



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume VIII
Issue 188

A New Way of Seeing

Gleanings from the writings of
Norman P. Grubb (1895-1993)

What is your outlook on life? What do you see in all the circumstances surrounding you? The answer to these questions is the difference between life and death, between turmoil and peace, between fear and love, between despair and hope, unhappiness and joy.



whom I had always thought of as a far-off Person quite apart from His creation. It produced a new seeing of Him, as actually revealed in all created forms, even if they have been distorted from their original harmony.

Jesus introduced to His disciples a new way of "seeing;" a seeing with the single, spiritual eye. Perceiving the divine viewpoint will change one's perspective in its entirety.

That was a vast stride for me, for it gave me the "single eye" which Jesus said will fill the body with light. I began to be a "see-through-er" to Him, rather than a "see-at-er," in all that is in His universe, whether man or matter, whether evil or good. I then began to find the poise, calmness, hope and faith there is in such single-seeing.

In these selected gleanings from the works of Norman Grubb¹, we will be taken on a journey into this new way of seeing.

"ALL THINGS" ARE OF GOD

GOD IS "ALL IN ALL"

For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to Whom be glory for ever. Amen (Romans 11:36).

Looking, from heaven downwards rather than earth upwards, and realizing that God has always been nothing but the God of perfection, "working all things after the counsel of His own will" (Ephesians 1:11), we can see the whole problem of our chaotic world from a totally different point of view.

Life in the human [form] must always be a tension, a constant propounding of problems with no adequate solution, a constant oscillation between the pleasurable and the painful; but when we raise our sights from the human to the divine, the whole picture changes. All started with God, all ends with God, and there is only One with Whom He has to do; all is centered in Christ.

He who is unchangeable from everlasting to everlasting has always been the "All in all." And that means what it says. If God is the "All in all," then all that exists is a unity of which He is the Center, and everything manifests Him, on one level or another.

Therefore, whatever intervenes in history [History], whether pleasant or unpleasant, must ►

That was what first truly opened my eyes to the One

1. These gleanings are a collection taken from his following books: *The Deep Things of God* (1958); *God Unlimited* (1962); *Once Caught, No Escape* (1969); *Who Am I?* (1974); *Summit Living* (1985).

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be caught up into the stream of His purposes of grace in Christ. If the devil appears on the scene, then the devil must be His agent. If the fall of man adds to the chaos, then we must learn that He has already foreseen that and the fallen first Adam was to be only a type in reverse (Romans 5:14) of the last redeeming Adam. This same Christ would Himself embrace the consequences of sin, atone for it, conquer it, and then produce out of the wreckage of fallen humanity a new race of sons to occupy the highest position in the universe, to share the throne of Him who is made "*higher than the heavens*" (Hebrews 7:26), "*better than the angels,*" seated at "*the right hand of the majesty on high*" (Hebrews 1:3-4).

Evil, then, would be to Christ an agency for good, utilizing it for good, because faith understands that God reigns in the darkness as well as in the light – "*the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee*" (Psalms 139:12) – and that God fulfills His own purpose through adverse circumstances which expose to man his *inability*, and spur him on to the receiving faith in the liberating *ability* of God.

ALL ARE "IN HIM"

Paul was bold to say of all humanity, redeemed and unredeemed, that "*in Him we live and move and have our being*" (Acts 17:28). That is a strong statement. Not just that He made us, and in some sense we have a derived but separate life He has given us. No, indeed. All men are "*in Him.*" Their natural life, their thinking and acting, are expressions of Him. It is impossible for any created being, of this world or any other, including the devil and his angels, to be out of God. All are "*in Him*" eternally; He is the hidden root of their lives, the hidden Self behind their selves. Separation from Him is an impossibility.

"ALL THINGS" – ONE IN CHRIST

We see the unity of the universe, the oneness of all, which is a present fact to the eye of faith, and is stated in its final form when Paul says that He is going to "*gather together in one all things in Christ*" (Ephesians 1:10). That settles it. All is one, and that great day is coming when what now appears separated to the outward eye will be visibly and ►

Bible Student's Notebook™

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This weekly 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 the law (Galatians 5:1)
- the organic nature of the church, the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12)
- the distinct ministry of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles (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 forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14)
 - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6)
 - adult sonship position (Galatians 4)

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This publication is not connected with any "church," "denomination," "movement," "organization," "mission," "creed," "meeting," "school," "conference" or "fellowship."

