



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume 28
Issue 686

Spiritual vs. Religious Life

by — F.H. Robison (1885-1932)

Religious life, not spiritual life, is the chief mainstay of religious organizations. Indeed, spiritual life is at a reduction because it is concerned chiefly with the will of God, its only object of worship. The will of God often crosses inconveniently with the plans of men or, yes, the religious activities of men.



not help either air or sunshine, however much it may debar the socially incorrect from entering.

Again, organizations appeal to the soul, even to the body, but rarely to the spirit. As soon as a group of people believe that they have some understanding of or insight into Scripture that is not had and has never been had before; as soon as they are unshakably fixed to any idea in or about the Word of God, or to anything other than the Word of God as such, there they have the foundation to their organization and to much human works. The thought that one has something never known by other believers is an insidious thought and has the germ of pride in it. Pride usually rests on ignorance, ignorance of how little is known by any and of how much more is known by others than by ourselves. Pride is a soulish attribute as are all self-conscious powers.

The whole caste system belongs to the old creation. When God's purpose with man is accomplished there will be no more governing and governed, no more rule or authority or power (I Corinthians 15:24), but the perfection of God's shall have been steeped into the very fiber of His creatures so that all show of power will be unnecessary, like the veteran policeman lays off his uniform and enjoys himself in his own grown-family circle.

Soulish powers, God-given though they be, do not enable one to sense the presence of God in His universe nor His sovereignty in our lives.

There was caste under the Old Covenant. There will be caste under the New, but there is rightly none now, and in the end of the long and gracious age following the Millennium there will be none; for that is the age of the New Creation proper, the New Heavens and the New Earth, of which we are but an *advance working model* (Ephesians 2:7).

The soulish man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned (I Corinthians 2:14).

(see *SPIRITUAL LIFE*, page 5909)

The blurred mixture of law and grace which prevails in the minds of Christendom is due to a failure to distinguish between the New Creation and the New Covenant. Many think that, because they are Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Catholics or something else, they are entitled to some special consideration; but the grace of God pays no more attention to those man-made screens than air and sunlight do in passing through an open window. The screen certainly does

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Circumcision of the Heart

by — F.H. Robison (1885-1932)

In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ (Colossians 2:11).

The distinction between outward worship and inward is not peculiar to the writings of Paul. It is found frequently in the Hebrew Scriptures. The *circumcision of the heart* is referred to in Leviticus 26:41; Deuteronomy 10:16; 30:6; Ezekiel 44:7; *circumcision of the ear* in Jeremiah 6:10; *circumcision of the lips* in Exodus 6:12, 30; cf. Jeremiah 9:25-26.

The idea has been made use of before by Paul in Romans 2:25-29, then in Ephesians 2:11 and subsequently in Colossians 2:11. Paul warns against the Judaizers who, since the sentence of Acts 28, had become all that they contentiously spoke of the Gentiles as being. They had spoken of themselves as God's children, and boasted of eating at God's table. They had reproached others as "dogs," as being ceremonially "unclean," and as getting, at best, only crumbs from the table. They were the workers of good, because they had the Temple services.

Paul now reverses the image. The believers, not merely in the Messiahship of Jesus but also in His Lordship and Headship, are the children who banquet on the spiritual feast which God has set before them. The Judaizers are now the dogs who nose around over things which God has marked as refuse. They are now the evil workers and the mutilation.

The mere outward circumcision did not make a Jew in fact. Arabians since Ishmael have circumcised their males. The outward act without the change of heart was no different from cutting off any other part of

the body, as far as any religious significance was concerned. There was a true circumcision in Israel in olden days; there was a true circumcision in Israel during our Lord's ministry, and they followed Him. There was a true circumcision in Israel during the Acts period, and they clustered around the Pentecostal ecclesia or around the apostle Paul.

Now that Israel was sinking into blindness there was little of the true circumcision in her, except such as came over to Paul's new teaching and such of Israel as trusted in God after the manner of Abraham, yet not falling, in the divine apportionment of things, under Paul's own ministry. Of such last were certainly John, Peter and such others of the Twelve as were living. Of such also were the three friendly Jews left to Paul out of his former co-announcers of the Kingdom (Colossians 4:10-11). Aristarchus, Mark and Justus were never transferred from the Bride to the Body, yet they had enough of the spirit of the universal household of faith to appreciate Paul as a brother, though his special ministry was not for them.


