



# Bible Student's Notebook™

## The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume VIII  
Issue 177

### The "Daze" of Our Lives

by – Andre Sneidar and Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

*Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labor which he taketh under the sun? One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth for ever. The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose. The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits. All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again. All things are full of labor; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing (Ecclesiastes 1:2-8).*

Solomon describes the relentless cycle of earthly life. It can seem like a treadmill, a vicious testimony to vanity, the rat race of human existence. You know what I am talking about. Some days can seem more like a *daze* – than anything that makes sense – and with all the things that mess up and go undone, we end up *feeling* like a failure.

Ever notice how it seems that the everyday things just seem to pile up; the things that “need” fixing, or just in things that “need” to be done in the normal course of daily life. We find ourselves in the position of the old Dutch proverb, “The further I go, the behinder I get” or, “The harder I work, more work I find to be done.”

The cycle of earthly life can be heavy and wearisome much of the time; with repeating bouts of discouragement; being overwhelmed and depressed. The *feeling* of futility and failure is a byproduct of Adamic life, and I find myself living in that place more often than I would like. I believe that the Lord allows us to live near the edge, so that we have no choice but to simply rest in Him. After all it is He Who works in us to “*will and to do of His good pleasure*” (Philippians 2:13).

Faith always brings us back to the place where, if there is *failure*, it would need to be His! For after all, He is all that we really have; and He is all that we really need – for isn’t He our Father, and the *MASTER* of the Universe?

When we are *weak then* are we *strong* (II Corinthians 12:10). That’s the truth that Paul taught and lived! We often tend to see “things getting done” or “things **not** getting done” by the eye of human achievement – by our own self-effort – instead of through the divine-viewpoint of “*we are His workmanship*” (Ephesians 2:10). All that is *really* being done is not so much about “what **we** do” anyway, or of our “accomplishments;” rather, it is about what is being done “to us” and “through us” – after all WE ARE THE WORK ... “*HIS WORKMANSHIP*.” So, even when we *seem* like a *failure*, something is getting done; and only the eye of faith can see that!

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The human eye is always seeking the solution and victory in “things,” in “circumstances,” and in “situations.” If only they would change, we think we would have “success.” Yet God is seeking instead to change *us* in the “things,” in the “circumstances,” and in the “situations;” so that in whatsoever state we are in we can find the true life of joy and contentment in Him (Philippians 4:11).

How often we forget this and are drawn back to the “things,” the “circumstances,” and in the “situations.” It is not easy to see with the eyes of faith in a physical world. Our lives can *seem* to us to be an utter disaster; near the brink of total collapse. The grass-is-greener-on-the-other-side syndrome is so real to our hearts. “If only I had \_\_\_\_\_,” what a difference everything would be. Then, what comes after we actually get what we *think* we “need”? We just get a new, “If I only had \_\_\_\_\_” to replace the previous one. We must not be fooled by all of this; it is only that vicious cycle of Adam’s old search for meaning in life. We need to remind ourselves of these truths.

Often I remember this verse:

*And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God (I Samuel 30:6).*

“David was greatly distressed,” but he “encouraged himself in the LORD his God.”

We have to learn to do what David did. I can’t tell you how many times I have felt so discouraged, felt on the edge of throwing in the towel on EVERYTHING; but then I would tell my heart the things that my Father has taught me on my journey with Him.

As we go through the *daze of our lives*, let us remember that God in His good pleasure has chosen us to be “His workmanship.” There, in His divine operation, is something wonderful that should not, but somehow often seems to be forgotten. What is it? It is that since God has chosen us, we are then by that virtue: foolish, weak, base and despised (I Corinthians 1:27). God’s work in His chosen vessels is most often not (if not *never*) accomplished in some big-production-way that brings attention to His vessels. He uses the foolish, weak, base, and despised; and praise the Father, we qualify! Especially me!

## ***Bible Student’s Notebook***<sup>™</sup>

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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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Remember that it is our responsibility as husbands and fathers to take the truths we learn from God’s Word, the truths that we hold dear, and impart them to our families.

