



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume XIII
Issue 320

Being "OK" with Not Being "OK"

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

By the grace of God I am what I am (I Corinthians 15:10).

You just want to be OK. Your struggles are constant; your conflicts are continuous; your battles are endless. You just look forward to that plane – that place and time in life – where everything will just finally be OK.

Really though, who in this life truly is "OK"? The simple fact of the matter is that, regardless of what outward appearances may suggest, we ALL are weak, frail, flawed and endlessly faltering creatures – all of us, *without exception*. The entire creation – every last bit of it – has been subjected, against their will, to vanity. None can escape it; not even you.

*For the creature was made **subject¹ to vanity,² not willingly**, but by reason of Him Who has subjected the same in confident expectation (Romans 8:20).*

This all will be gloriously and permanently corrected in the resurrection, but you might as well go ahead and admit it: for now you're broken, and you aren't going to be "fixed" for now. Granted, you may have some days that are better than others, some circumstances that



seem to indicate that you are "OK," but the wearisome cycle will simply recur.

Thus it is by design – by divine design – and Father is bringing you to a place where you are OK with not being OK, a place where you simply rest in His current purpose and plan in your training and development for that grand and magnificent culmination that He has also wonderfully and skillfully designed especially for you – in your next life.

THE CHRISTIAN "FIX"

Christianity always wants to "fix" everything. Religious bookstores abound in "How to ..." books. Pulpiters continually weary their bench-flocks with what they must *do* to correct things. The pressure is constantly on to get it all corrected, focusing on the problems, on the circumstances, on changing everything – on deliverance from what makes us not OK. Please don't be influenced to buy into this illusive dream.

Though you may have recurring periods of better circumstances and better performances, that which ultimately stops you from being truly OK will never change. The root of your real problem is not coming from your varied and fluctuating circumstances; they are actually coming from the design of God found in you – the failure to which *He* has subjected you. He has

(see **OK**, page 2911)

1. "Made subject" is translated "placed under" in the *Emphatic Diaglot*.
2. The Greek word translated "vanity" here is *mataiotēs*, and is defined by Joseph Thayer (*Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*) as: "What is devoid of truth and appropriateness; perverseness, depravity, frailty, want [i.e., lack] of vigor." B.W. Johnson (*People's New Testament*) defines it as "seeking without finding." It is translated in the follow ways by various versions:
 - "aimless frustration" (An Understandable Version)
 - "spoiled" (Bible in Worldwide English)
 - "frustrated" (Goodspeed New Testament)
 - "imperfection" (Montgomery New Testament)
 - "folly" (The Riverside New Testament)
 - "failure and unreality" (Weymouth New Testament)
 - "futile" (Moffatt New Testament)
 - "weak" (New Life Study Testament)
 - "imperfection" (Centenary Translation)
 - "dissolution" (Original New Testament)

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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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OK (continued from front page)

purposefully and expertly created you with flaws – an abundance of them – that will never go away in this lifetime.

Count on it: if God Himself, in His great wisdom and love for you, has – at this time – subjected you to futility, all of the self-help-religion in the world won't be able to change it.

THE REAL ANSWER

Because of this wise and competent plan of Father, the real answer is never to be found in you at all. The answer is to be found in Him – and in Him alone. It is to be found in knowing just Who He really is, and just what His plans are for you in this temporal life.

[God] said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you: for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest on me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities ... for when I am weak, then am I strong (II Corinthians 12:9-10).

I AM WHAT I AM

By the grace of God I am what I am (I Corinthians 15:10).

“I am what I am.” Herein lays a *great* key. God has made you what you are. *You* are His handiwork³ – every bit of you – flaws and all. *You* ARE what you ARE by God's direct hand. Rest in Him. Rest in His work in you. Rest in His plan for you. Rest in His sure outcome for you.

As a son of God we can be thankful for the sufferings and hardships of this life. If not for them, we would be distracted from our celestial hope. In a seemingly strange, yet divine way, we can be thankful even for our bouts with complaining,⁴ realizing that they, too, are a godsend. After all, “*all things are of God*” (II Corinthians 5:18), even the “*evil spirit from the LORD*” that troubled Saul (I Samuel 16:14). For, even for us, our complaining makes us realize that this world is not our home and creates in us such a strong desire for something more, something better – and that better thing is Father Himself!