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eternally one in Him. Think of that: not Christ in the universe, but the universe in Christ ... Even the word *universe* means *one* ...

NOT TWO POWERS, BUT ONE

We shall never find the answers to life's problems until we see Him as the only One in all activity, not two powers but one. Not a dichotomy, but a unity. As Jesus said,

The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness (Luke 11:34).

Yet the opposite of single is not evil, but double. Why then evil? Because to see double is to see evil. We only have the secret when we see as Jesus did, through all to One – to Him, the Father, including seeing through the devil. Isaiah saw this more clearly than any other writer in the Bible in some chapters such as 45 and 46.

I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things (Isaiah 45:7).

EVEN EVIL INTENDED FOR GOOD

But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good ... (Genesis 50:20).

When the adventure of adversity is seen in its true perception, it is found to be the doorway into God's most transcendent secret – that adversities and sufferings, which in their origin are the effects of sin, in the grasp of faith become *redemptive*. We "*count them all joy.*" We "*rejoice in tribulation.*" We use them as special opportunities to see the manifestation of God's power, instead of merely enduring them with a struggle as "judgments" or "tests."

IMPERFECTION – POINTING TO PERFECTION

Imperfection in all forms is God's finger pointing to perfection. It makes a tremendous difference to our outlook and actions when we realize this, for we learn to recognize that weakness, shortages,

failures, disappointments, all that is short of the ideal, which are in God's order for this age, are for one purpose only: as parables, as figures, as sign posts pointing to the hidden sufficiency: types pointing to prototypes. If there are weaknesses, there is strength; if shortages, supply; if failures, success. Thus we read that Adam was "*a figure of Him that was to come*" (Romans 5:14) – the first Adam, the failure, pointed to the necessity in God's purpose of perfection, of a last Adam, the fulfillment.

UNDERSTANDING THE NEGATIVE

We give negatives positive names, as does the Bible, because they are real entities; but at the same time by doing so we tend to obscure their real condition as negatives. Biblically, evil is merely not-good; bitter is not-sweet; hate is not-love; man is not-God; and so on.

When we see all negatives in their true character, we see this vital fact – that they are merely the reverse side of their positives. They are not meant to be anything apart from their positives. They have no rightful existence except as minor to major, night to day, darkness to light, no to yes, each by union with its positive giving distinctive birth and form and character to some manifestation of its positive, as do the minor to the major keys in music.

Therefore, insofar as they have been infected and inflamed by a contrary spirit, He who is the Positive, the "*All in all,*" must necessarily restore them. This He has done in what the Bible calls "*the reconciliation of all things*" (Colossians 1:20; Romans 8:19-21). He will not finally permit any portion of His creation to remain "out of temperature;" He will,

... Gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him (Ephesians 1:10).

THE WAY OF THE CROSS

Released from the negative spirit, all negative conditions fall back to their rightful place for those in whom Christ lives; the bitter brings out the flavor of the sweet; light shines out of darkness; mortality is swallowed up by life; evil is overcome by good. That is to say, what comes to us in the natural ►

as trial, sorrow, suffering, privation, persecution, in our spirits we see to be not objectionable invasions of something contrary and frustrating, but the way in which we are,

Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body (II Corinthians 4:10).

He again is dying in us (His human body) in all kinds of situations, and He is rising victorious in us. His life is manifest to all in our mortal flesh (our visible enjoyment of the unenjoyable); the integrating victory of the Spirit is seen in us as we “*take pleasure*” in things which are the opposite to natural pleasure – “*infirmities, reproaches, necessities, persecutions, distresses, for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong*” (II Corinthians 12:10). Evil then is servant to good, hate the seedplot of love.

Inner integration in unpleasant situations has far wider repercussions than the personal. It is the continuation of Christ’s vicarious sufferings and saving resurrection.

Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body’s sake, which is the church (Colossians 1:24).