We are the true circumcision now. No need to look to the Jew as a class for anything whatever during this dispensation. They are in blindness, and until that blindness is lifted there will be nothing of note. We are the true circumcision¹ who have put off the impurity of the heart – the heart being purified by faith – and have put on Christ, whether belonging to the outward circumcision, as Paul and Timothy, or to the outward uncircumcision, as the most of us.

— Excerpt from:
Are Bride and Body Identical?

TOPICS:

Major: Circumcision; Right Division; Worship
Minor: Israel; Religion

1. [Editor:] For more information on "Spiritual Circumcision," see:
– We are the "Circumcision" – Paul's Figures of Distinction, Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., [Bible Student's Notebook #555](#).



**Some Writings of
F.H. Robison**

by — F.H. Robison (1885-1932)

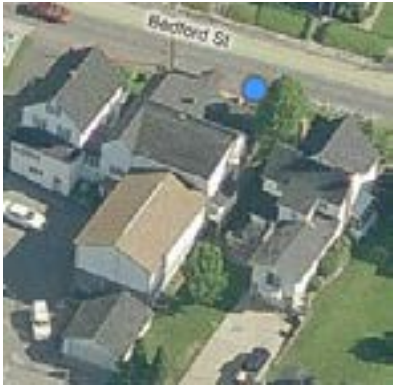
Also the author of the work
*Are the Bride and the Body
Identical?* Robison was a faithful associate of A.E. Knoch and George Rogers.

130 pp, HB
See order form.



Editor's Desk

Paint, PA



Bird's Eye View of Pilkington Abbey

Our local post office is in Windber, PA, but we actually live and have our offices in three structures, built in 1895, on Bedford Street in Paint, PA.



Bedford Street view

There are actually two places named Paint that border Windber: Paint Borough and Paint Township. We live in the former. Paint sits on Paint Creek in Somerset County, just south of Johnstown, 50 miles southwest of Altoona and 75 miles east of Pittsburgh.



Paint Falls

Paint Creek is located in the Allegheny Mountains' Laurel Highlands, in the heart of old coal mining country. It is home to Paint Falls and Little Paint

Falls, though hidden from sight by the old structures of the borough. The population of Paint is just shy of a thousand, approximately half of its population in 1940. It is bordered by Windber and Scalp Level, all part of the Johnstown area.

WINDBER



Coal barons Charles and Edwin Berwind brought their operation here in 1897. Windber obtained its name by reversing the syllables in "Berwind." In Windber's peak in 1910 it had a population of 9,000, more than double its current residents.

Before the mining industry came to the area, Paint Creek's valley was so remarkably scenic that it attracted a steady flow of artists from Pittsburgh to paint its landscape (thus their destination became known as "Paint.") Sadly, today much of its once picturesque beauty bears the clear marks of its previous industry and loss of population.

JOHNSTOWN & THE JOHNSTOWN FLOODS



When talking to folks from outside of the immediate area we often just tell them that we are from "Johnstown." Johnstown, settled in 1770, was formally organized as a town by Swiss German immigrant Josef Schantz (Joseph Johns). Initially known as "Schantzstadt," it soon became Anglicized as Johnstown.

Johnstown also shows the decaying marks of its great industrial past of steel mills, as well as its own population decline. In its prime in 1940 Johnstown had a population of nearly 70,000; today it is less than 20,000. One need not visit the area to imagine what such a drastic decrease in residents has done ►

to its communities. Also known as “Flood City,” Johnstown has had its share of floods; most notable are the floods of 1889, 1936 and 1977.

