



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume 38
Issue 940

Things I Misunderstood

Part 5

7 Things I Misunderstood about Prophecy

An Exposé of Evangelical Prophetic Interpretation

Personal Reflections by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.



What about the end times?
What about the end of the world?

What about the last days?
What about the rapture?

Are any of these near?

Section 5

I Misunderstood that This Current Era Is Limited

... the time is short ... (I Corinthians 7:29).

... the era is limited ... (CV).

I grew up misunderstanding the duration of the current era.¹ I had been taught, and then in turn taught others, that Paul's statement that "the time is short" was a reference to the period of time in which we presently live.

However, I would come to see that Paul was speaking of the former era in I Corinthians 7. I would come to recognize that our current era, which began when Paul revealed the pinnacle of his revelation found in Ephesians and Colossians, is in fact *limitless*. Any attempt at defining the duration of the current Secret Administration is mere speculation.

Limitless is defined as "vast"² and "seemingly boundless."³ These are such appropriate descriptions of a dispensation of unadulterated grace. The very

nature of pure grace makes it so. After all, "where sin abounds grace does much more abound." The sin of Israel's fall ushered in the expansive reign of God's grace.⁴

While Paul anticipated the era of the Acts period to wrap up quickly, nonetheless, "the hope of Israel" was placed in abeyance, superseded by a previously unrevealed immensity of unparalleled grace. The continuation of Israel's prophetic Kingdom graciously has continued to remain in suspension for many centuries now.

(see **PROPHECY**, page 7943)

- See the important work:
 - *The Absolute Despotism of Grace: A Compilation*. This work consists of 25 chapters, by 16 authors, spanning over 135 years, expounding on the marvelous, powerful reign of God's grace in our day. (See the [order form](#) under "Compilations.")

- "A period of time that has a particular quality or character" (*MacMillan Dictionary*).
"A period of time considered as being of a distinctive character" (*Collins Dictionary*).
- Webster's New World College Dictionary*.
- MacMillan Dictionary*.

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Bible Student's Notebook™

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

ISSN: 1936-9360

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Scripture education in a weekly format!

This free electronic publication is dedicated to:

- the absolute sovereignty and deity of God (Romans 11:36);
- 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 through the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the universality of death and resurrection (I Corinthians 15:21);
- the unique gospel of Paul – which he calls "my gospel" (Romans 2:16; 16:25; II Timothy 2:8; I Corinthians 15:1-4; Acts 13-28; Acts 20:24);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret in ages past" (Romans 16:25);
- the epistles of the present Secret Administration being Ephesians & Colossians (Ephesians 3:2, 9; Colossians 1:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the One Body (Ephesians 4:16);
- the Secret Administration, being the operational revelation for today (Ephesians 3:9);
- the unprophesied, Celestial hope and calling of the One Body (Colossians 3:4);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Ephesians 3:1-3);
- 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 and ascended seated position among the celestials (Romans 6; Ephesians 2:6);
- adult sonship position (Ephesians 1:5).

This publication is the product of humble efforts of ordinary men intended to stimulate the earnest study of Scripture. We do not claim infallibility for the contents of this publication; thus they are not meant to imply finality on any subject discussed, or that further research would not add further light from the Word of God. God's storehouse of truth is inexhaustible, so draw on its wealth by prayerful study. 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."

We are always open for discussion, but never for disputation. – André Sneidar

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"The God of All Comfort"

Part 7

by — Hannah Whitall Smith (1832–1911)

Key Points:

The Lord, not in anger, but in tenderest love, shakes that which can be shaken, so that only those "things which cannot be shaken" remain..... 7940
When all of our own foundations are shaking, it is the Lord driving us from our false resting place and forcing us to rest in him alone..... 7940

God's consuming fire is something we shall not be afraid of, but shall warmly welcome..... 7942
God will likewise shake everything in our lives that can be shaken, and will "unbottom" us off every false rest, until only that "which cannot be shaken may remain." 7942

Things that Cannot Be Shaken

And this word, yet once more, signifies the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain (Hebrews 12:27).



We will all acknowledge, I think, that if our souls are to rest in peace and comfort, it can only be on unshakable foundations. It is no more possible for the soul to be comfortable when it is trying to rest on "things that can be shaken," than it is for the body. No one can rest comfortably in a shaking bed, or sit in comfort on a rickety chair.