Christ still dies and rises again for the world through His spiritual body, as He did through His earthly one. That does not mean that Christ’s unique redemptive work for the world was not completed or could in any least degree be effected through any body except His own, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin, Mary, the Jesus of history Who was crucified at an exact location, buried in a known tomb, and viewed in His resurrection body by many witnesses. Yet it is also constantly the Christ who lives in the believer walking in us the way of victorious death and resurrection in every one of millions of situations and spheres of service, right along the line from the mother with her family, to the worker in his job.

The point so hard to learn and relearn in our Christian immaturity is God’s way of the cross: confronted with the necessity of a world that must die to sin

and rise to righteousness, the One who need not so die and rise went that way first Himself; and by that vicarious act released death and resurrection power through Himself for a world. So Paul could write that,

... Death worketh in us, but life in you (II Corinthians 4:12).

NEED: THE EVIDENCE OF SUPPLY

God must restore rebel negatives to their predestined estate of submission to their positives. He must overcome evil by good, clothe the corruptible with incorruption, and swallow up mortality in life. This He did, in His “*determinate counsel and foreknowledge,*” by the One Who died to that negative spirit; replaced by His resurrection; and in His ascension awaits the day when the last negative (death, *i.e.*, not-life) will be put under His feet.

Long before there was condition of need God had completed His work of perfect creation. The fall and its consequences have been an apparently tragic interlude, but that was provided for in “*the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*” (Revelation 13:8).

Therefore, God has always had His fullness ready to replace our emptiness, His perfection our imperfections, His light our darkness, His life our death. He has always intended, planned and provided total supply for every human need, and the supply has always been there. It is not that our need initiates the demand for its supply and must somehow call attention of the Father to it and persuade Him to supply. No; indeed, *HE* initiated the need so that we might find all our supply in His and our Christ!

The need is the proof that the supply is there, and is merely God’s means of conditioning us to be agents of faith. It is God who confronts us with every kind of problem, inability, difficulty, that in our weakness, He may flash the spark of faith into our hearts, His faith, that His supply for exactly that situation was there long before.

THE PARABLE OF LIFE ITSELF

That is the meaning of parable, and all life is a parable, if we understand it; for a parable is an earthly representation of a heavenly fact. What fact? It is the story of some human need picturing a spiritual need – the man who fell among the thieves, the lost sheep, the prodigal son – but is that all? No, the story always points on to the supply of that need, the provision of grace. The Kingdom of Heaven parables underline human need as pointers to the One Who from eternity has been Supplier of all need.

Parables, therefore, are signposts, not to see need which is obvious, but to the One who has brought the need to our attention because He intends to supply it. In this sense, the whole of our human existence is one continuous parable. It is one vast imperfection pointing to the invisible perfection already ours in Christ; one vast confusion pointing to the eternal order in Him. It stirs in all who have eyes to see the longing for that final perfection at His coming, but at the same time it is God's summons to us to receive by faith in the here and now the supplies of some many needs.

OUTPOURED LOVE MEETING THE NEED

God is love; and what is love? In a word, love is for others. If I love, my interest and involvement is to meet the other person's need, no matter what happens to me in the course of it. This is our God of the universe. He is love. He exists for His universe, not His universe for Him. If His universe is fulfilled, He is fulfilled. If it is happy and harmonious, He is happy.

That is why He is safe as God. In all human history, because we are self-interested, not other-interested, all those who have power over others turn it to their own advantage. It is they for Him, not He for them. That has been the curse of dictators, kings, rulers, tyrants and, yes, capitalism – turning what they control to their own advantage. Yet God is love. It is not the universe for His convenience, but He for it. His pleasure is when we are pleased and satisfied.

The final title given His Son in the Bible is "*the Lamb*," in the book of Revelation. It comes no less

than twenty-seven times: "*The Lamb on the throne*," "*the Lamb is the light thereof*," "*the marriage supper of the Lamb*," "*follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth*."

Why the Lamb? What is the character of a lamb? You can do what you like with a lamb. This is the nature of the Son, only that He is deliberately, not helplessly, available.

God is love, and love means existing to meet the needs of others, with total indifference to what happens to yourself. Love belongs to need, just as Jesus who was Love in the flesh, likened Himself to bread, which ceased to love its own life in the cornfield and finds its true end in being the means by which others live. All forms of creation demonstrate this to be so, and that they are involuntary manifestations of Him whose forms they are, because everything finds its true end in being something for others: the tree becomes a table for me, the metals in the earth become my conveniences for living.