THE 1889 FLOOD

Infamous 1889 Johnstown Flood Picture



The 1889 flood was the worst disaster by dam failure in American history, as well as this country’s largest single-day civilian loss of life before 9/11. It was on May 31, 1889, that the neglected and compromised South Fork Dam and an extraordinary storm led to the enormous disaster. It is hard even to imagine the scale of its tragedy. Perhaps the best way to begin to grasp the enormity of the flood is by way of a few statistics and facts.¹

- The dam was built between 1838-1853 by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a part of the canal system.
- The dam was purchased in 1879 by the South Fork Fishing and Hunting Club, an exclusive club that counted Andrew Carnegie and Henry Frick among its members.
- The distance between the dam and Johnstown was 14 miles.
- The lake was 450 feet higher than Johnstown.
- In springtime the lake would normally swell to a size of 400 acres.
- The lake had a perimeter of 7 miles, and up to 70 feet deep.
- The dam contained 20 million tons (4.8 billion gallons) of water before it gave way, about the same amount of water as goes over Niagara Falls in 36 minutes.
- Prior to the dam breaking, 6 to 10 inches of rain fell in 24 hours.
- It took 40 minutes for the lake to drain.
- Flood lines were found as high as 89 feet above river level.
- The great wave measured 35-40 feet high and hit Johnstown at 40 miles per hour.

- The depth of the water in Johnstown was as high as 60 feet in some places.
- Four square miles of downtown Johnstown were completely destroyed.
- The pile of debris at the stone bridge was 70 feet high and covered 30 acres.
- The force of the flood swept several locomotives weighing 170,000 pounds as far as 4,800 feet.
- Bodies were found as far as 350 miles away in Cincinnati, and as late as 1911.
- 1,600 homes were destroyed.
- 2,209 people perished.
- 99 entire families died, including 396 children.
- 124 women and 198 men were left widowed.
- 777 victims were never identified and rest in the Plot of the Unknown in Grandview Cemetery.

THE 1936 & 1977 FLOODS

The 1936 flood took two dozen lives, destroyed 77 buildings and severely damaged nearly 3,000 more. In 1977 nearly 1 foot of rain fell in 8 hours causing the Laurel Run Dam to break, draining its 100-million-gallon lake in an hour. Local streams and creeks became raging rivers carving new waterways. 85 lives were claimed (8 of the bodies were never found), and 2,696 were injured. 640 buildings were destroyed and another 2,580 significantly damaged.

“AMERICA’S COUNTY”

Somerset County, which borders the northern side of the Mason-Dixon Line, is honorarily known as “America’s County.”² Its two largest towns are Som-



erset (6,200) and Winder (4,100). A largely rural and agricultural county, it is home to the second-oldest Amish community in North America, founded around 1772.³

1. Gleaned from the Johnstown Area Heritage Association.

2. An honor recorded in the Congressional Record, Volume 151, Part 12, July 14-22, 2005, and registered with the US Patent and Trademark Office.

3. Lancaster County, PA being the oldest.

The highest natural point in Pennsylvania is Mount Davis at 3,213 feet, located in the southern part of the County. The county is also one of the snowiest inhabited locations in the United States, with the highest elevations of the county averaging 150+ inches of snow each winter. We often can have snow as early as late October through early April. Snow has been officially recorded in the county for every month except July, although local lore has it that even July saw snow in 1816, “the year without a summer.” These conditions are ideal for the county’s two most notable ski resorts: Seven Springs and Hidden Valley.

Somerset County is also the location of the Quecreek mining accident of 2002, causing an estimated 75 million gallons of water to fill an underground mining room, trapping nine miners for over 77 hours. Amazingly all nine miners were rescued, using a technology that would later be used to rescue those from the Chilean mining accident in 2010.

Somerset County is also the location of the crash of United Airlines Flight 93 on 9/11 and the National Park Service’s memorial there.

For the past thirteen years our multigenerational extended family⁴ and ministry has been quite ad-

4. There are currently 14 family members from three generations residing here.

SPIRITUAL LIFE (continued from front page)

It was for this reason that the apostle Paul did not speak the wisdom of this age, but the wisdom of God (I Corinthians 2:6-7). The world by its soulish wisdom has not known God.

Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His spirit: for the spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God (I Corinthians 2:9-10).