So, relax; the way you are is His outworking in you.

3. “we are His workmanship” (Ephesians 2:10, KJV).

“His achievement are we” (CLT).

“we are His handiwork” (Weymouth).

4. See “A Complaining Spirit” (Bible Student's Notebook #316).

BEING OK WITH OTHERS NOT BEING OK

It's the same for other people as well: they are who they are. We are all in His skillful hands; each one of us designed and being masterfully crafted to fit into His glorious, creative collage.

Just as it is true that we are the way we are because Father is working in *us*, even so He is working His expert plan perfectly and precisely in *all* of His creation, as He is the “*faithful Creator*” (I Peter 4:19).

Father is extremely good at His job, and just like with any other work, you can't judge the finished product when seeing it in some stage of its development. This is true of you and me, but it is also true of our loved ones and friends – all of God's creation!

Attempting to be “God” to someone is an especially hard job if you are not qualified. There is only One in the universe qualified for such a daunting task, and He already has all things squarely under His control.

Don't be discouraged when you look around you. What you see is NOT the end of God's plan and purpose. What you see is NOT the finished product of God. God is actively at work in us in every circumstance, of every life. He is steadily and successfully working “*all things after the counsel of His Own will*,” finding no challenge with the circumstances and lives of our loved ones – not even the hard cases. Nothing poses an obstacle to Him – after all, He *is* the *Almighty* God.

Don't be overwhelmed: you're NOT the Workman. God is God; He is in charge. He loves others just as unconditionally as He loves you. He is molding them as surely as He is you – day-by-day – into *all* that He intends for them to be, regardless of what we may think we currently see.

One day you'll be OK. In the resurrection Father will perfect His work in you. Until then you can be OK with not being OK. It's all Father's plan. To Him, beautiful is the mess we are.

So, relax and enjoy *His* work.

(This is an excerpt from an upcoming book by the same title.)

Why Christ Died and Man's Doctrine of Substitution

by — Arthur P. Adams (1845-1925)

There are two enmities spoken of in the New Testament which Christ removes: the Law, (Ephesians 2:15), and the carnal mind (Romans 8:7).

The law is an enmity between man and God – a stumbling block bringing death, not life. Christ delivers us from this hopeless condition, from under the guilt (Romans 3:19) and penalty (death) of the law – “*having slain the enmity*” (Ephesians 2:16), “*blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross*” (Colossians 2:14). By His death He permanently placed it where it can no longer harm the sinner, because by His death He opened up the way of faith which is above and beyond the reach of law.

The carnal mind is an enmity that Christ removed, being “*made sin for us*,” opening up the way whereby we become partakers of His “*divine nature*” so that we possess the “*mind of Christ*” (I Corinthians 2:16; Philippians 2:5) and are “*no longer in the flesh but in the spirit, if so be the spirit of Christ dwell in us*” (Romans 8:9).

The death of Christ reconciles us to God by the removal of the two enmities. Furthermore, Christ's death reconciles us to God by revealing Him to us, by making God known to us. Mankind is now unreconciled to God because they do not know Him. “*God is not in all their thoughts*” (Psalm 10:4). The great mass of the world are in the condition that Paul describes when he says,

Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God by the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts (Ephesians 4:18).

This is the present condition of the race: dark, ignorant, blind. Now, when this darkness is dissipated, when this ignorance is enlightened, when “*the eyes of*



the blind are opened” so that the world becomes acquainted with God, then forthwith they will become reconciled to Him, and they will begin to love Him.

Acquaint now thyself with God and be at peace (Job 22:21).

