



# Bible Student's Notebook™

## The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume XV  
Issue 364

# The Religion of Angels

by — E.W. Bullinger (1837-1913)

Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary **humility** and **worshipping** of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind (Colossians 2:18).

It is certain that θρησκεία (*threeskeia*) means **religion** (not **worship**), and is so rendered in all of the other places where it occurs (see Acts 26:5; James 1:26-27). It must be so rendered here: “**humility** and **religion**”: i.e., **humility**, yes – “*the religious humility of angels.*”



Let no one deprive you of your prize, having pleasure in<sup>2</sup> the religious humility of angels, taking his stand upon<sup>3</sup> the things which he hath seen, vainly puffed up by the mind of his flesh and not holding the Head ... (Colossians 2:18-19).

If we observe this figure<sup>1</sup>, it throws all of the other words into their right places, and enables us to give them their right meanings. This gives sense also to the reading of all of the Textual Critics, and with the R.V. in omitting the negative μή (*mee*) before the word “*seen.*” It also saves our having to condemn these Colossian saints for angel-worship! Surely there is nothing in this epistle to warrant the conclusion that they had fallen as low as that!

The passage is a warning to the saints who had been well-instructed as to their standing in Christ that they were not to forget in their worshipping the Father that they had a higher standing than that of angels, even that of beloved sons, in the acceptance of “*the Beloved One*” (Matthew 3:17). They had “*boldness of access*” (Ephesians 3:12) as sons, and not merely that which pertained to “*angels*” as “*messengers.*”

We cannot think that this is a mere warning not to make angels an object of worship. Such a thought is far below the whole scope and teaching of the epistle. The verse then will read,

If we hold the great truth of the “*Mystery*” concerning the Head and members of the Body of Christ, we shall understand and take our proper standing before God, which He Himself has given to us. To cease from “*holding the Head*” (:19) is to lose practically all of our special privileges as members of His Body. It is to take up an attitude before God, in our access to Him, below that in which His love and grace has set us. It is to take the place of *religious humility as the angels*, as servants instead of sons – even the sons of God. It is to worship with veiled faces at a distance, instead of with unveiled faces, beholding the glory of the Lord. It is a feigned humility, not apprehending the exceeding riches of the grace of God toward us in Christ Jesus, which is sure to issue in a regard for visible things and religious ordinances

2. Lightfoot.
3. R.V., margin.

(see ANGELS, page 3280)

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1. Hendiadys.



## 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:
  - total freedom from sins (Colossians 1:14);
  - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6);
  - adult sonship position (Galatians 4).

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# The Sacrifice of Christ Typified in the Law

by — Arthur P. Adams (1845-1925)

The law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? Because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, "Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, "Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me,) to do Thy will, O God" (Hebrews 10:1-7).

## A SHADOW

Here we find the typical character of the sacrifices; the law was a "**shadow**," only a shadow, "*not the very image*," of "*good things to come*." Those "*good things*" began to be realized when Christ came to do God's will; then the real purpose of the sacrifices began to appear, and that purpose was to "*take away sins*," which the blood of bulls and goats could not do. Let us turn to the law and see if we can get a clear understanding of this subject.

A full account of the ceremonies of the Atonement day will be found in Leviticus 16. I shall not attempt to explain in detail the typical significance of all of these ceremonies, as I am not sure that I understand the true significance of all of the details of this type; but of the general meaning of it I have no doubt, and this general meaning I wish to consider.

The first fact to which I wish to call attention is that there is nothing said in all of this legal ceremony of *the penalty of sin*. Let this fact be particularly noted and well considered. In all of the "orthodox" creeds and manmade theories of the atonement, the great effort always is to show how, through Christ's *substitution*, the sinner may *escape* the penalty of sin. This view is wholly



wrong, and the law bears me out in this position.

Here is one of the principle sources of error in the common view of this doctrine. With the majority of persons the prominent thought is, "I have sinned; there is a just and holy God Who punishes sin; how shall I escape this punishment?" This is about as high as most men get in their moralizing, and their *theory* of the atonement is built on this basis.

Let it be further noticed in this connection that the monstrous doctrine of endless torment necessarily leads to this view of the atonement. If that is the punishment of sin, then it must be that the main purpose and work of the atonement is to save man from that fearful doom. The punishment of endless, hopeless misery is so unspeakably awful, overshadowing and dwarfing to insignificance all other considerations that it is no wonder, in fact it is inevitable, that the question about how to escape such an appalling sentence should be made the one central and most prominent feature in the theory of the atonement held by those who believe in this unscriptural, unreasonable and God-dishonoring dogma.

