



# Bible Student's Notebook™

## *The Herald of His Grace*

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

Volume XII  
Issue 291

## God's Goal Accomplished

### *With Objections Considered*

by – William C. Rebmann  
(author of *The Bible in Brief*)

**H**ave you ever wondered how God was intending to end all of this business of running the universe?

Did you ever stop to think that God knew how everything would be and how it would become before He created even a single thing? Did you ever realize that, because of this fact, God certainly must have had a purpose in view before He created Adam? Did you ever stop to realize how the teaching of eternal punishment would fit in with that unchangeable truth? Did you never wonder if Christ meant in a literal, actual sense what He said in John 12:32?

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

Will all men be saved when God has completed His plan for the ages, "*His purpose of the eons, which He makes in Christ Jesus our Lord*" (Ephesians 3:11)?

The Scriptures clearly state that God will accomplish this to His great glory; but many are the arguments against this truth. Even so, we believe that, as God grants you understanding, you, too, will come to reverently worship God as the Supreme One, Who in His love plans far, far ahead, and by His surpassing wisdom and power makes the most dark and tedious ways all open into the terminus of shining glory.

#### COLOSSIANS 1:20

*And through Him to reconcile all to Him (making peace through the blood of His cross), through Him, whether those on the earth or those in the heavens.*

**Objection:** The "*all things*" here means material things only.

**Answer:** Material things cannot have feelings of enmity or peace. Besides, the Greek, is not "*all things*," but simply "*the all*."

**Objection:** Reconcile means the general satisfaction of God with Christ's sacrifice for the entire world.

**Answer:** A reading of :21-22 disproves that. (Scofield says, "Reconciliation ... is that effect of the death of Christ upon the believing sinner which, through divine power, works in him a thorough change toward God from enmity and aversion, to love and trust.")

**Objection:** Reconciliation can be accomplished only by faith.

**Answer:** Paul was saved by sight, the sight of Christ in His glory (Acts 9:1-6). The Lord simply overwhelmed his unbelief with faith (I Timothy 1:13-14).

As Saul of Tarsus, Paul was the foremost (chief) sinner. If he was saved by God's deliberate choice and convincing proof of Christ's divine Sonship, then all other sin-

(see *ACCOMPLISHED*, page 2679)

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## **Bible Student's Notebook™**

*Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal*

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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 (1 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 (1 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 forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14);
  - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6);
  - adult sonship position (Galatians 4).

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**ACCOMPLISHED** (continued from front page)

ners can even more readily be turned to God, in His Own time.

**Objection:** Paul called himself the “chief” (AV) of sinners, because of that deep humility which makes every convert feel his own depravity.

**Answer:** Unbelief, persecution, hatred of God's people, rejection of Christ, cruelty and murder, are unspeakably vile sins. Of all of these Saul was supremely and actively guilty (c.f. Acts 9:1; I Timothy 1:13). Saul's sinfulness was magnified by his superior knowledge of Gods revelation (c.f. Philippians 3:4-6) and his earlier rejection of Christ, even though he witnessed Stephen's great testimony of Christ's divinity and resurrection (Acts 7:56, 58).

**PHILIPPIANS 2:10-11**

*That in the name of Jesus every knee should be bowing, celestial and terrestrial and subterranean, and every tongue should be acclaiming that Jesus Christ is Lord, for the glory of God, the Father.*

**Objection:** This passage speaks of what, for most, will be a forced bowing of the knee.

**Answer:** Such an awful forced scene could never be “for the glory of God, the Father.” Besides, all will bow “in” (not “at,” as in the AV) the name of “Jesus,” the name which means “Yahweh-Savior.” Indeed, “no one is able to say Lord is Jesus except by holy spirit” (I Corinthians 12:3).

**I CORINTHIANS 15:22**

*Even as, in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ, shall all be vivified.*

**Objection:** Only those who die “in Christ” will be vivified.

**Answer:** This is not what Paul says! Besides, if that was the thought, why bring Adam (who affects the entire race) into the picture?