But God as *The Person* can only be a person through persons, so that in this living union in Christ, as He is limitless love, so we are love in endless variety of expression, for,

... As He is, so are we in this world (I John 4:17).

Wonderfully profound words from our dear brother! We would encourage the re-reading of these gleanings a few times, for if your experience will be the same as ours, you will find a deepening richness with each reading.

Truly *all* of life is but a parable leading us to the single-eye of spiritual seeing – the divine perception of the eternal supply of God – the benevolent Creator, the Love Worker of "*all things*" as the "*All in all*" of His universe. Seeing not evil at work, but seeing through "*all things*" to Him, the sovereign God of the universe; "*seeing Him who is invisible*" (Hebrews 11:27); and seeing through to His and our Christ –

Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith ... (Hebrews 12:2). ■



Select Readings on God's Ecclesia (Part 5)

"Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach" (Hebrews 13:12-13).

SO MUCH WASTE

There is probably not another field of human activity where there is so much waste as in the field of religion ...

In the average church we hear the same prayers repeated each Sunday year in and year out with, one would suspect, not the remotest expectation that they will be answered. It is enough, it seems, that they have been uttered. The familiar phrase, the religious tone, the emotionally loaded words have their superficial and temporary effect ... Yet every Sunday morning for twenty years he goes through the same routine and, allowing two hours for him to leave his house, sit through a church service and return to his house again, he has wasted 170 twelve-hour days with this exercise in futility.

A.W. Tozer (1897-1963)
Born After Midnight, pp. 100-101

GOD'S TRUE ALTAR TODAY

The altar call, as we know it, has its roots in the person and ministry of Charles Finney (1792-1875). Finney's meetings involved huge crowds and multiple conversions, and altar calls were used as a means to lead people to Christ ...

What was an altar used for in the Old Testament? It was used to offer up a sacrifice to God. The higher spiritual truth for us today ... is to be found in Romans 12:1. It states, "... *present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service ...*" We must understand that we are to become an altar unto

God, and that our life must become a sacrifice unto Him. It is not a matter of going to an altar as much as it is becoming an altar!

We must stop trying to force and manipulate people to come to a man-made altar, convincing them that walking an aisle is what saves them. Rather, we must help them to comprehend that God has *already* reconciled them to Himself through the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. As they are *awakened* to this truth they will want to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. When this takes place we *become an altar*, and our *lives become a living sacrifice* unto God.

Present yourself as a living sacrifice unto God!

Thomas Kissinger
The Glory of God and the Honor of Kings

EMANCIPATION AND FREEDOM

The largest part of the Church still on earth is to be found among the organized and denominational groups of this world. The organization is not the Church. The denomination is not the Church. Those who are in these things, though seriously limited and held back in spiritual poverty because of what they are in, are nevertheless part of the church ...

If they see the Church, they will not be able to stay there long ... Many things that once were possible in relatedness to that which is not the Church will no longer be possible – not because you decide to get up and leave, but because it simply becomes an untenable position. An untenable position is one that you can not live with ...

Someone who has seen the Church and is paying the price to remain on that ground has found in his own personal life an emancipation and a freedom that he did not dream existed. The limitation, the smallness of his Christianity and its conception of God's purpose simply breaks forth into something which is almost limitless and expansive.

Floyd Police

The Great Mystery, pp. 3-4

“CHURCH” NAMING

Instead of the Babel of many names ... we have the answer as to the name of the church ... The names which God has given us in His word are enough: we need no others, for they would divide and not unite us.

Let not this be passed slightly over as unimportant. Such is not the thought of the apostle:

Now this I say, that everyone of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? ... For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? (I Corinthians 1:12-13; 3:4).

Modern sectarian divisions are but the development of those germs which the apostle sought so earnestly to destroy – mere exhibitions of pride and carnality, as far as the systems are concerned, parting those who love the same Lord and are taught of God to love one another.