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# *The Salvation of All*

## Select Readings on *Universal Reconciliation*

(Part 4)

*"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Corinthians 15:22).*

### **THE ENTIRE RACE FALLS AND RISES TOGETHER**

The Bible clearly reveals that the entire race essentially falls and rises together. *"In Adam all die."* Together we plunge into sin and misery under the headship and representation of our father Adam. *"In Christ shall all be made alive."* Together we finally rise to newness of life to be received and embraced by the Father of all spirits, to live and to love, forever bound together as a holy family.

As Paul says in Romans 5:

*Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord (18-21).*

Tragically, we often gloss over a passage like this without really stopping to think. Paul here is not distinguishing between the Christian and the mass of lost humanity. He is not making a contrast, but rather a comparison between the representation of Adam and the representation of Christ, with his focus being the universal scope of each. The *all* and *many* in both cases are one universal humanity, comprising each and every person, who are jointly and individually the benefactors of both the disobedience of Adam and the obedience of Christ.

Paul isn't considering different classes of men, but mankind as a whole.

Now what was the result of Adam's transgression? It was universal condemnation of all, without first consulting them or asking for their contribution. The result of Adam's disobedience was complete and universal in its scope and consequence, plunging each and every member of his race into sin and spiritual separation from God.

Now, just as Adam's sin had a direct, powerful, irresistible effect on the whole for evil, so the righteous act of Christ has a direct, powerful, irresistible effect on the whole for good. Just as one sin resulted in universal, real, actual condemnation, so the one act of righteousness performed by Christ, the second Adam, results in universal, real, actual justification, not just an opportunity to cast your lot in with Jesus, not just the offer of life, but the real, actual, powerful impartation of life! The real actual, powerful communication of righteousness! The plain language of the text allows for nothing less!

Allan Ernest Chevrier

*Whatever Became of Melanie?* 2005, pp. 138, 139

### **GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY**

My early religious impressions were received in the atmosphere of partialism. The church, the Sunday school, and the home made the awful future a serious reality to my young heart. So firmly was "orthodoxy" instilled into me, that much of the joy peculiar to childhood was changed into sadness.

But, when other influences entered my heart a little later in life, this world itself had a larger meaning ►

to me, and God became to me, not the monster which “orthodoxy” had taught, but the righteous Father who owns all worlds and all people, and that relationship a tie never to be broken. Christ became to my soul, not the messenger of death, but one with *good tidings of great joy*, and it has ever since been my aim to proclaim the *good news*, that the world might be blessed.

William Percival Burnell (1851-?)  
*Voices of Faith*, 1887

### UNDEFEATABLENESS

There is in God’s love a quality of undefeatableness. Shakespeare wrote movingly:

... Love is not love  
Which alters when it alteration finds ...

The supreme quality of the love of God is that it has refused in any situation to cease to love.

William Barclay (1907-1978)  
*Daily Celebration*, p. 128

### THE GREATEST SIGN OF GOD’S LIMITLESS LOVE AND FORGIVENESS

*For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus; Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time (I Timothy 2:3-6).*

God ... wishes all of us to be saved. God will surely have His way and we will all be saved. ...

Is there no act so bad that salvation would be lost? What deed could be worse than the crucifixion of Christ? Can God forgive those who killed His Own Son? Can Jesus forgive even those who are crucifying Him? We read in Luke 23:34 that Christ in the midst of His suffering on the cross said, “*Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.*” He asks God to forgive them not because they believe in God, repent of their wrongs, love God or Him, understand or any other positive requirement,

but because “*they know not what they do.*”

If anyone fails to fulfill this, it is those who are Christians, and particularly ministers, for they have studied and claim to “know” just like the Pharisees. Yet I believe that Christians, even ministers, like the scribes and Pharisees, “*know not what they do.*”

Everyone, then, is included in Christ’s plea for forgiveness, and that request is certainly granted by His Father. Thus, the worst sin of all time becomes the greatest sign of God’s limitless love and forgiveness. There is nothing people can do to prevent God from forgiving them, and there is nothing they can or must do to earn that forgiveness.

Walter Williams  
*Love Without Limit*, p. 22

### GOD IS NO FAILURE!

The Love of God will prevail forever. If hell is pictured as endless days of punishment for the wicked; then it would seem God’s purposes have failed and Christ’s victory is hollow; but this is unbiblical. God is no failure! Judgment is not the last word. Even as God’s love overcame all evil on the cross of Christ, so God’s will for the salvation of everyone will be realized (I Timothy 2:4).

