



# Bible Student's Notebook™

## The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume XVIII  
Issue 443

## Divine Supremacy

by — William Mealand (1873-1957)

Observant reading of Scripture discloses to the mind many illustrations of divine supremacy. Incident upon incident reveals the absolute character of God's will and His power to enforce it. At the commencement of creation, it was at His pleasure and by His prompting that worlds were brought into being, and that, prior to this, His only begotten Son appeared as the glorious Firstborn. Then, in and through Him, God displays the wonders of His power.

To the Son is assigned the marvelous executive ability of carrying out and seeing through the Father's high purpose. It is in the details of this purpose that we perceive God's supremacy. It is therefore revealed in the wisdom and grace of His Word, to the intent that we should have excellent ground for confidence in, and reliance upon, the living God.

That God intervenes in human affairs not only finds confirmation in Scripture, but in everyday life as we all experience it. The related incidents of God's Word, however, should prepare us for what we observe in our daily life. Indeed, it has been so noted, giving rise to the French motto,

Man proposes, God disposes.

This is remarkably seen in Jacob's life. His name means "circumventer," and he gave it much meaning, as we well know. He had much to learn, and only so learned from his human impotence. His name was changed to "Israel," to which may be given the meaning, "Deity controls." A great lesson, not only for Jacob, but for all mankind.

In the case of Gideon, there is another fine expression. Realizing his weakness he exclaims,

*Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.*

However, poverty in his case was no bar to the will and purpose of God for him. In the story of Ruth, too, there is a telling illustration of God's directive power. The words of Boaz to Ruth are worth quotation.

*The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under Whose wings thou art come to trust (Ruth 2:12).*

Three words are worthy of notice here: *work, reward, trust*. The sequence is applicable in our own day. God always recompenses, for He is no one's debtor. His reward is always sure and satisfying. The lovely figure of speech employed well denotes His gracious care:

*Under Whose wings thou art come to trust.*

It all shows how wisely and how well God looks in upon life down here. He does nothing in vain, though we may, and at times do. How true to say,

God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform.

Note the utterance through Moses to Pharaoh,

*In very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power, and that My name*

(see SUPREMACY, page 3947)

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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:
  - total freedom from 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).

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*SUPREMACY (continued from front page)*

may be declared throughout all the earth (Exodus 9:16).

Again, God's word to Moses,

*Who hath made man's mouth? Who makes the dumb or deaf, or the seeing or the blind? Have not I, the Lord? (Exodus 4:11).*

God is indeed supreme.

*None can stay His hand, or say to Him, "What doest Thou?" (Daniel 4:35-37).*

However strange and inscrutable, He will do what He deems to be good; for the last word is with God, the final decree. This is remarkable in the case of Balaam, who was hired by Balak to curse Israel. We read,

*Howbeit our God turned the curse into a blessing (Nehemiah 13:2).*

This incident is very striking. As Balak said to Balaam,

*I called thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast altogether blessed them these three times ... I thought to promote thee unto great honor, but lo, the Lord hath kept thee back from honor (Numbers 24: 10-13).*

"The Lord hath kept thee back from honor." Better this, than to be promoted to a greatness by sacrificing a principle pleasing to God. Are there not times when we can thank God for keeping us back from some worldly prize?

How true the words,

*A man's heart devises his way, but the Lord directs his steps (Proverbs 16:9).*

Man may plan and arrange, even to a nicety, but the last word is with God. Of this great truth there is daily demonstration. Again and again we read of cases, or they may come under our own observation, where the inscrutable will of God cuts right across man's self-determination.

Jeremiah well voices this truth:

*O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in him-*

*self. It is not in man that walks to direct his steps (Jeremiah 10:23).*

Yet, how vast the number who really think that the way of man is in himself, and that he can direct his steps. Why the chaos of "man's day" if his way is so good? Indeed, if he was left utterly and entirely to himself, the world would be infinitely worse.

Thanks be to God, He does look in upon our tragic state, and so orders, adjusts and circumvents, that we have cause to praise Him for those compassions which fail not.