**Objection:** All being “made alive” merely involves resurrection to condemnation, endless death in the lake of fire.

**Answer:** Verse 26, “the last enemy is being abolished is death,” makes it clear that this passage speaks of final, ultimate vivification, of glorious salvation for all mankind.

**Objection:** The last enemy is the occurrence of dying, not the resultant state of death.

**Answer:** It includes both, and the time occupied by that state up to the resurrection (c.f. I Corinthians 15:21, “For since, in fact, through a man came death, through a Man, also, comes the resurrection of the dead”).

**GENERAL OBJECTIONS**

**Objection:** There is then no urgency to be saved now.

**Answer:** Every unsaved man shall be judged “in accord with his acts” (Revelation 20:12) and enter the lake of fire. Also, eons of glory and joy will not be enjoyed by the unsaved.

**Objection:** The Bible speaks of “everlasting punishment” (Matthew 25:46) and “everlasting fire” (Matthew 18:8; AV).

**Answer:** The Greek word translated “ever” is (as spoken in English) *eon*, and the Greek word (in English form) for “everlasting” is *eonian*, which reverts the argument back to the meaning of *eon*. Proof that the *Authorized Version* translation of the Greek word *aiōn* as “ever” is wrong is that the *Authorized Version* itself often translates this word “world,” as in the phrase “end of the world” (Matthew 13:39-40, 49). Yet another proof is that the same version sometimes translates the plural form as “ages” (Ephesians 2:7; Colossians 1:26). Yet in two very important passages, it translates this plural form by the singular form “world” (both of which Scofield changes to “ages”): I Corinthians 2:7, “before the world [ages],” and Hebrews 9:26, “end of the world,” or, as Scofield says, “consummation of the ages: ‘Eon’ (or ‘age’), then, must speak of a limited period of time; for it has a beginning, an end, and a plural number.”

**Objection:** Eon varies in meaning in the Scripture, sometimes having a temporal meaning, and sometimes being eternal and unlimited.

**Answer:** No word can have such contradictory usages, otherwise how do we know what it means at any ►

given time? Finiteness and infinitude are as opposite as east and west.

**Objection:** Granted, eon means age or a limited period of time, but “*for ever and ever*” (Revelation 20:10; AV) will not be for a limited number of eons, but, as the Greek has it, “for the eons of the eons” (*i.e.*, for an unlimited numbers of eons which themselves contain still additional eons, or “eons tumbled upon eons.”) This must be as endless as Christ’s reign (Revelation 11:15), and the reign of the saints (Revelation 22:5).

**Answer:** A period of time cannot contain other periods of time of the same kind, or the term becomes meaningless. “*The eons of the eons*” are the final “*eons*” (ages) as distinct from the other scriptural eons. This is because they are the grandest and most significant eons of all of the eonian times. Every like expression has a similar meaning: *e.g.* day of days, heart of hearts, holy of holies. (The Greek also has two singular forms, “eon of the eon” and “eon of the eons,” referring to the last great eon. To be correct in our findings, we must note the scriptural forms and distinctions.)

Christ’s reign is not endless, but only until all is subject (I Corinthians 15:24-28). Then all rule will be abolished.

**Objection:** If the “*everlasting punishment*” (AV) of the unbelievers has an end, then the “*eternal life*” (AV) of the saints has an end also, at the end of the ages.

**Answer:** How can life end if death is abolished at that time (I Corinthians 15:26)? The life of the eons ends when all are vivified, at the “*end*” (or “*consummation*”) of the eons (I Corinthians 15:24). Life itself, however, continues on interminably (*c.f.* Luke 1:33).