Randy Klassen  
*What Does the Bible Really Say About Hell?*

### A TRIP TO HELL AND BACK

Did you realize Jonah went to “hell” (*King James Version*) and got out? That’s right – he went straight to the womb or “*belly of hell*” (Jonah 2:2 KJV) and then God brought him back again! These words come directly from a version that many people consider to be very authoritative. Jonah 2:2, “... *out of the belly of hell cried I ...*” and 2:6, “... *Thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God.*” ...

Jonah chapter two proves that whatever “hell” in the *King James Version* may be, it is a place where ... God gets people out ... as ... in the case of Jonah (2:6) ...

Whatever "hell" really is, its door outward is open to ultimate salvation.

George Howe  
*The Ultimate Reconciliation of All*

### IS YOUR GOD A CHRISTIAN?

I remember reading of a Sunday school teacher who devoted a class to the topic of *hell*. After she had gone on for some time, a troubled young girl innocently spoke up saying, "I think that God should become a Christian." This sensitive child got something that adults generally miss. How can this god be the author of Christianity when He isn't even a Christian Himself? How confusing it is, trying to live the Christian life using this god as an example?

Allan Ernest Chevrier  
*Whatever Became of Melanie?* (2005), p. 133

### PROPITIATION FOR ALL SIN

*And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world (I John 2:2).*

This is a text so worded, with a "not ... only," and "the whole world," as if the Spirit had purposely consulted to obviate and prevent all clippings of it.

Jeremiah White (1629-1707)  
(Chaplain to Oliver Cromwell)  
*Restoration of All Things*, p. 25

### PAYMENT TWICE

God will not payment twice demand,  
First at my Savior's bleeding hand,  
And then again at mine!

William Cowper (1731-1800)

### ETERNITY OF PERSUASION

It is claimed that universalism does away with free will ... What is forgotten is that God has eternity to work in. It is not a question of God, as it were, rushing a man into heaven. It is a question of God using an eternity of persuasion and appeal until the

hardest heart breaks down and the most stubborn sinner repents.

William Barclay  
(1907-1978)

### BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING

Many Christians assumed that to be called or chosen by God was a matter of privilege and blessing only, not for responsibility and service. So God chooses some for heaven and others for hell, and we need to acquiesce to God's choice. Biblically, however, God chooses some, not to the exclusion of others but for the benefit of others: they're "blessed to be a blessing."

Brian McLaren  
*The Last Word & the Word After That* (2005), p. 169

### THE RANSOM HAS BEEN PAID

*Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time (I Timothy 2:6).*

The price is laid down for all men, such a price as justice required, such as God accepted: for it is an actual ransom, which it could not have been called if the creditor had not agreed, and declared Himself satisfied therewith (a testimony for its proper time to be declared for all.)

Jeremiah White (1629-1707)  
(Chaplain to Oliver Cromwell)  
*Restoration of All Things*, p. 25

### SO MISREPRESENTED

If the Lord were to appear ... [He] has been so misrepresented by such as have claimed to present him, and especially in the one eternal fact of facts – the relation between Him and His Father – that it is impossible they should see any likeness. For my part, I would believe in no God rather than in such a God as is generally offered for believing in.

George MacDonald (1824-1905)  
*Unspoken Sermons*: (1889) Series 3, pp. 40-41

## INVINCIBLE LOVE

How *invincible* is the love of Christ! ... Death might take away Christ's *life* – but not His *love*! Neither can our sin wholly quench that divine flame of love ...

That which makes this love of Christ the more stupendous – is that there was nothing in us to excite or draw forth His love! He did not love us because we were worthy – but by loving us He made us worthy!

Serious meditation on the love of Christ, would make us love Him in return. Who can tread by meditation upon these *hot coals of Christ's love*, and his heart not burn in love to Him?

Thomas Watson (1620-1686)  
*A Treatise Concerning Meditation*

## SALLY'S STORY

The woman I'd so easily disregarded while she lived had become a dilemma in her death ... To many Christians, Sally's destiny was an *easy* judgment. Having never accepted Christ, Christ wouldn't accept her. She was doomed to hell.

I grew up believing we were destined for either heaven or hell ... that only those who ... accepted Jesus as their Savior before they died would live with God forever. All the rest would suffer hell's eternal torment ...