When we become acquainted with God we have peace – “*peace with God*,” reconciliation. Now Jesus Christ is the one perfect revelation and image of God. He comes to man as “*Emmanuel, God with us*” (Matthew 1:23). Through Him “*God was manifested in the flesh*” (I Timothy 3:16), and thus Christ reveals God to us; knowing the Son we know the Father also (John 8:19), and thus are we reconciled to God, *i.e.*, changed from enemies to friends. This is confirmed by I John 3:16 and 4:7-11; through the sacrifice and death of Christ, God's love is “*manifest*” and we are enabled thereby to “*perceive*” it, and so we come to “*love Him, because He first loved us*” (I John 4:19) and thus are reconciled to Him.

Romans 5:10 declares that we are reconciled by His death and saved by His life. We have seen how we are reconciled by His death; I will add a word as to how we are saved by His life. Salvation is the completion or outcome of the work of reconciliation; we are not yet saved, only by faith (Ephesians 2:8) and hope (Romans 8:24), nor shall we be until “*delivered from the bondage of corruption*.”

Now then, when we are thus saved we shall in the full and perfect sense partake of the “*divine nature*” or life – we shall be one with the Father and the Son even as They are one. Then in the full sense (not by faith but in fact) we shall receive the life of the Son of man. Now we live by faith (Galatians 2:20) as we are saved by faith; then we shall live in fact and be saved in reality, for salvation is life, the “*new creation*” (II Corinthians 5:17) in its ultimate completion, and we know that we are “*made alive in Christ*” (I Corinthians 15:22). Thus are we “*saved by His life*.”



For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life (Romans 5:10).

WHY CHRIST DIED

We will proceed now to notice other Scripture that speaks of the purpose of the death of Christ. Christ Himself gives a reason for His death when He says,

Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit (John 12:24)

Then a little further on He says,

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto Me.

John the evangelist adds, *“This He said signifying what death He should die.”*

The death of Christ is the ground of the reconciliation of the world (*“much fruit,” “all man”*) unto God. Jesus is the *“First Born among many brethren”* (Romans 8:29). This same reason for the death of Christ is also especially set forth in Hebrews 2:9-15. Jesus Christ *“tasted death for every man”* in order to *“bring many sons unto glory.”*

Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Christ died to deliver man from the bondage of fear; for when we come to know God we are reconciled to Him, as we have seen, and we begin to love Him, and fear is cast out (I John 4:18).

We will look at one more passage, in Romans 14:9. We have here a specific, direct answer to the question, *“Why did Christ die?”*

To this end Christ died and lived again, that He

might be Lord of both the dead and living.

Christ is the Lord, Head or Chief of the race (compare the use of the word “Lord” in Matthew 22:43-45). He is Head over all things (Ephesians 1:22); *“He is the beginning, the First Born from the dead that in all things He might have the preeminence”* (Colossians 1:18); He is *“the Beginning of the creation of God”* (Revelation 3:14), i.e., the finished creation, the *“new creation.”*

Now in order thus to be Lord, First or Chief of the dead, as well as the living, it was necessary of course that He should become one of the dead. In this condition He was Chief or Head of all mankind; He was the first to pass through the entire process of God’s way to life through death, hence He is *“Lord of the dead.”* We know also that He was the first to enter into life, the life of the *“perfect man”*; He was the *“First Born from the dead,” “the First Fruit,” “the first that should arise from the dead,”* and thus He became *“Lord of the living,”* the *“Beginning”* of a regenerated race so that now He can say,

I am the First and the Last and THE LIVING ONE; and I became dead, and behold I am alive unto the ages of the ages, and I have the keys of death and of hades (Revelation 1:18).

Thus Christ died that He might become Lord, First-fruit, and Beginning of both the dead and the living, and *“if the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy; if the root be holy so are the branches”* (Romans 11:16).

ANSWERS TO THE QUESTION, “WHY DID CHRIST DIE?”

First, to reconcile the world to God; and this includes,

Second, the removal of the two enmities, *“the Law of Commandments”* and the carnal mind.

Third, making known God to man, through Jesus Christ, *“the express image of the invisible God.”*

Fourth, the bringing forth of the *“Much fruit,”* the *“Many Brethren,”* the *“Many Sons,”* the *“Whole Creation.”*



Fifth, the destruction of the works of the devil.