Samuel Ridout (1855-1930)

The Church and Its Order According to Scripture (1915)

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH

What does Scripture put in the place of a regularly ordained clergy, taking charge of all ministry and worship? *The Holy Ghost*. He it is Who dwells in the church, His temple (I Corinthians 3:16), Who teaches (I Corinthians 2:9-16), Who leads

our prayers (Romans 8:26, 27), and praises (I Corinthians 14:15). If He uses instruments it is never by virtue of any “office” they may have: He is not confined to any one man. ... The Lord's servants will abound if He is unhindered, unquenched.

It is God's answer to the needs of His church. He knew we would fall into utter confusion, that we would multiply machinery, that we would resort to every expedient which the ingenuity of man could suggest – all in vain, save to show our helplessness, so He gave us the Holy Spirit. ... If we grasp this truth of the Spirit's presence we have reached an answer as to what is the teaching of Scripture regarding the organization of the church ...

Is anything lacking? Will contingencies arise not provided for? Impossible! The name of Christ; the presence of the Holy Spirit; the Word of God to guide. ... No emergency can arise that will call for any new machinery. The Holy Spirit is all-sufficient.

Let us dwell upon this. The distinctive characteristic of the Christian dispensation is the personal and abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. ... Human organizations, no matter how wisely effected and administered, are a hindrance to the manifestation of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. We know this is not believed by many conscientious Christians, but we appeal to Scripture for justification, and entreat them to consent to God's order, reminding them too of their responsibility so to do.

Samuel Ridout (1855-1930)

The Church and Its Order According to Scripture (1915)

MODERN PHARISEEISM

We have the Scriptures of truth: and they reveal to us, in plain, direct, categorical, unmistakable words ... It is taken for granted, therefore, that we shall believe what God says in ... His Word ... had we not imbibed tradition from our earliest years.

... We ought to discern, at the very first glance at it, that it is unique, and stands out so isolated, by itself, that we should never for one moment dream of accepting as truth that which, if we know anything of His Word, we should instantly and instinctively detect as human tradition used for a special purpose. But, unfortunately, we have been brought up for the most part on man's books, instead of the Bible. People draw their theology from hymns written by men who were saturated with tradition; who, when they did write a good hymn generally spoiled it in the last verse ...

Persons imbued with such false traditions come to ... Scripture with minds filled with the inventions, fabrications and imaginations of man; and can, of course, see nothing but their own traditions apparently sanctioned by our Lord. ... But when we read ... passage[s] in the light of the whole Word of God, and especially in the light of the context, we see in it [false doctrine] the traditions of the Pharisees, which were "highly esteemed among men," but [are] "abomination in the sight of God."

E.W. Bullinger (1837-1913)
The Rich Man and Lazarus
Bible Student's Press

THE PRESENT CONDITION

Instead of a heavenly people, waiting for God's Son, we see a worldly company seeking to make a name upon the earth; instead of "one Body," many divisions; instead of the realized power of the Holy Ghost ... we see human expedients and organizations. Instead of separation from the world, we see the Church at home in the world, and linked with it. Will not every lover of Christ admit with tears that we have not made too dark a picture? ... Let us own together our common sin and shame, and bow under the mighty hand of God ...

But what is the remedy? Can we restore the fallen Church? ... Alas, no! We are in the "last days," the "perilous times." ... But are we to sit still and go on with worldliness and disobedience to the Word of God? Let Scripture answer:

Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor, and some to dishonor. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work (II Timothy 2:19-21).

Christ is the same; His Word the same; His grace the same. He is outside this world and worldly systems of religion – however much He may own and bless individual faithfulness.

*Let us go forth therefore **unto Him** without the camp, bearing His reproach (Hebrews 13:13).*

Samuel Ridout (1855-1930)
The Church and Its Order According to Scripture (1915)

TIED TO THE WORD OF GOD

When doctrine is carved in stone as a confession or doctrinal statement, we merely promote another man-made tradition, no matter how close it is to the truth. Because if it is possible to get closer to the truth, we find out that we are tethered to someone else's deficient understanding and can proceed no closer. If we dare to break the tether, we threaten all our relationships that are still tied to it and face the trauma of breaking the communion of saints built over a lifetime. We need to tether ourselves to God's Word unadulterated by any tradition. This would allow us to stand firm upon our convictions without necessarily having to agree on every point of doctrine.

Ross Purdy
I Will Have One Doctrine and One Discipline
Bible Student's Press (2006)