Now Sally's life and death had unsettled what was once a sure conviction ... she had been drawing close to God. She'd turned from the path of destruction. She'd been asking, seeking and knocking. I couldn't believe God would invite Sally to His home, then slam the door as she stood at the threshold. It seemed a cruel joke ...

Though it defied the formula I'd been taught, I wanted God to be gracious to Sally. My scorn gave way to sympathy ...

The longer I thought, the clearer the answer became.

God loved Sally far more than I ... If the little I knew had changed my heart toward Sally, why was it so hard to believe God was even more gracious? It was the formula. It limited God's grace.

The next day at the funeral, instead of talking about the formula, I spoke of grace. I read ... a story of a father and his prodigal son, of a son who wandered afar before turning toward home, of a father waiting, hoping and longing.

I said, "Some people think God sits on a throne, holding fast to holiness and injustice, waiting for us to grovel at his feet. But last night, as I thought about Sally I remembered another prodigal's homecoming. I realized God is never content to wait on His throne. God was standing at the door watching for Sally, just as surely as that father watched for his prodigal; and while she was yet at a distance, God saw her and had compassion. God ran and embraced her. God welcomed her home ..."

Writing Sally's eulogy was the breaching of a dam – the first rivulet of what would soon become a coursing flood. For many years God had been eroding my obsessive devotion to judgment, punishment, and wrath ... Sally's funeral simply washed away any remnants of resistance. The dam ruptured, and grace swept through, softening ground that had long been cracked and dry.

Philip Gulley / James Mulholland  
*If Grace Is True*, pp. 4-9

## SO TIRED

I am so tired by the things said about God. I understand God's patience with the wicked, but I do wonder how He can be so patient with the pious.

George MacDonald (1824-1905)  
*The Elect Lady*

## THE PURPOSE OF CHRISTIANITY

Should the purpose of Christianity be reduced to this: to increase the population of heaven and decrease the crowdedness of hell? Was the message of Jesus and the apostles, at the root, information

on how to get your personal soul into heaven after you die? Is that what it all boiled down to?

Brian McLaren

*The Last Word & the Word After That* (2005), p. 8

### **THE SALVATION OF ALL IS A DONE THING**

... *The works were finished from the foundation of the world* (Hebrews 4:3).

For indeed all His works are finished to Him from the foundation of the world, and we are saved in Him before the notice of it comes to us, as the apostle said, though it was a mystery and was hid in God till it was manifested by the gospel. So the salvation of all men is a done thing with God, though it hath its proper seasons to be exhibited to the view and notice of men.

Jeremiah White (1629-1707)

(Chaplain to Oliver Cromwell)

*Restoration of All Things*, p. 19-20

### **THE MOST POWERFUL INSTRUMENT IN HIS ARSENAL**

Christ is now the rightful heir and undisputed owner of all things. Everything and everyone belong to Him. This also includes us. And the fact of the matter is that He is now in the process of claiming His inheritance, not mutilating and destroying it! And He will succeed! Not cold, heartless revenge, but true justice, holy, exalted and pure, will finally triumph.

All who died in Adam will most certainly live in Christ, and that, forever and ever and ever! And the predominant, most powerful instrument in His arsenal of justice is His love! True, deep and lasting repentance, a genuine, life-changing conversion is not birthed by servile fear, but by love. It is the goodness of God that leads to repentance (Romans 2:4). Fear is nothing more than a cruel taskmaster that hardens the heart and drives the child away. According to the Scriptures and our own experience, it is the love of Christ that compels and inspires us to truly live for Him (II Corinthians 5:14). It is the constant, cloudless view of His mercy that empowers and persuades us to offer ourselves

as living sacrifices in the service of God and others (Romans 12:1).

Though justice does involve punishment and the occasional fearful consequence, this is not its base. The foundation of true justice is love, as are all the attributes of God, for God IS Love.

Allan Ernest Chevrier

*Whatever Became of Melanie?* 2005, p. 68

### **EITHER GOD IS, OR HE ISN'T**

Either God is all-powerful, or He is not. Either God is all-wise, or He is not. Either God is all-loving, or He is not. Either God's will is sovereign, or it is not. Either God's grace is infinite, or it is not. Isn't it time for the Church of Christ to decide one way or the other, and then make her theology fit her expressed faith?