The more we think of God as supreme in His own creation, and in His will as being paramount, the less shall we think of man's misordered arrangements. God is above all of these, and yet in them, for the pursuance of His purpose. In our own lives, too, we see how God is above, yet also in both circumstance and so-called "chance," which attend upon His will. A certain writer, commenting on this thought, has well said,

To what fortuitous occurrence do we not owe every pleasure and convenience of our lives!

The patriarchs of old were very conscious of this great truth. Take the story of Joseph. In his life, God moves with a momentous end in view. The issues are big, the means drastic. Heartless cruelty goes hand in hand with lying and deceit. The brothers sinned grievously, and Jacob had to confess,

*All these things are against me (Genesis 42:36).*

Yet note the remarkable outcome. Joseph finely emphasizes it all:

*God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So it was not you that sent me hither, but God ... (45:7-8).*

What lessons Israel had to learn! However, did they learn, and do they now? Only but few; and is it not so even with ourselves, of the nations? May we realize more and more how much we are flung upon God, upon His wisdom, His power, and perfect understanding. In God's wonderful words to Israel, through the prophet Isaiah, there is an arresting statement of divine supremacy.

For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returns not thither, but waters the earth, and makes it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall My Word be that goes forth out of My mouth. It shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper whereto I sent it (Isaiah 55:8-11).

How finely contrastive are these sentences! Note the introversion of the pronouns, *My* and *your*, and the loveliness of the figures, too. The contrast suggests, does it not, the greatness and vastness of God's thoughts and ways. Just as the rain and snow come down from heaven, returning not except they water the earth with resultant fertility,

*So shall My word be that goes forth out of My mouth.*

Observe the positive character of its result.

*It shall not return unto Me void. It shall accomplish that which I please. It shall prosper whereto I sent it.*

Now, as an instance of Israel's thoughts being far from God's thoughts, and their ways also, it is instructive to note Moses' words relative to their entry into the promised land.

*Understand therefore, that the Lord your God gives you not this good land to possess it for your*

*righteousness. For you are a stiff-necked people (Deuteronomy 9:4-6).*

Yet, in spite of their continued disobedience and departure from God's expressed commands, a great destiny is still theirs in the counsel and intention of God. They were,

*To be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth (Deuteronomy 7:6).*

To give but one more quotation concerning Israel's high destiny, which reveals the mighty directive power of God:

*... I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I will redeem you with a stretched-out arm. I will take you to Me for a people. I will be to you a God. I will bring you in unto the Lord. I will give it to you for an heritage ... (Exodus 6:6-8).*

The statement commences and closes with the words, "I am the Lord."

Their destiny still awaits them, and it will then be seen that God's choice of such a people was a wise and beneficent one.

In the course of time, and in true fulfillment of prophecy and promise, the joyous advent of Messiah took place, even He Who should be called "the Son of God." Now, God's supremacy is seen here in a marked way, and it is instructive to read Luke's opening chapter in confirmation of so great a truth. To quote but a few words, will, I think, give us a key to the whole chapter, and indeed, to the record of Christ's wondrous life, death and resurrec-

(see SUPREMACY, page 3950)



68 pp, PB.

## ***The Names and Order of the Books of the Old Testament*** by — E.W. Bullinger

To get back to the "original" is ever the endeavor of the careful Bible student. To find that he has followed in the study of the Holy Scriptures some man-devised classification of the Sacred Writings is disheartening, yet such is the condition of all who have based spiritual thought and exegesis on the names and order of the books of the Old Testament as they appear in our Bibles. The "authority" for them is a human one dating back to about 300 B.C. How seriously the original order and the original names were tampered with in this change is shown in this book, and the true names and order of all of the books are clearly set forth as they appear in the original Hebrew, and in harmony with the Divine imprimatur of Luke 24:44. It will be seen at once that the information contained between the covers of this book is of vital importance as fundamental knowledge for the Bible student.