**Objection:** Then God is not “*everlasting*” as He is called in Romans 16:26 (AV).

**Answer:** The idea of “*lastingness*” is no part of the Greek word *aiōnion* (“eonian”). “Eonian” is simply the adjectival form of “eon.” Just as “American” speaks of that which pertains to “America,” eonian speaks of that which pertains to the eons. It is helpful to take note of the previous verse (:25), observing that the phrase “*kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest*” (AV) is actually “*hushed in times eonian, yet manifested now*” (CV). Therefore “eonian” certainly is not “eternal” (“eonian” also occurs in the phrase “*before times eon-*

*ian*,” II Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2). The adjective “eonian” means “pertaining to the eons.” That God is the God of the eons does not confine Him to these periods of times any more than His title “*the God of Israel*” precludes His being the God of all. Other “gods” fall and are forgotten; but we have a God Who made the eons (Hebrews 1:2), Who has a purpose of the eons (Ephesians 3:11), and Who accomplishes His purposes accordingly during the eonian times (*c.f.* Titus 1:2). Hence He is the eonian God, or Subjector. The eons belong to Him and He belongs to them, and His shall be the glory for them long after they are past.

**Objection:** In II Corinthians 4:18, eonian must mean eternal because it is set in contrast to the word temporal, meaning enduring for time as opposed to eternity.

**Answer:** The Greek word translated “*temporal*” has no connection with the word for “time”; it is literally TOWARD-SEASON, and means “temporary” or “for the era.” In the passage in question, “eonian” is used in contrast between our afflictions, which last for a brief “season,” and our promised long enduring “eonian” glory, which lasts until all opens out into the glorious consummation.

## I CORINTHIANS 15:28

*Now, whenever all may be subjected to Him, then the Son [Christ] Himself also shall be subjected to Him Who subjects all to Him, that God may be All in all.*

**Objection:** Subjecting signifies the use of force.

**Answer:** Not necessarily, for though He may use force as a means, in the end He will have so led and taught His creatures that they will no longer need government (*c.f.* :24, “*nullifying all sovereignty and all authority and power*”). God, by His spirit, will become everything in each and every one, for He will become “*All in all*.” What else can these words mean, for all shall be at peace with God?

## ALL WILL BE SAVED

*“Through the blood of His cross”* (Colossians 1:20), Christ makes peace for all with the Father and at last so teaches each one as to bring all into the blessed family of God. This is “*in accord with the purpose of the eons*,  
(see **ACCOMPLISHED**, page 2683)



# *Christ's Lordship*

## *and Our Maturity in Christ*

by – William W. Bentley, Jr  
author of *The Simple Story of the Universe*

Many years ago God led me into a class of truth seekers whose sole purpose was to study the Sacred Scriptures and try to glean from them an appreciation of God's real plan of salvation for mankind. Most of us had been brought up in Christian homes rooted in many of the popular denominations, and in many instances we had to lay aside some of the teachings and interpretations of the Bible that had been passed on to us from previous generations.

The matter that troubled me most was the apparent conflict in the teaching of Peter and the rest of the Twelve versus that of the converted Saul of Tarsus who never even saw Jesus in the flesh. Not until we had studied together for over two years did it occur to me that there were two distinctive "gospels" (evangels): that concerning the Kingdom heralded by Jesus Himself and His Jewish followers, and the Pauline gospel. The former gospel was based upon salvation through a combination of faith and conformity to law; the latter was channeled through the grace of God alone. This distinction, finally dawning upon me, did then, and does still, represent one of God's greatest gifts to me, and I have endeavored in my small way to pass this realization along to as many others as possible.

One of the facets of this "new" concept which has particularly kindled my interest was its relationship to the Lordship of Christ. The prevailing concept of Christ's Lordship differs surprisingly from that presented in Paul's epistles. It is this matter that I would like to discuss in this article.

It is common knowledge that the Scriptures often speak of God's indignation and of divine vengeance. It would seem that this emphasis was carried over into the early Christian religion as a critical factor in its organization. This has continued to the present day.