If endless torment is the penalty of sin, then, of course, if anyone is to be saved, the sinner must ►

not suffer that penalty at all; for if he does, it is to him total and absolute ruin without any possibility of recovery or deliverance. Yet, the theory requires that someone must suffer this penalty in order to vindicate the outraged majesty of the law, and to satisfy the inflexible justice of God. Hence arises the necessity of *substitution*: man the guilty sinner, if he is to be saved at all, cannot suffer this penalty. Someone must suffer it, hence the theory absolutely requires that an innocent victim should suffer in man's *stead*. Yet this theory is made still more absurd and contradictory, and perfectly baffling to all reason and common sense by the fact that we are taught that, after all, Christ does not suffer the penalty of the sinner's transgression, but something else which is accepted as, in some way, equivalent to that penalty. Thus error leads to error; falsehood is built on falsehood; absurdity on absurdity; and the result is "Orthodoxy."

Now, when one escapes from this great theological lie of endless torment, then, and not until then can he begin to consider some other view of the atonement than that which makes the innocent Jesus suffer the penalty of sin in the guilty sinner's *stead*.

This *substitutionary* theory of the atonement has not legitimately a single passage of Scripture to support it. There is not a passage in the Bible that teaches that Christ died to satisfy the justice of God, in the sense in which *substitutionists* claim. There is not one that teaches that He suffered the punishment of sin *in the place* of the guilty.

The atonement that Christ made is not a provision whereby man may *escape* the penalty of sin. God's judgments are always good and for the benefit of the one judged. It would be doing the sinner an injury to shield him from those judgments, if such a thing was possible. The atonements provided for man's deliverance from sin, not from its penalty.

*Christ came to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself* (Hebrews 9:26).

What man needs is *deliverance* – not from the penalty of sin, but from sin itself, and this is what Christ, or rather "God in Christ" does for us in the atonement. This great and glorious purpose of the atonement is clearly indicated in the law, the "*shadow of good things to come*" (Colossians 2:17):

*Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood He likewise took part in the same; [for what purpose?] that through death He might destroy him that had the power, that is the adversary, and deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage* (Hebrews 2:14-15).

What was the purpose of the atonement under the law? Just exactly what it was under the gospel: "*to put away sin.*" We are distinctly told that the bullock and the two goats were a "*sin offering*" – that is to say, they represented the sin that was to be "*put away.*" They did not represent the penalty, nor did they represent a *substitute* who was to receive the penalty in the place of the sinner, neither were they a gift to *appease* the one sinned against; but they represented the sin itself that was to be slain, destroyed and put away.

The three animals were one sin offering, each one representing a different aspect of the same sin offering, and the anti-type of all three: Aaron's bullock, "the Lord's goat," and the "scapegoat," are Jesus Christ. All of the sacrifices find their fulfillment in the Lord Jesus.

Here is the key to the proper understanding of the atonement in the type or anti-type in the law or the gospel: *The sacrifice represents the sin.* If we see this truth, we shall readily understand that there is no need of the doctrine of *substitution* in the atonement.

Let us notice how this is still further indicated in the law. A sin offering was one that was considered as *representing the sin* of the transgressor, and as being charged with that sin. Hence it was unclean, and the carcass, after the blood had been poured out at the altar, was to be burned "*without the camp*" as an unholy thing unfit to come into the midst of God's people; and the person who performed this duty of burning the dead and rejected carcass was himself unclean and must remain so for a certain time and until he had performed certain ceremonies. Thus the sin offering, representing the sin of the offender, was looked at as polluted and polluting. This fact is brought out in all of the sin offerings, but especially in connection with the scapegoat.

## THE SCAPEGOAT

The Hebrew word here rendered "*scapegoat*" is *azazel*, which literally means "avorter." The "*scapegoat*" was



the “averted,” *i.e.*, he averted or warded off calamity from the children of Israel by bearing away their sins. The only possible cause of trouble and suffering in God’s universe is sin. When sin is removed from us, when we are separated from our sins, then all calamity is averted, because all possible cause of calamity is removed. Hence the live goat was the averter because it separated the children of Israel from all that could cause trouble and distress, and thus averted, or warded off trouble and distress.

*Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess upon him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities in a land not inhabited (Leviticus 16:21-22).*

Here is the type; is it not plain that the sin offering represented the sin of the people? What was done to the sin offering, whether slain or sent away, represents what will ultimately be done with sin.

Let it be remembered that the scapegoat is only another phase of one and the same sin offering, and the character of all of the sin offerings will be plain. The result of the Atonement under the law was deliverance from sins.