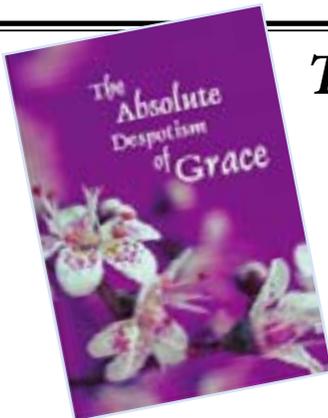
Foundations to be reliable must always be unshakable. The house of the foolish man, which is built on the sand, may present a very fine appearance in clear and sunshiny weather; but when storms arise, and the winds blow, and floods come that house will fall, and great will be the fall of it. The wise man's house, on the contrary, which is built on the rock, is able to withstand all the stress of the storm, and remains

unshaken through winds and floods, for it is "founded on a rock."¹ It is therefore of vital importance that our spiritual life is built upon "things that cannot be shaken."

Of course, the immediate thought that will come to every mind is that it must be built upon the rock Christ Jesus. This is true; but practically, though perhaps unconsciously, we believe that in order to have a rock upon which it will be really safe to build, many other things must be added to Christ. And if we were only perfectly honest with ourselves, I suspect we should often find that our dependence was almost wholly upon these additions of our own; and that Christ Himself, as our rock of dependence, was of altogether secondary importance.

The "foundation of God standeth sure,"² and it is the only foundation that does. Therefore, we need to be "shaken" from off every other foundation in order that we may be forced to rest on the foundation of

1. Matthew 7:25.
2. II Timothy 2:19.



The Absolute Despotism of Grace

A Compilation

A Compilation of 25 chapters, by 16 authors, spanning over 135 years, expounding on the marvelous, powerful reign of God's grace in our day.

146 pages

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God alone. And this explains the necessity for those “shakings” through which we are called to pass. **The Lord, not in anger, but in tenderest love, shakes that which can be shaken, so that only those “things which cannot be shaken” remain.**

The things that are “shaken” are the “things that are made.” It is not that these things are bad things in themselves. It is only that they are not to be the place of our foundation and rest, and that they must therefore of necessity be “shaken.” The great overturnings and tossings in matters of faith, which so often distress us, are only the necessary shaking of the “things that are made,” in order that only that which “cannot be shaken” may remain.

There are times when our experience seems to us settled and immovable as the roots of the everlasting mountains. But there comes an upheaval, and all our foundations are shaken and thrown down, and we are ready to despair and to question whether we can be believers at all. Sometimes it is an upheaval in our outward circumstances, and sometimes it is in our inward experience. Yet, it is the Lord driving us from our false resting places and forcing us to rest in Him alone.

Sometimes the dependence is upon good feelings or pious emotions, and we must be deprived of these before we can learn to depend only upon God.

Sometimes the reliance is upon creeds and supposed “sound doctrine” that have us feel that we are occupying an invulnerable position. We view that we are so correct, and our doctrines are so orthodox; and then

the Lord shakes *our* doctrines and creeds, plunging us into confusion and darkness as to our views.

It was at just such a moment as this that my own soul caught its first real sight of God; and what had seemed certain spiritual ruin and defeat was turned into the most triumphant victory!

Or it may be that the upheaval comes in our outward circumstances. Everything has seemed so firmly established in prosperity that no dream of disaster disturbs us. Our reputation is assured, our work has prospered, our efforts have all been successful beyond our hopes, and our soul is at ease; and the need for God is in danger of becoming far off and vague. Then the Lord puts an end to some or all of it, and we are tempted to think He is angry with us. But in very truth it is not anger that has designed this, but His tenderest love.

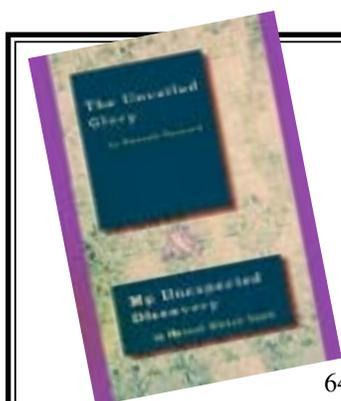
Paul declared that he counted all things but loss that he might win Christ;³ and when we learn to say the same, the peace and joy become our possession as well.

The Lord asked the children of Israel,

What iniquity have your fathers found in Me that they are gone far from Me and have walked after vanity? ... For My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water.⁴

3. Philippians 3:7-8.

4. Jeremiah 2:5,13.



64 pages

See [order form](#) under “Other Authors.”