Sixth, the deliverance of “*the children*” from the bondage of fear.

Seventh, to become Lord of both the dead and the living.

Eighth, then of course, there was the purpose to ratify Israel’s New Covenant (Hebrews 9:16-17).

NOT A “SUBSTITUTE,” NO “VICARIOUS” ATONEMENT

In all of these answers to the question, “Why did Christ die?” *there is not a particle of substitution*, not the least hint at a so-called “Vicarious” atonement.

I know, of course, how some try to make out “substitution” from some of these texts we have examined; but this is done either by ignorance, thoughtlessness or prejudice. No deliberate, impartial examiner of these Scriptures can find any “substitution” in them at all. Yet men insist on this God-dishonoring dogma as though it was one of the main pillars of the eternal throne.

Perhaps some will think of such passages as,

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

[He] *suffered for sins, the just for the unjust* (I Peter 3:18).

These passages may *seem* to some to teach substitution, but this is only because they have been accustomed to so regard them. For instance, here is a paragraph from the writings of one who believes in substitution.

Christ was our Substitute in death; He died the just **FOR** the unjust. He tasted death **FOR** every man. This dying **FOR** the guilty was substitution.

In this paragraph the brother emphasizes the “*for*” as though of itself it taught substitution – but does it?

Is it possible for one person to do something *for* an-

other except as the other’s substitute? How blind and careless these self-constituted leaders are. The physician prescribes a remedy **FOR** his patient, but not **INSTEAD** of him. Christ “*died **for** our sins*” (I Corinthians 15:3), *but not **instead** of them*. He died “*the just **for** the unjust*,” but it does not follow from this statement, as many think, that He died *instead* of the unjust.

“*He bore our sins*,” but in what capacity? As an associate, or as a substitute? So far as the simple statement is concerned it might be either; but from other Scripture, as we have seen, we know that *Christ was not our substitute*, but our Companion, Elder Brother and Sharer of our woes.

Christ “*tasted death for every man*,” but it could not have been as a substitute for every man, for the simple reason that man must himself die; we can very readily see how Christ died for man as his associate,

Made in all points like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest (Hebrews 4:15).

We can readily see how He was the first to pass through the whole process of God’s way of life through death, as our Forerunner, and the Captain of our salvation, in order to deliver man, not *from* a death to which they were exposed, but *out of* a death in which they were *already* involved.

It would be impossible to explain, either on a scriptural basis or on the ground of fact and reason, how Christ died as man’s substitute; for surely man himself must die.

Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return (Genesis 3:19).

Every man must himself bear death, with the exception that Paul refers to in I Corinthians 15:51. The idea then of substitution or vicarious atonement is simply and purely a human “*tradition*,” “*making the Word of God of none effect*” (Mark 7:13).

As this subject is very important, I will add another illustration of the shallow, careless way in which men reason in order to prop up this falsehood of

(see **WHY**, last page) ➤

All in Father's Design

by — André Sneidar

Father's purpose in us is to awaken and enlighten us to the truth that this world and life are not our reality. It is His way of reminding us of who we really are, and what we really are, in Christ as part of His grand design for the ages. He has a wondrous plan, purpose and place for us against which the things of this life pale in comparison, about which Paul said that all of this life is really nothing compared to the *"far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory ..."* (II Corinthians 4:15-18) which one day will be *"revealed in us"* (Romans 8:18).

Just think: One day Dad will use what the world sees as our pitiful imperfections – our brokenness, our divinely implanted flaws – as the display of His *"abundant grace"* (II Corinthians 4:15). Even in this life the outworking of death (*"the dying of the Lord Jesus,"* :10) in us has a glorious purpose: that the *"life of Jesus might be manifested in our mortal bodies"* which will eventually (and even now in some measure) *"through the thanksgiving of many super-abound to the glory of God"* (:15).

We read in :6 that God *"commanded the light to shine out of darkness,"* taking us back to Genesis, and in the same way God's light *"has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of His glory ..."* Imagine that! The same creative power of God that brought all of creation into existence is at work in us for the purpose of revealing *"the light of the knowledge"* of His Glory to the world around us, illuminating, as it were, *"the face of Jesus Christ"* to others!