Paul announced his distinctive evangel (gospel), salvation by grace from a kind and loving God, both to Jew and Gentile. However, during Paul's own lifetime, this evangel was obscured. In Romans 1:18ff Paul had spoken

of God's indignation as a matter exhibiting the great need of the evangel of grace. Yet the church hierarchy related it to the Lordship of Christ and made it a motivating principle for Christian service. Similarly, Paul referred to God's vengeance as evidence that believers should not seek to avenge themselves on their enemies (Romans 12:19), while church tradition has generally presented it as a threat to the believer in order to keep him in line.

Under the distorted evangel (*c.f.* Galatians 1:7), one based on fear and works, to become a Christian one had to conform to a ritual, the first step of which was to acknowledge Christ as Lord and Savior, confessing sins, repenting and being baptized. The second step, to assure one's ultimate deliverance from wrath, was to follow in the footsteps of the Savior, accepting His Lordship in everyday life. For while past sins were washed away at baptism, it was inevitable that a believer would commit more sins during his lifetime, and even though he confessed and repented frequently, there would undoubtedly be some unforgiven sins which God could use on Judgment Day to condemn him to an eternity in hell. No one was ever sure whether he was saved or not until that final day, so everyone lived a life of uncertainty regarding his ultimate destination.

The Pauline Evangel, however, teaches us to acknowledge Christ as our Savior, the only begotten Son of God – He Who was humiliated, and Who suffered an unmerciful death on Calvary for all of our sins, Who arose on the third day and now sits at the right hand of the Father. Our salvation is based solely on this conviction, not by any works that we do or any laws to which we conform.

These provisions, centered in the accomplished work of Christ, annul the Lordship-precepts prescribed by traditional Christianity. Christ's Lordship is not imposed to enhance one's chances for salvation, but rather is based on a salvation already graciously gained on our behalf.

Nevertheless, those who have mixed the two evangels claim that the salvation-by-grace concept encour- ►

ages believers to accept the philosophy of “eat, drink and be merry” because all is forgiven by the grace of God anyway. This is the conclusion that many might come to, but I would implore them to read on.

Paul’s letter to the Romans was written to bring the believers of that day, as well as us, from an immature to a more mature concept of God’s plan of salvation. The whole book is priceless in this regard. A Jewish convert once said to me, “How could one remain a Jew after having read Romans?”

There is one section in Romans that has a direct bearing on a mature recognition of Christ’s Lordship. It begins with chapter 6, verse 1, where Paul asks,

*What, then, shall we declare? That we may be persisting in sin that grace should be increasing?*

In other words, should we, who have trusted Christ as our Lord and Savior after having lived a life of sin and knowing now that we have been justified in God’s sight, now persist in our sins knowing that God’s grace is unlimited, and knowing that through Christ’s sacrifice we are all justified in the acts we have done or will do in the future? If that is our attitude, we are far from maturity, as Paul explains in Romans 6:2-14.

*May it not be coming to that! We, who died to sin, how shall we still be living in it? Or are you ignorant that whoever are baptized into Christ Jesus, are baptized into His death? We, then, were entombed together with Him through baptism into death, that, even as Christ was roused from among the dead through the glory of the Father, thus we also should be walking in newness of life. For if we have become planted together in the likeness of His death, nevertheless we shall be of the resurrection also, knowing this, that our old humanity was crucified together with Him, that the body of Sin may be nullified, for us by no means to be still slaving for Sin, for one who dies has been justified from Sin. Now if we died together with Christ, we believe that we shall be living together with Him also, having perceived that Christ, being roused from among the dead, is no longer dying. Death is lording over Him no longer, for in that He died, He died to Sin once for all time, yet in that He is living, He is living to God. Thus you also, be reckoning yourselves to be dead, indeed, to Sin, yet living to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Let not Sin, then, be reigning in your mortal body, for you to be obeying its lusts. Nor yet be presenting your members, as implements of injus-*

*tice, to Sin, but present yourselves to God as if alive from among the dead, and your members as implements of righteousness to God. For Sin shall not be lording it over you, for you are not under law but under grace.*

Finding that Christ is our Lord and Savior, we are to,

*Walk worthily of the Lord for all pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work, and growing in the realization of God (Colossians 1:10).*

This is an attitude we most willingly accept because of all of the wonderful blessings with which He has endowed us. This acceptance of Christ’s Lordship does not rise out of *fear* of His indignation, or from dread of being sentenced to an eternity in Hell. Rather, it is the mature attitude that rises from an *appreciation* of the evangel of grace.

