the doctrine of everlasting torture, and must deny it. I believe that the Lord gave us a complex brain and the ability to think rationally for a reason. Just had to get all the years of programming out of the way, and see the truth. Thanks again brother Clyde! – **FL**

I thought I would let you know we appreciate all your hard work and study to help us all see God's grace in this age. Keep up the hard work and I know you will be rewarded. – **SC**

Thank you so much for putting out the Daily Email Goodies. I learn something new with each one. – **TX**

I am seeing Truth Clyde! Thank you for your website and all the articles posted there. I am so looking forward to the Bible Study that you put out ... I am free! – **WA**

This Daily Email Goodie is so good; you always seem to get so much more of these Scriptures and really clarify things! Thank you for passing on your insights. – **CO**

ORTHODOXY (continued from page 2401)

Errors are part and parcel of the life and soul of the nominal "church." They are the warp and woof of the entire fabric. They are woven into its creeds and standards, its preaching, Sunday School instruction, social meeting talk, its hymns and songs, into the entire body of its literature, its rituals and litanies, and they are ingrained into the thought and feeling, the mind and heart of every one of its members, so that to remove them would be like drawing out the nerves and tendons of the human body, an operation that would inevitably result in the body's total destruction.

The Spirit of the Word 1885

Arthur P. Adams was born in 1845.

He was married to Ophelia ("Addie"). He was a Methodist minister whose independent study of the Scriptures led him

I am so enjoying your teaching. I have not stopped reading and studying for many days. I, like you, can't help it! ... I am so free, Scripture has never been clearer to me than it is now! Thank you brother! – **WA**

Many thanks for your *Daily Email Goodies*. They open our (my wife and myself) eyes for what is written in the Scripture. They are very constructive for our spiritual life. – **Belgium**

Two of your recent BSN editions: *Back to Basics* and *Where Do We Go From Here?* are fabulous ... You did a masterful job of presenting the case simply and thoroughly.

You bring out a point in here that I've never really considered before, and that is that we START with the big God, and then work in toward our experiences. I guess this is just another way of saying, "absolute and relative," but it is a good way of saying it ... IT IS SUCH A SIMPLE SOLUTION!

As for your other newsletter – wow. Again, so concise and simple. I never really considered in detail that Paul SAID he had a public and a private ministry ... I love your boldness in touching the financial issue. This should not be something we shrink away from – and yet we do. But you do not ...

The more I look into your website ... I am simply astounded at your body of work, and that it continues to grow. – **OH**

Responses to: *Not Our Ability – But His* (Daily Email Goodies #2453)

This was an excellent article. It opens up what God was saying when He said His ways are not our ways and as the heavens are above the earth so are His thoughts above our thoughts. Thank you. – **Australia**

That truth is mind boggling. So contrary to the world and the religious system. Wonderful!!! – **PA**

to separate from his denomination in 1878.

For a short while he was acquainted with Charles Russell, and then with Nelson Barbour. Barbour was purported to have held to "Rellyism" (Universal Reconciliation).

Adams disassociated with Russell early in the 1880s. He became associated with John Paton. One source states that "Adams became a significant force among those opposing *Zion's Watch Tower*."

In 1885 he became the editor of *The Spirit of the Word* published out of Beverly, MA. He published this for at least 22 years (as it was listed in the 1907 *A Guide to the Current Periodicals and Serials of the United States and Canada*, by H.O. Severance).

He published at least one book, *Bible Harmony*.

He died in 1825, possibly in Poughkeepsie, New York, his last known residence.

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