The deep things of God have to do with His motives and purposes as distinguished from His visible acts. His motives and purposes are knowable only by revelation; so those who scorn it in favor of “natural religion,” the written Word in favor of the wrought Word, are not spiritual. Such might be in possession

equately located here on Bedford Street, a main thoroughfare in Paint. Meanwhile we continue our active search to relocate the *Pilkington Abbey* to a more retreat-like setting to better facilitate our hospitality ministry, *The Fellowship Inn*.⁵ Some of us have imagined that the transition to a new location would have occurred long before now, but,

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

Awaiting further assignment, I remain an ambassador from the Paint consulate,



Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.
Pilkington Abbey
Paint, PA

TOPICS:

Major: Editorial; Ministry

5. For more details on this active search, see our editorial, – A Fellowship Retreat & Retirement Community – Looking toward the Future: Are you interested in participating?, [Bible Student’s Notebook #679](#).

of facts of science and know nothing better to do than to play with them, theorize about them, taking particular care to leave God out of their theories.

The soulish man is anything from the world’s good fellow to the most gifted litterateur or most accomplished artist in forms or tones. He may be “*earthly, soulish, demoniacal*” (James 3:15), or simply “*soulish, having not the spirit*” (Jude 19).

The point of all this here is that one may be extremely religious and not spiritual at all. In fact, to be extremely religious in this dispensation, when a *set system of worship* is not laid upon us, itself marks a dearth of the spirit.

— Excerpt from: *Are Bride and Body Identical?*

TOPICS:

Major: Religion; Soul; Will of God
Minor: Body Life



Obviously we can't out-think the intentions of Father. So, I have learned to be content where I am, *i.e.*, in His will. – **SD**

Kudos to you on your book *Being OK with Not Being OK*. When I am fearful, angry or depressed (as I'm prone to be), this book ALWAYS restores my sanity. God NO DOUBT inspired your penning of that book! This book and your 3-part Video Series *The Greatest Truth I Know* have pulled me out of dark depressions. – **Email**

Your work – the work of one person in one life time – is amazing. I look at it from afar ... and thank God for what is still there – to challenge and encourage me daily. Your *Daily Email Goodies* are a work that I read every day, part of my daily medicine. Is there access to a current goodie file? – **GA**

I posted your site on my Facebook to friends. I was glad to happen on your work. – **PA**

I started re-reading your book *Being OK With Not Being OK*. ... Your book helps me to rest in peace again! – **CO**

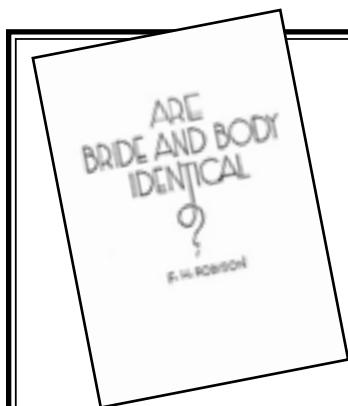
Thank you for your unceasing labor of love for the Body of Christ. – **TN**

We are learning to love and to show hope and peace in the midst of chaos and unbelief, because of the Gospel of Grace given to our beloved Paul from our majestic Redeemer and Champion, the Son of God at the Father's right hand. Thank you for treating me as a brother and fellow pilgrim. This has been rare in my journey until now! Our sincere love and prayers. – **AL**

I have been receiving your email for about a year now and I thoroughly enjoy them. I have been rightly dividing the Word for many years now. I value your insight. Many thanks in the Lord. – **FL**

Back in the day, when I was operating under essentially "*Kingdom of Heaven*" expectations, *i.e.* prophetic fulfillment, etc., I had "hope" as an undergirding strength, but then read *The Silence of God* [by Sir Robert Anderson] and "lost" it. What a day that was. I remember walking down the sidewalk – alone – having felt like I just "lost" the only Father that I ever truly had (because if He could not/would not intervene with physical blessings what good was He, from an everyday practical standpoint?) I was literally devastated to the point of tears. But now, 30 years later, due to Father's love and grace, and a measure of "*the spirit of wisdom and revelation*" (which I pray constantly for), and a large dose of "right division," which He sent to me through you, I find that the knowledge of Father's **absolute** sovereignty brings my heart and spirit more peace, comfort and hope than my previous Baptist "Kingdom" expectations ever did! Of course my old age is ever increasing the nearness of my "rest" (in the dust of the earth) and I know that when I awake "*I shall see God.*" So, I'm thinking that I'll see Father and Son in about 5-10

(see **MAIL**, next page)



Are Bride and Body Identical?

by — F.H. (Fredrik Homer) Robison

That there is a "Bride" mentioned in Scripture, and also a "Body," probably no Bible student, or even Bible reader, would deny. As to whether these different terms refer to the same or to distinct classes of believers is the subject of this work.