When we read in :7 about *"treasure in earthen vessels,"* we are taken back to when God used just a very few of His people to defeat a huge army arrayed against Israel. These few had a light in earthen vessels, and then when the vessels were

broken the light shone forth to reveal God's awesome work. In the same way, God is working in His *"not many"* (I Corinthians 1:26) vessels of service; and it is in our brokenness that His light, *"the light of the glorious gospel of Christ"* (II Corinthians 4:4), shines forth to the world to reveal God's awesome work!

This ministry spoken of in :1 is in the continuing context of chapter 3, and is a ministry of our being living, walking *"epistles"* (3:3), the purpose of which is to give *"life"* (:6). Our wonderful Father uses the troubles, perplexities, persecutions – all of the trials and tribulations of this life (4:8-9) – to deliver us to death, for the marvelous breaking of His vessels. Thus, while the world is busy attempting to show off their supposed superiority of supremacy, God ultimately reveals the futility of the *"darkness"* of their *"blinded minds,"* demonstrating the *"excellency"* of His power through us.

What a wonderful and glorious privilege and benefit it is for us that our Awesome Father has chosen us to use as weak, flawed, broken vessels in His service, so that ultimately the whole creation will see and understand the amazing knowledge and wisdom in all that He has done and said He will do.

*Oh! the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counselor? Or who has first given to Him, and it shall be repaid to him again? **For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to Whom be glory throughout the ages. Amen!*** (Romans 11:33-36).

substitution. In order to defend this doctrine from the charge of injustice – the injustice of the innocent suffering, instead of the guilty – it is alleged that this is no more unjust than the vicarious suffering that is allowed in the world all of the time:

Do not the innocent suffer for the guilty here in this life? Is there not vicarious suffering all around us, the mother suffers for the child, the child suffers for the parent, the wife suffers for the husband, the community suffers for the criminal, etc.? Surely, if God permits this continual vicarious suffering in the world, should we find fault, and brand it as unjust, because Christ suffers vicariously?

Now is it not a marvel that intelligent, thoughtful men – ministers, editors of religious periodicals, evangelists, etc., – that such men as these should reason in this way and not perceive its utter fallacy? It is true that there is a great deal of suffering in this world on the part of the innocent for the guilty, this of course is a certain and a sad fact; but is this suffering vicarious? These words mean “to do or suffer in the place of another.” Do the innocent suffer in the place of the guilty in this world? *i.e.*, instead of the guilty, so that the guilty escape the punishment that the innocent suffer in their stead? Will the drunken husband have less punishment because his wife has suffered a part of his punishment in his place? This

would be the case if the wife suffered for him vicariously, *i.e.*, as his substitute; but of course no one has any such idea. The fact is, there is no vicarious suffering in the world, not a particle; the innocent suffer for the guilty, *i.e.*, on their account, but they do not suffer in their place, or instead of them. No one suffers a single pang that another ought to suffer in that other one’s stead, and no one will escape a single pang because someone else has suffered it in his place.

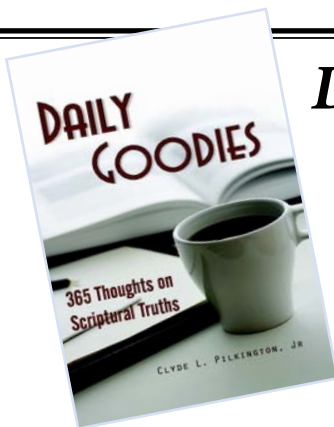
Every man shall bear his own burden (Galatians 6:5).

Every man shall receive according to his deeds (Romans 2:6).

Every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward (Hebrews 2:2).

Thus on every hand, however we may look at it from the stand point of reason, fact or Scripture, it is seen that the doctrine of substitution is false. Let it go with that other lie of endless torments, seeing that it is equally dishonoring to God. We can readily find from Scripture the real reasons for the death of Christ, reasons that commend themselves to an enlightened judgment and that magnify the wisdom and love of God.

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