*See order form.*

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# Thus He Gives to His Beloved While They Sleep

by — E.W. Bullinger (1837-1913)

*It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows; for so he giveth his beloved sleep (Psalm 127:2).*

Here the word “for” is unnecessarily introduced, creating a confusion of thought and hiding the meaning. Translated correctly, the sense is perfect without any human addition.



Yes! “His beloved”! Loved not because  
Of any work Which we have ever done;<sup>3</sup>

But loved in perfect grace, “without a cause”:<sup>4</sup>  
This is the source Whence all our blessings come.

Taken from *Figures of Speech in the Bible*  
(Bible Student’s Press, 2014) p. 58, *Ellipsis*.

The word “so” is כֵּן, “thus, in this manner.” It refers to what follows, viz., to the Lord’s way of giving in contrast to man’s way of “works.” God’s spiritual blessings are not obtained by incessant labor – rising early and sitting up late, nor by painful and sorrowful effort. “Thus He giveth” – this is the way He giveth to His beloved. How? “sleeping” or while they sleep. שֵׁנָה (sheynah) is an adverbial accusative, meaning “in sleep.”

It was in this way that He gave His wondrous gifts to Solomon. His name was (יְדִידְיָהּ) “Yedidiah,” i.e., beloved of Jehovah (II Samuel 12:25). The word here is also יְדִיד, Yedeed, i.e., beloved. And this Psalm relates to Solomon, as we learn from the Title. Solomon knew by a blessed experience how God gave to him His richest blessings while he was “sleeping” (II Kings 3:3-15). Even so He gave to Adam a Bride (Genesis 2:21-22); to Abram, the everlasting Covenant (Genesis 15:12-16), and to Jedidiah “His beloved,” wisdom, riches and honor. “Thus He giveth to His beloved while they sleep”<sup>1</sup> when they are helpless and are unable to put forth any effort of works, by which to earn the blessing, and in which the flesh might glory before God (I Corinthians 1:29).

How wondrously He gives! E’en while we sleep—  
When we from all our “works” Have ceased, and rest;

And He our life Doth mercifully keep,  
Then, without works, Are His beloved blest.<sup>2</sup>

3. “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us” (Titus 3:5).
4. “Being justified freely by His grace” (Romans 3:24). The word “freely” here is the same word (δωρεάν) *dōrean* as in John 15:25, where it is rendered “without a cause” (“They hated Me without a cause”).

There was absolutely no cause why our blessed Lord Jesus was “hated.” Even so it is with regard to our justification: – “Being justified without a cause by His grace.”

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1. [Editor: Thus, the Concordant Version renders it, “Yet so is He giving to His beloved in their sleep.”]
2. “And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work” (Romans 11:6).



**SUPREMACY** (continued from page 3948)

tion. The words are those of the messenger to Miriam regarding the birth of John, the forerunner of Christ.

*Seeing that it will not be impossible with God to fulfill His every declaration (Luke 1:37).*

Of course not, and the life of our Lord is the loftiest expression of such an utterance. What shall we say, too, of Paul, whose eventful life and career was so embedded in the forepurpose of God? Did not his arrest by the Lord Christ, and subsequent mission to the nations, complete the divine ordering in the wisdom of God's two-fold purpose?

Think of the proud, religious Pharisee being led by the hand into Damascus. There he meets Ananias, who said to him,

*The God of our fathers fixes upon you beforehand to know His will, and to be acquainted with the Just One, and to hear the voice of His mouth, that you shall be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard (Acts 22:14-15).*

Do we not perceive in these impressive words the foreknowledge of God, so in keeping with His great design for all mankind? As well, notwithstanding his guilt, Christ further said to Paul,

*Go! For I shall be delegating you afar to the nations (Acts 22:21).*

Thus, in a very marked way, we see the apostle as one *extricated* from the people and from the nations, to be God's herald and a teacher of the nations in knowledge and truth.