At the same time, we recognize that we are still subject to human frailties, and even though we are strongly motivated out of our love, affection and appreciation for God’s grace, we fail and even yield from time to time to sinful influences. This is the human condition and is true of everyone, no matter what our views may be of the evangel. The question is: What is the mature concept of Christ’s Lordship that God has provided for us in dealing with our everyday weakness and sins? Is it a Lordship established by a gracious, accomplished salvation, and is such a concept of His Lordship an effective force in our lives for making progress in dealing with our weaknesses?

Again, Paul, who says that we are to become followers of him as he is of Christ (I Corinthians 11:1), leads us in the path of maturity. He writes,

*Not that I already obtained, or am already perfected. Yet I am pursuing, if I may be grasping also that for which was grasped also by Christ Jesus. Brethren, not as yet am I reckoning myself to have grasped, yet one thing – forgetting, indeed, those things which are behind, yet stretching out to those in front – toward the goal am I pursuing for the prize of God’s calling above in Christ Jesus. Whoever, then, are mature, may be disposed to this, and if in anything you are differently disposed, this also shall God reveal to you. Moreover, in what we outstrip others, there is to be a mutual disposition to be observing the elements by the same rule. Become followers together of me, brethren, and be*

*noting those who are walking thus, according as you have us for a model, for many are walking, of whom I often told you, yet now am lamenting also as I tell it, who are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose consummation is destruction, whose god is their bowels, and whose glory is in their shame, who to the terrestrial are disposed. For our realm is inherent in the heavens, out of which we are awaiting a Savior also, the Lord, Jesus Christ, Who will transfigure the body of our humiliation, to conform it to the body of His glory, in accord with the operation which enables Him even to subject all to Himself (Philippians 3:12-21).*

Another helpful passage from Paul on this matter is,

*We should all attain to the unity of the faith and of the realization of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature of the comple-*

*ment of the Christ, that we may by no means still be minors, surging hither and thither and being carried about by every wind of teaching, by human caprice, by craftiness with a view to the systematizing of the deception (Ephesians 4:13-14).*

As we continue to “grasp” for maturity in Christ, we should not become discouraged by our human weaknesses and assume a guilt complex. Our course in the Lord should be to acknowledge our mistakes, while continuing to praise God all the more for His grace and goodness. The recognition that we serve the Lord Who has dealt with our mistakes on the cross is truly an effective force in dealing with present weaknesses. Our aim comes to be one of glorifying God in everything we think, do or say because we know that in His eyes we are spotless, totally justified, and our destiny is with Him. This is maturity in Christ. ■

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*ACCOMPLISHED (continued from page 2680)*

*which He makes in Christ Jesus, our Lord” (Ephesians 3:11). Thus He gains the enduring love of every creature.*

We have just reviewed the most important facts concerning what God’s Word teaches concerning universal reconciliation. Our part is to believe what the Scriptures state and not to doubt. May we be walking in love toward all, while faithfully serving Him.

God “*is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will*” (Ephesians 1:11), even though we cannot know precisely how He does so. God is “*the Savior of all mankind, especially of believers*” (I Timothy 4:10; c.f. 2:4-7).