*On that day shall the priest make an atonement for you to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sin before the Lord (:30).*

Thus once a year they were legally reconciled (“*set at-one,*” Acts 7:26) to God by being delivered, not from the penalty of their sins, but from the sins themselves.

“*It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins*” (Hebrews 10:4). That was the type, only a “*shadow of the good things to come*” (:1), a “*figure of the true,*” and yet a perfect shadow, a true figure, so that from the shadow we can clearly grasp the substance, from the figure we may understand “*the heavenly things themselves.*” Now see how perfectly the anti-type corresponds to the type as indicated in such passages as the following.

*The Lord hath made the iniquity of us all to meet*

*on Him* [just as it did on the scapegoat] (Isaiah 53:6).

*Behold the Lamb of God which beareth away* [like the scapegoat again] *the sin of the world* (John 1:29).

*Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many* (Hebrews 9:28).

*Who His Own Self bare our sins in His Own body on the tree* (I Peter 2:24).

He did not bear away our penalty for sins as our *substitute*, but He bore away our sins. In Him our sins were destroyed; by Him our sins were put away; “*He was made SIN for us*” (II Corinthians 5:21). There is no more wonderful statement in the Bible than this.

However, there is something dread and awful in it: the idea of a sinless Person being made sin! He was not made a sinner or sinful. This could not be without destroying His character as the spotless Lamb of God; but He was made sin itself. He was accursed (Galatians 3:13), and as an accursed and unclean thing He was carried without the camp and suffered as the dead, rejected sin offering, thus showing God’s judgment on, and the final destiny of sin. It is a thing used in God’s economy for a purpose, and when that purpose is accomplished it will come to an end, be utterly abolished, along with death and the grave, and God will be “*All in all,*” or in other words, all things will be reconciled to Him (Colossians 1:20).

Here, then, in general is the symbolic significance of the atonement as set forth in the Law, and here in brief is the manner of its fulfillment in Christ the great anti-type.

The key to the understanding of the whole subject is to remember that *the sacrifice represents the sin* – not the sinner, not the penalty, but the sin. If this fact is borne in mind, much misunderstanding and error will be avoided. In the type and in the anti-type sin is treated as though it was a tangible, real thing, and is killed, carried away and utterly destroyed, clearly prefiguring the final result of redemption: No more anything accursed (Revelation 22:3).

# From Useless to Useful by God's Grace

by — Frank Neil Pohorlak (1907-1988)

*Onesimus, who once was useless to you, yet now is useful to you as well as to me (Philemon 11, CV).*

It is not always possible to foresee how people will turn out. It is better to suspend judgment until all the evidence is in. Best of all, let the judging be done by Him Who alone knows the heart (John 21:17).



with you, for he is **useful** to me for service" (II Timothy 4:11). Mark went *from* USELESS to USEFUL.

Perhaps you are saying, "My name is not Peter, or Mark." No, but your name is there just the same. Paul writes of us all:

Peter is a case in point. Would you have seen a follower in a fisherman? A saint in a sinner? Courage in a craven? Would you have heard the Pentecost proclamation from a cursing, blustering, frightened, Christ-renouncing disciple? The grace of God turned Peter *from* USELESS to USEFUL.

*Not one is understanding. Not one is seeking out GOD. All avoid HIM: at the same time they were **useless** (Romans 3:11-12).*

Would you have seen a follower in a forsaker? Mark, a cousin of Barnabas, was a companion of Barnabas and Saul when they left Jerusalem (Acts 12:25). At Pamphylia Mark left the party and returned to Jerusalem (13:13). Paul, in his last epistle writes, "Taking Mark, lead him back

Apart from Christ we were unprofitable – "useless." Then the grace of God was made known to us. We who obtained the conciliation were justified. If God is now "profiting" (see Philemon 20) from us or finding us "useful," it is not *out* of us; rather it is God Who wills as well as works in us for the sake of His delight (Philippians 2:13).

## "Also"

by — E.W. Bullinger



This work consists of a listing and explanations of 378 New Testament passages where the word "also" may be ambiguous or misleading to the English reader.

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After we have done all we can and should, we are still unprofitable slaves.

*Has that slave no thanks, seeing that he does what is prescribed? I presume not! Thus, you also, whenever you should be doing all these things that are prescribed you, be saying that "Useless slaves are we. What we ought to do we have done" (Luke 17:9-10).*

When comparing what we should do with what we do, we are all unprofitable or useless slaves. Only the grace of God can convert a *useless sinner* into a *useful saint*. Only the grace of God can continue to be profiting from those who once were unprofitable in themselves, but now are useful to God in Christ.