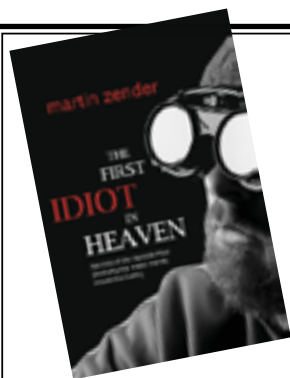
In the guidance of God, what lessons must he have learned in Arabia, in desert quietude! Maybe, the revelation awaiting him there very largely constituted him the lonely figure in his spiritual career. In how great a way Paul was used, his various letters well show. That God was with him in wonderful guidance, his journeys confirm. In God we owe so much to the noble Paul, do we not? How impressively, at Ephesus, he alludes to his unique commission as an apostle of the risen Christ!

*I, bound in spirit, am going to Jerusalem, not being aware what I will meet with in it, more than that the holy spirit, city by city, certifies to me, saying that bonds and afflictions are remaining for me. But of nothing have I a word, nor yet am I making my soul precious to myself, until I should be perfecting my career and the dispensation which I got from the Lord Jesus, to certify the evangel of the grace of God (Acts 20:22-24).*

Truly, "all is of God." Hence, those citations of Scripture as to His wondrous foreknowledge, inscrutable judgments and untraceable ways. Who is there, of thoughtful mind and long experience as a believer of God's Word, who has not again and again perceived evidence of God's directive power? As Cowper writes in *The Task*:

Happy the man who sees a God employed in all the good and ill that checker life! Resolving all events with their effects and manifold results, into the will and arbitration wise of the Supreme.

God is indeed supreme, and moves to His great ends unthwarted by the ill. There is mystery, it is true, but what a marvelous and sustaining hope! ■



352 pp, PB.

*See order form.*

## ***The First Idiot in Heaven***

**Secrets of the Apostle Paul (and Why the Meek Merely Inherit the Earth)**

by — Martin Zender

Paul was a visionary. He saw the world as no one else saw it. Jesus Christ blinded him with truth. "To live is Christ," this man said, and he lived life with singular purpose: to see and know Christ.

In Paul's evangel, God justifies sinners, not law-keepers or moral performers. According to what the terrestrial-bound Jesus taught (the gospel of the Circumcision), law-keepers and moral performers stay on Earth ("the meek shall inherit the Earth" – Matthew 5:5). So the Christians who think that imitating Jesus will get them to heaven will instead (assuming they can actually imitate Jesus) wind up on Earth.

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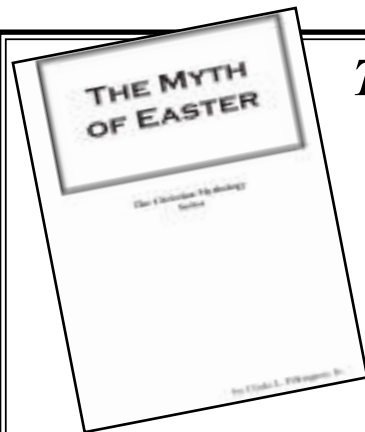


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## ***The Myth of Easter***

*“The Christian Mythology” Series*

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

There are many myths in Christendom. They have managed to master their own form of mythology. Easter is an example of such a religious fable.

If Easter is the celebration of the historical fact of our Lord Jesus Christ's resurrection, then why does its date change every year? Historical dates do not fluctuate; but Easter Sunday can fall anywhere between March 22 and April 25. Have you ever wondered why?

It is one of the glaring clues that something is seriously wrong with Christendom. The Western Christian religion can't seem to get anything right when it comes to even the simplest of Scriptural truths.

Have you ever really considered if there is any scriptural basis of Good Friday or Easter Sunrise Services that are so commonly observed by the religious community? Additionally, have you ever considered what Easter Rabbits and Easter Eggs have to do with the resurrection of Christ or teachings of God's Word?

Although millions of people are of the opinion that Easter and all of its customs are Christian and originated as a result of Christ's resurrection, it is a historical fact that the observance of Easter long antedates Christianity by centuries.