Loyal F. Hurley

*The Outcome of Infinite Grace*, chapter 3

Bible Student's Press

### **BIGGER AND BETTER**

We have to tell people the good news, the good news that God is even better than we thought, that the gospel is better than we realized. That their thoughts of God have been too small, too unworthy ... that the truly good news is bigger and better and more powerful than the conventional news they've been believing and preaching.

Brian McLaren

*The Last Word & the Word After That* (2005), p. 68

### **WHEN DOES HIS LOVE TURN TO HATE?**

Now if the doctrine of *hellfire* is true, when does His love turn to hate? And why? At what point does the Good Shepherd choose to beat the lost sheep to death with His staff, and then not dispose of the body, but raise it from the dead and give it a new body, so that He can more effectively torture it in the flames of hell forever, this one who is supposedly once the object of His love?

Allan Ernest Chevrier

*Whatever Became of Melanie?* 2005, p. 132

## GRACIOUS BEYOND OUR EXPECTATION

Who is God? Is God a gracious, loving Father waiting long through the night, with the light lit and the door open, confident His most defiant child will one day come home? Or is God a harsh judge eager to pass sentence, eager to punish and destroy all who do not satisfy Him?

I hope you will consider the possibility that God is gracious beyond your expectation ... I hope you'll believe the very best about God.

Philip Gulley / James Mulholland  
*If Grace Is True*, p. 46-47

## FREE WILL AND THE DOCTRINE OF HELL

The only will in the universe that is truly free is God's will. And even His will is not totally free. It's gloriously bound by His moral perfections. It is bound by His love, His goodness and mercy. According to the doctrine of *hell*, His perfections are not constant. They are not infinite, eternal and unchangeable as our confessions and catechisms suggest. If the doctrine of eternal torment is true, His love eventually turns to hate. Most in this life, who were supposedly once the objects of His love and goodness, eventually go to the place of suffering where they will forever be the objects of His wrath and fiery rage.

Allan Ernest Chevrier  
*Whatever Became of Melanie?* 2005, p. 51

## HE WILL HAVE ALL MEN TO BE SAVED

*Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Timothy 2:4).*

It is not said, He "*would have all men to be saved, by His good-will*"; but He "*will have all men to be saved.*" It is a will of authority and supreme sovereignty.

It is an immanent, permanent, fixed, determinate act of His will, not transient or revocable: He "*will have all men to be saved.*"

The will of God, and His work are one, God wills

nothing but He works it, "*Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will*" (Ephesians 1:11); for He wills nothing but with counsel, though He go for no counsel out of Himself, but His own will is His counsel; but the meaning is, that every thing that God wills, stands upon the grounds of the most absolute wisdom and prudence; that if a council were called of all creatures, nay of all the attributes of God, better advice could not be given or taken; no wonder then if what is so deliberate and resolved be accordingly pursued to effect and put into execution, being the result of such a counsel, hath all counsel in it, that is so perfect that nothing can be added to it; therefore His word is His work, He spoke and it was done, He is the rock, and His work is perfect; for all His ways are judgment, a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is He.

Jeremiah White (1629-1707)  
(Chaplain to Oliver Cromwell)  
*Restoration of All Things*, pp. 18, 20

## EXTRAVAGANT GRACE

Those aren't easy words to accept. Especially, if like me, you grew up believing some would be saved and most would be damned. It took many years for my belief to change. God had to overcome my objections. I resisted because such extravagant grace wasn't the traditional teaching of the Church. It wasn't the usual interpretation of Scripture. It wasn't the formula I'd been taught as a child. My belief changed only as I recognized the grace I'd experienced was not limited or conditional. I know a God of boundless love.

My experience is not unique ... In ways we don't fully understand and can't completely communicate, we were drawn to Jesus ... It was the God of Jesus that attracted us. The God Who loves people more than formulas, mercy more than judgment, and pardon more than punishment. The God Who seeks the lost, heals the brokenhearted, accepts the outcast, is kind to the wicked and ungrateful, is merciful and forgiving, and loves the whole world ...

I could no more reject this love than a man dying of thirst could refuse a cup of water.

Philip Gulley / James Mulholland  
*If Grace Is True*, pp. 13-14