The Unveiled Glory

— Hannah Hurnard (1905-1990)

and

My Unexpected Discovery

— Hannah Whitall Smith (1832-1911)

Hannah Whitall Smith (1832-1911) was the author of the classic work, *A Christian's Secret of a Happy Life*. Both famous Christian authors discuss their coming to see and embrace the salvation of all.

Like the Israelites, we too forsake the fountain of living waters,⁵ and try to hew out for ourselves cisterns of our own devising. We seek to quench our thirst with our own experiences or our own activities, and then wonder that we still thirst.

If we “*trust in vanity*,” vanity shall be our recompense;⁶ and many a time have we found this to be true. When our feet are walking on “*miry clay*,” we can have nothing but welcome for the Divine Guide Who shall bring us out from the clay, and shall “set our feet upon a rock,” and “establish our goings.”⁷

The prophet Isaiah, when lamenting the sins of his people, said, “*We have made lies our refuge, and under falsehoods have we hid ourselves*,”⁸ and he adds that the Lord had declared that He would “*sweep away the refuge of lies*,” and would cause the waters to “*overflow the hiding place*.”⁹ And he declared that at the center of all of this was “*a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation*.”¹⁰

It might look, as far as the outward seeming goes, as though it was God's wrath that did this, and many a frightened believer thinks it is; but His wrath is only against “*the refuges of lies*,” NOT against us, and love could do no less than destroy these false refuges.

Such “shakings” are always a painful process, and often can be most discouraging at first. Everything seems unstable, and rest seems utterly unattainable. No sooner do we find an experience or a doctrine in which we think we may surely rest, than a great “shaking” comes, and we are forced out again. And this process must continue until all that can be shaken is removed, and only “*those things which cannot be shaken*” remain.

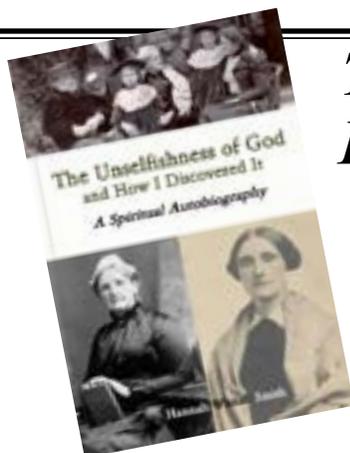
The process will make it seem as if the “*very foundations of the hills moved and were shaken*”;¹¹ and we do not always see at first that it is by means of this very shaking that deliverance is accomplished, and we are to be brought forth into the “*large place*”¹² for which we long.

Old authors used to teach what they called “detachment,” meaning the cutting loose from all that could hold us back from God. This need for “detachment” is the secret of many of our “shakings.” We will not be brought into the “*large place*” so long as we are tied fast to other things, any more than a boat can sail out into the boundless ocean so long as it is tied fast to the shore.

Before He could begin his journey toward “*a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God*,” Abraham must first be freed from all other cities, and must be detached from every other tie. Everything in Abraham's life that could be shaken

5. John 4:10.
6. Job 15:31.
7. Psalm 40:2.
8. Isaiah 28:15.
9. Isaiah 28:17.
10. Isaiah 28:16.

11. Psalm 18:7.
12. Psalm 18:19.



322 pages

See [order form](#) under “*Biographies*.”

The Unselfishness of God and How I Discovered It

The autobiography of Hannah Whitall Smith (1832–1911)

Smith was the author of the famed *A Christian's Secret of a Happy Life* (1875). She was influential in the “higher life” and “holiness” movements. Remarkably, she would come to see and embrace the *salvation of all*. She included a description of this journey and understanding in this autobiography published in 1903.

Not surprisingly, her autobiography would subsequently be republished, but with her accounts of coming to the conviction of the *salvation of all* having been removed. This publication is the complete and unabridged facsimile of the original edition.

was shaken. He was, as it were, “emptied from vessel to vessel.”¹³ All his resting places were disturbed, and there was no settlement or comfort anywhere.

Often, when our own overturnings and shakings come, we are in despair, but it is these very shakings that make it possible for us to reach the “large place.” The psalmist David had learned this, and after all the shakings and emptying of his eventful life, he cried,

*My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation: He is my defense; I shall not be moved. In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength and my refuge is in God.*¹⁴

At last God was everything to him; and then he found that God was enough.

It is the same with us. When everything in our lives and experience is shaken that can be shaken, and only that which cannot be shaken remains, we are brought to see that God only is our rock and our foundation, and we learn to have our expectation from Him alone.