128 pp., PB

See order form.

God's Objective in the Creation

by — R. Roe

The Lord is good to all: and His tender mercies are over all His works (Psalm 145:9).

And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched (Mark 9:43-44).

Of these the former asserts a divine attribute, the latter describes a place of punishment; and, if both be taken in an unlimited sense, they are evidently irreconcilable. Having, therefore, to decide which is best entitled to be taken in this sense, and so to be considered as a leading principle, we ought undoubtedly to prefer the former; because, of these two things, the attribute only is essential and unchangeable.

When thus rightly considered, we are taught by the whole tenor of Scripture, as developed both in the character and actions of God, that He had no other object in the creation of intelligent beings than that of making them finally and supremely happy in the

communication of His own blessedness: which object He effects, during successive dispensations, both in this life and the next, through the mediation of His Son; and, under Him, through the ministrations of a chosen portion of His creatures; so that even temporary evil will, in His hands, be made subservient to its more abundant accomplishment.

— *The Final Restoration of All Things* (1835)

TOPPICS:

Major: Creation; God

Minor: Right Division; Salvation of All

MAIL (continued from previous page)

years (or less) and the best part is that it's a *sure* thing! I don't need "signs of the times" because I've got a *death guarantee* which comes with a *resurrection promise* and I can't wait! (I will! But I'll do it with a smile on my face and joy in my heart – the time of dissolution is at hand!) – *SD*

I told you before how inspiring the *Being OK with Not Being OK* book has been to me, so much that this is the 5th [copy of the] book I've purchased. I gave the others away to appreciative friends. Actually, my 95 year old Mother in a nursing home has one of them. It's inspiring to her as well as she's on the same page with me in our understanding of God's Plan. It gives us something positive to talk about. – *CA* ■



185 pp., PB

See order form.

I Choose! Living Life to Its Fullest

Forty-Eight Daily Thoughts on Divine Life

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

This book shares the message of real, meaningful life – Divine life; life that can be lived and enjoyed daily!

The simple fact is that we are alive! Yet not just alive, but alive with the very life of God! But questions arise in our minds: What about the past? What about the future? We mustn't allow our "What if ..." imaginations of the past or the future to lay claim to *the present* that God has given us.

Each of us must allow the objective, unchanging truth of who God has made us in the Lord Jesus Christ to transform our minds. This is the spiritual message and journey of "*I Choose.*"

The Ultimate End of the Story Is Going to Be All Right

My friend Dana and I talk about how we want to make everything all right for those we love, and cannot. Her mother died of pancreatic cancer only a few months ago. We say to each other that if we were God we would make everything all right, and then we stop. Look at each other. Because we suddenly see that making everything all right would not make everything all right. We would not be human beings. ... We agree sadly that it is a good thing that we are not God; we do not have to understand God's ways, or the suffering and brokenness and pain that sooner or later come to us all. But we do have to know in the very depths of our being that the ultimate end of the story, no matter how many eons it takes, is going to be all right.

— Madeleine L'Engle (1918-2007)
Two-Part Invention: The Story of a Marriage
Harper & Row (1988), pages 151-152

TOPICS:

Major: God: Suffering
Minor: Sovereignty

2017 IN REVIEW

We are humbled and thankful to report, by the gracious will of God, that 2017 was an exceptionally fruitful year for the work here. As a way of conveying this encouragement to our readers, we supply you with a little data comparing last year with 2016.

	2016	2017
Number of BSNs issued	52	100
Number of books in print at year's end	161	369
Number of new customers	270	415

We desire to express heartfelt thanks for all those who so faithfully contribute to our work making this possible. It is our ceaseless joy and pleasure to be divinely appointed as co-laborers together in these ministries.

TOPICS:

Major: Ministry

Bible Student's Notebook™

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

ISSN: 1936-9360

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Scripture education in a semi-weekly format!

This free electronic publication is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation that God will 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 in ages past" (Romans 16:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Ephesians 1:1-3);
- 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);
- union in His death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6);
- adult sonship position (Galatians 4).

We do not claim infallibility for the contents of this publication. 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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