*Seeing that out of Him and through Him and for Him is all: to Him be the glory for the eons! Amen! (Romans 11:36).*

*For I am the El [God], and there is no further Elohim, and the limit is as Me. Telling from the beginning, the hereafter, and from aforetime, what has not yet been done. Saying, All My counsel shall be confirmed, and all My desire I will do (Isaiah 46:9-10).*

Eventually all Israel will be saved (Romans 11:26; c.f. Isaiah 45:25). How? They will be saved by their seeing their Savior in His glory yet still bearing the marks of their crucifixion of Him (c.f. Zechariah 12:10-11; 13:1, 6). In the same way, no man will be able to resist Christ’s

offer of love when faith is replaced by sight, when all of the sinners of all time see their Savior on the throne of power, and yet displaying the marks of deepest humiliation and suffering which He endured willingly to secure their final reconciliation into the family of God. Grace can only come through the merit of God’s righteous Son. God will show all of His lost creatures that it is only love He is seeking, not forced or fearful obeisance. This was His plan even before the eons. Why should we not believe that God in His great wisdom will work out all according to His greatest glory?

God seeks love, above all else. Glory, yes, but only insofar as it will increase the love of His creatures. All else is subservient to this, for, “God is love” (I John 4:8, 16). God’s purpose is not just a wishful longing for love. His only true glory lies in the ultimate success of His plan to secure the full and voluntary response of love from His every creature. Then and then alone – even as the shepherd who sought and found the one lost sheep – will He rest from His completed work.

What do you think of this Christ Who lovingly throws His all into such a grand plan to gain the love of every man? If you believe on Him now and His sacrifice for you, you are “*justified by faith*” (Romans 5:1), and will share in His glories in the grand eons to come. ■



I just concluded my reading of your book, *The Church in Ruins*. It is a clear and fair assessment of the present state of the church according to biblical standards. Thanks for your ministry. – **CT**

I finished your book *The Church in Ruins* today, and especially the passages on being alone struck a chord with me, not surprisingly. You are so right. It is a “soulish” desire to want to belong, to be able to snuggle up to the masses and feel secure in the fact that all of these people are likeminded. Not going to happen with our views. For two years I have been fighting the doubt and loneliness that follow in the wake of our largely perpendicular views – doubt, because of the world-trained wisdom that “numbers don’t lie” (well, in theology they mostly do) ... So it was really uplifting to read the passage that this is God’s “M.O.” He isolates you to make you have to depend solely on Him – and so I do, more and more. The

doubt recedes as I rest in Him. – **Netherlands**

Thanks for all of the email goodies and audios. I love them! – **Email**

No need any more to walk alone in Christ. I have you, my dearest brother! I spent 20 years alone. Thank you for your website. Many articles are posted that have helped me understand my experience of evil. I’m beginning to see that our joy comes from the growth through our trials, not a “joy” of the trial; even though we may eventually be mature enough to thank Him for whatever are His ways of growing us.

I am thanking Father for giving you the “call”! Your way of teaching is so understandable and loving. It is just right for average believers such as myself. (Of course, there is nothing average about Father choosing us and then calling us during this administration!) – **LA**

I just love your *Daily Email Goodies* and forward them all to my daughter in college. Your pieces are put together so well and always leave me happy. Thank you for always putting forth the joy and love of God. Your emails have regularly made my day. – **Email**

## *Love Is the Greatest!*

by - Philo Thelos

*For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity (I Corinthians 13:12-13).*

It is immensely important to all of us that we remember and practice what the Apostle Paul implies in I Corinthians 13:12-13. Love, the greatest of all spiritual qualities, will endure. Love is greater than judgment, than personal opinions, than condemnation, than all other considerations. Far better it is to love a person who palpably wronged us than to condemn or accuse.

We do not have all of the answers, and we never will unless somehow we become infallible. We have made too many mistakes in the past by interpreting biblical statements exclusively in the light of our

own modern cultural and ecclesiastical context. We have hurt too many people by establishing unbreakable rules on the flimsy foundation of our fallible and often gullible understanding ...

God requires of us the same grace toward others that He has exhibited toward us. Of all laws, rules and ethical standards that have ever been given, there is only one that is eternal. Standing above even faith and hope, the greatest of all is love ... As God has so freely given grace to we who are so utterly undeserving, so must we be willing to give grace to those whom we consider to be utterly undeserving.

***Divine Sex: Liberating Sex from Religious Tradition*** (2002), p. 162-163