*Therefore, will not we fear though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof... God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved ...*¹⁵

“Shall not be moved” – what an encouraging decla-

13. Jeremiah 48:11.

14. Psalm 62:5-7.

15. Psalm 46:2-5.

ration! Can it be possible that we, who are so easily moved by the things of earth, can arrive at a place where nothing can upset our temper or disturb our calm? Yes, it is possible; and the apostle Paul knew it. When he was on his way to Jerusalem, where he foresaw that “*bonds and afflictions*” awaited him, he could say triumphantly, “*But none of these things move me.*”¹⁶ Everything in Paul’s life and experience that could be shaken had been shaken.

We too may come to the same place so that neither the fret and fear of the little things of life, nor its great and heavy trials, can have power to move us from “*the peace ... that passeth all understanding,*”¹⁷ which is the portion of those whom God has taught to rest only on Him.

A great many are afraid of the “*consuming fire*” of God,¹⁸ but that is only because they do not understand what it is. It is the fire of God’s love, that must in the very nature of things consume everything that can harm His people; and if our hearts are set on being what the love of God would have us be, His fire is something we shall not be afraid of, but shall warmly welcome.

Israel could thank God that the consuming fire of His love would not cease to burn until it had refined them as silver is refined. For their promise was that “*He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and He shall ... purge them as gold and silver are purged*”¹⁹ in order that they would become “*pleasant unto the*

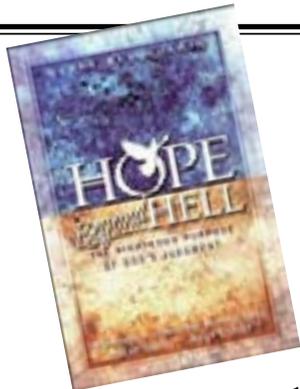
(see **COMFORT**, last page)

16. Acts 20:23, 24.

17. Philippians 4:7.

18. Hebrews 12:29.

19. Malachi 3:3.



Hope Beyond Hell – The Righteous Purpose of God’s Judgment

by — Gerry Beauchemin

This work makes a compelling case affirming that all of God’s “judgments” have a good and remedial purposes.

108 pages

See [order form](#) under “Other Authors.”

Is Time Really Short?

What an enormous expanse God's economy of grace has been! What else would we expect from His pure grace? It has, indeed, been "vast" and "seemingly boundless." It has spanned nearly two millennia already, which pales in comparison to Paul's previous profession that "time is short" (I Corinthians 7:29).

The Law spanned just over 1,500 years. If the Law which caused sin to increase lasted some 15 centuries, does it not make divine sense that Grace would abound long beyond such a period? Of course! And Grace now stands at nearly 20 centuries. But is it nearly over? Is Grace about to cease? Or, has Grace another century? Or, 5 centuries? Or, perhaps an additional 10 centuries to double the duration of the Law? Or, even well beyond that? What kind of show will God make of this great attribute of His? None of us should dare to be so presumptuous as to estimate the end of the era of His Grace!

Like I myself had been, prophetic prognosticators⁵ are simply ignorant of God's current unpropheied dealings with man. They use Scriptures addressed to Israel, as well as Paul's earlier priestly epistles, to promote the idea of a supposed "imminent" coming of Christ (or, the so-called "Rapture," or "Snatching Away"). As a result, their hearers are encouraged to adjust their lifestyles unnaturally for this impending event. One passage from Paul's Acts-period letters

5. E.g. Hal Lindsey (*The Late, Great Planet Earth*), Tim LaHaye (*Left Behind*), Jack Van Impe (*Perhaps Today*), Harold Camping (*Are You Ready?*), Ernest Angley (*Raptured*), Salem Kirban (*I Predict*), Todd Strandberg (*Rapture Ready*).

that is sometimes used to advocate such an adjustment is,

*This I say, brethren, **the time⁶ is short**: it remains, that both they that have wives be as though they had none (I Corinthians 7:29).*

*This I am averring, brethren, **the era is limited**; that, furthermore, those also having wives may be as not having them (CV).*

An approach to life based on this passage from a previous economy is a dishonor to God and contrary to His present purpose as revealed through Paul's further advanced revelations. As a result, it will also wreak unnecessary havoc in one's personal and domestic life, bringing added sorrow to the heart and disgrace to the message of His Grace. For example, if a husband erroneously attempts to conduct his life today as though he had no wife, he most likely will find himself *actually* not having one! Sadly, he will have also missed out on crucial training for coming Celestial occupation!

This current era of Grace is vast and seemingly boundless!