The letter of Paul to Philemon teaches many lessons to the believer eager to learn. It begins in grace (:3) and ends in grace (:25). The use of "fellow" with

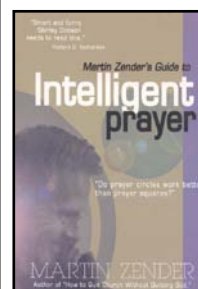
- "worker" (:1),
- "soldier" (:2), and
- "captive" (:23)

shows the tie that binds us to others who are in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul's prayer for others is characteristic of himself, too frequently distinguishing him from us (:4). Paul is hearing of faith and love, not the probably harsh treatment of a slave which may have led him to run away.

To what are our ears attuned? To the faith and love of others, or to their disbelief and lovelessness? If we hear of faith and love, do we rejoice? If we hear of lack of faith and love, do we likewise rejoice and publish abroad the defection from deportment? If we do, love did not commit that act; for love is not taking account of evil, is not rejoicing in injustice (I Corinthians 13:5-6).

When the grace of God is heard and realized, it brings forth fruit (Colossians 1:6-10). To Philemon Paul writes of the fellowship of faith which becomes operative in the realization of every good thing which is in Christ Jesus (:6). Boldness to enjoin what is proper gives way to a higher law – love that entreats (: 8-9). The grace of GOD in salvation turns a useless slave into a useful saint (:11). Good is to be voluntary, not compulsory (:14). Note the delicate tact of Paul.



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He does not say "he ran away," but "he is separated for an hour" (:15).

There is no use harrowing the soul and filing the feelings when it can be avoided. Grace turns a runaway slave into a beloved brother (:16).

A characteristic of the disposition of a Christian is,

*Now if in anything he injures you, or is owing aught, this be charging to my account. I, Paul write with my own hand, I will refund it (:18-19).*

How like the Samaritan of whom Jesus spoke in Luke 10:35! Paul wants to be *profiting* from Philemon by having him receive an unprofitable slave whom the grace of GOD has made to be *profitable* (:20). GOD's grace made it possible for Onesimus (Greek, meaning: PROFITable) to live up to his name.

Paul expected much from people, he received much from people; they delighted to rise to the demands he made of them and which he encouraged them to believe that they could do, if they but would (:21).

Onesimus must have had faith in GOD's grace to return to a master from whom he had fled and possibly stolen. He must have had faith in Philemon's regard for Paul, to return with a letter

Paul had written on behalf of a slave for whom society in that day had little regard.

These thoughts are but suggestive of the wealth this brief letter affords the diligent student who makes GOD's Word his chiefest possession. ■



ANGELS (continued from front page)

which are the natural objects of the fleshly mind, the only things which it can comprehend or understand.

Hence the theme of ordinances being done away in Christ follows in :11-15.

*Which sort of things have indeed an appearance of wisdom in self-devised religious observances, humiliation and discipline; yet are not really of any value to remedy indulgence of the flesh<sup>4</sup> (:23).*

The exhortation is plural; but the warning is directed

4. R.V. and Lightfoot.

against some individual who, puffed up, would fain teach them that as angels in their worship “veiled their faces” and take the most humble place, therefore it was only becoming that they should do the same. These were the only things which the “flesh” could see; this was the standing that the flesh would fain take! Yet they were not to be thus defrauded of that high calling and standing which they had in Christ, and which enabled them to draw near with boldness to the throne of grace.

*Figures of Speech*  
pages 667-668



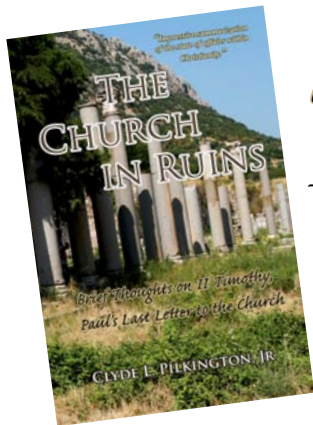
## OUR WORLDVIEW

Since God is the “Savior of all mankind” (I Timothy 4:10), we should “be at peace with all mankind” (Romans 12:18), “work for the good of all” (Galatians 6:10), “increase and superabound in love for all” (I Thessalonians 3:12), and “be patient toward all” (I Thessalonians 5:14). View the mass of humanity around us as objects of God’s love. One day every enemy will be our friend. Yet most of all, apply these things especially to the family of faith. – Dan Sheridan

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by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.



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