6. The word translated "time" (KJV, Young) and "era" (CV) is *καιρός* (*kairos*). It is defined by A.E. Knoch as "a distinct portion of time having special characteristics" (*Concordant Keyword Concordance*). The *Concordant Version* translates it by four different English words in Paul's epistles. Here are those words along with a verse reference:

- "era" (I Corinthians 7:29);
- "occasion" (Galatians 6:10);
- "season" (Galatians 4:10);
- "period" (I Corinthians 7:5).



See [order form](#) under "Other Authors."

The Fallacy of Post Mortem Punishment in Light of a Successful Savior

by — Mike Owens

This is a summary of the biblical, logical and philosophical reasons by which the author has abandoned the notion of hell or punishment after death. God is an all-powerful God of love Who knows how to win hearts and minds. To assume that He needs to use physical or psychological pain in order to gain the admiration, love or loyalty of His creatures is an insult to His sovereignty and wisdom. Like Thomas and Paul – who came to believe by something they saw and experienced, not by faith – everyone, even the Hitlers and Stalins of this world, will experience PRA – Post Resurrection Amazement.

(to be continued)

NOTE: For the video version of this study, [Things I Misunderstood about Prophecy](#), go to our Biblical Resources channel on YouTube.

NOTE: See the previous installments from this series:

- Part 1** – “3 Things I Misunderstood about God,” [BSN 917](#);
- Part 2** – “3 Things I Misunderstood about Salvation,” [BSN 918](#);
- Part 3** – “3 Things I Misunderstood about Christ’s Sacrificial Work,” [BSN 919](#);
- Part 4** – “4 Things I Misunderstood About the Rich Man & Lazarus,” [BSN 920](#);
- Part 5** – “7 Things I Misunderstood about Prophecy,” Section 1 [BSN 926](#);
- “7 Things I Misunderstood about Prophecy,” Section

- 2, Installment 1, [BSN 933](#);
- “7 Things I Misunderstood about Prophecy,” Section 2, Installment 2, [BSN 934](#);
- “7 Things I Misunderstood about Prophecy,” Section 3 [BSN 936](#);
- “7 Things I Misunderstood about Prophecy,” Part 5, Section 4 [BSN 939](#).

TOPICS:

Major: I Corinthians 7:29; Acts Period; Era; Grace; Prophecy; Prophetic Teachers
Minor: Time

COMFORT (continued from page 7942)

LORD,²⁰ and all nations shall call them blessed, for they “shall be a delightful land,’ saith the LORD of Hosts.”²¹

To be “pleasant” and “delightful” to the Lord may have seemed impossible to Israel when they looked at their shortcomings and unworthiness. But if they thought of the lovely, consuming fire of God’s love, they could have been of good heart and taken courage, for He will not fail nor be discouraged until all their dross and reprobate silver is burned up.

God will likewise shake everything in our lives that can be shaken, and will “unbottom” us off every false rest, until only that “which cannot be shaken may remain.”

20. Malachi 3:4.
21. Malachi 3:12.

(to be continued)

For a short biographical sketch of Hannah Whitall Smith, see: – Editor’s Desk, [Bible Student’s Notebook #921](#).

TOPICS:

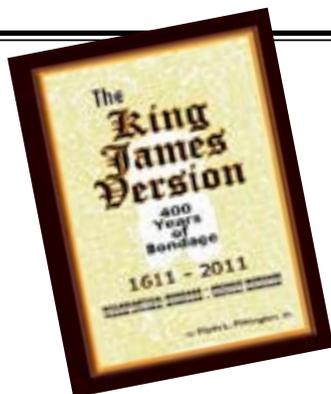
Major: Comfort; Foundation; God; Peace; Rest
Minor: Trials



Restoring the Foundations:
Essays in Relational Theology

by — James Wesley Stivers
(originally published in 1995)
94 pages

A companion book to *Eros Made Sacred*. This is a study of the Christian Man’s relation to God, woman, his children, his firstborn, social order, etc. (See [order form](#) under “Other Authors.”)



72 pages

See [order form](#) under “Pilkington.”

**The King James Version –
400 Years of Bondage**

1611-2011

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

1611 was not a high spiritual mark in the history of the church, the Body of Christ. Instead of being a grand year of the pinnacle of preservation or perfection of God’s Word, it was rather the sad depths of the subtle corrupting of God’s Word by the historic union of governmental and ecclesiastical politics.

An excellent book! – NC
Quite an eye opener to say the least! Very good! – NM