

FROM NEGATIVE TO POSITIVE BELIEVING

By: Norman P. Grubb

It is a universal seeing and knowing, with no further double vision, that is of ultimate importance. That is the only key to a believing with no kinks in it. As long as we see good and evil, two powers, which was my trouble for some time, we will equally have a see-saw believing.

The first principle of faith in action must always be the inner seeing before the believing. In this world full of evil and problems, we will always, as humans, start by seeing and believing in something that disturbs us, which we call evil. This is negative believing; and what we see inwardly, and therefore believe, is what we outwardly transmits to others. We transmit darkness, not light; death, not life.

Is there an alternative? Yes, there is, and that was what settled into me, once I saw God as all. There cannot be two powers, for He is one. But how, then, can I include the workings of an evil power, of which the world and people are so full, as an expression of the one power of God if He is love?

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Turning to the Bible I found the plainest statements linking God with evil. Here are some of them. The prophet Isaiah said plainly, "I am the Lord, and there is none else. I formed the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil. I, the Lord, do all these things" (45:7). That statement is total enough. But there are plenty more. To Moses God said, "Who has made the dumb, the deaf, or the seeing or the blind?" (Ex. 4:11). When

Jeremiah spoke of God's coming judgment on rebellious Israel, with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, he said that God named the heathen king who would destroy them "Nebuchadnezzar, my servant!" God spoke of as "locust, the caterpillar, the cankerworm, the palmer worm, my great army which I've sent among you." There are dozens of such sayings by the prophets.

We all know about Joseph, for he went farther. He left no room for us to say that God permits evil things to happen but does not direct them. After he had suffered by being sold as a slave by his brethren, and then thrown into prison by the false accusation of Potiphar's wife, after fourteen years of such treatment, he told his brethren, "You thought evil against me but God meant it for good." Meant it! To mean is not to permit. It is direct purpose and planning.

Peter, in a startling statement in his speech after Pentecost, referring to the greatest crime in history, told the crowds, "Jesus of Nazareth...Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Determinate counsel--there's no possible permissiveness there!

When in those early days of persecution the believers were praying together, they said in their prayer, "For of a truth, against your hold child, Jesus, both Herod, and Pontiffs Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatever your hand and you counsel determined to be done." what could be stronger?

Then when He stood before Pilate, and Pilate had said, "Know you not that I have power to crucify you and have power to release you?" Jesus answered, "You could have no power against me except it be given you from above!" From above? We would say, if we believe in two powers, from beneath! But Jesus saw only one power.

At the last supper table, as Judas left the table to betray Him, Jesus merely said to His disciples, "The Prince of this world

comes and has nothing in me.” Nothing! He did not inwardly see him. And he said the final word when the soldiers were come into the garden to arrest Him, and He told Peter, “Put up your sword in its sheath. The cup which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it?” And that cup? Satan taking Him to Calvary.

I had the answer when I saw that a person is only a person because he is free. Plainly, therefore, as we have seen by the history of our human family, that had to include our freedom to take the fruit of the forbidden tree, which in turn had to include its tragic consequences, and the sorrows God, in His faithful love, told Adam and Eve would come to them. So in creating persons like Himself, who would be able to manage His universe, God had to make them free. He could do nothing else or they would not have been persons. and freedom is the necessity of making choices. he therefore created them with the possibility of choosing the opposite of Himself, the evil, which they did. In that sense God created evil, because, as we have seen, there cannot be consciousness without opposites.

It does not mean that He is the doer of evil. As Paul said, “God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man.” He created freedom, and basic to freedom is the possibility of alternative choices. It is in this sense that He created evil.

Satan himself was God’s created being, of the highest order. In his freedom he rebelled, and founded the kingdom of darkness of which he is the god. But he is till forever God’s Satan, and God deliberately used Satan, for instance, to bring Job to the final end of himself (as He uses him in all our lives!). Job is one of the great recorded evidences in the Bible that God is manipulating Satan, not Satan God (Job 1:8 and 2:3).

Stretch this out, and we find in all human history we can boldly call Satan “God’s convenient agent.” We have already sought to make plain that if Satan had not first been free to take us the wrong way, we should never now be safely settled in the right one through Christ. So watch, as of course so many of us do, and see God continually using evil for good purposes,

meaning the evil as a product of our freedom, but using it for His overcoming grace.

In that sense, then, the Bible says that God means the consequences of evil, whether in its corruption's in our personal lives, or in all its horrors of disease, death, disaster, cruelties and "man's inhumanity to man." to think God means such as if He is talking pleasure in them we see clearly is an equal horror. We know that all evil so pierced His heart that, to redeem us from it, He come in the person of His Son, Himself to be perfected in suffering, right up to "tasting death for every man."

In another sense, it is necessary we recognize that God does mean evil in all its tragedy, and understand why He means it. For only by that recognition can we be firm and strong, and praising, when the storms of evil are blowing around us. If, when this or that hits us, or we or our neighbors live in distressing conditions, we can only say that God permits it, we seem to imply a weakness in God; or at least we wish He didn't permit such things as if He is sorry about them, but can't help it because the devil must have his way. There is an element of disturbed questioning in us about a God who sits back, as it were, and leaves the devil free to do his damndest.

But when we have these solid grounds for knowing there is no other way except that we humans must reap our share of the sorrows of life, and God means exactly what has come to us, we then can see it and can take it in a totally opposite way--as all joy, instead of all horror. For we know this is the negative background for His purposes of perfect love. All is perfect, and He is working everything out "after the counsel of His own will," and it is always "the good pleasure of His goodness." And if good and enjoyable to Him, we know it is good and enjoyable to us.

What a difference this makes to our normal negative headshaking over all that is happening to us in our personal lives, our families and the world, As we have said, we must always start from the negative impact of this world's discords on us, right in our own emotional responses, and in our family,

business, or church relationships. We just don't like it. We start with the ever-present temptation to simply believe a thing to be evil, which it is to human eyes. We really know we're off-center, because the effect of our negative-believing is at once an inner disturbance and darkness. The frown is on our face! And our temptations turn to quick reactions of temper, impatience, and negative judgmentalism.

By this we learn that in all problems, the only real problem is ourselves. It is our negative believing. What we hold, holds us; and what we are transmit. I always know I am off-center when things disturb me. Self-outlook has taken the place of Christ-outlook. When I start that way in my negative human reactions, being tempted to slip back into an independent-self outlook, there is a healthy touch of hell in me.

But now that this wonderful truth has settled into us as total truth - that God is the Lord and there is none else (Isa. 45:5-14), so nothing but what He wills, exists - we know that all these discords are merely disturbed outer conditions, whether in things or people...of which the inner center is He. They are disturbed forms of Him and His perfect kingdom of heaven. And now it is simple for us to exchange our negative believing for the positive recognition of God in all. It is surely surprising and humbling to us when we suddenly wake up to how long we have often remained in our negatives!

So now we clearly see that the first way in which rivers of the Spirit flow out of us is in this reversal of our inner seeing. We must constantly remember that all we are is spirit, and that all which comes out of us to others is our inner seeing.

We recognize we shall always start with our negative reactions to things or people as they appear to us. We cannot be human and do less. But they are the necessary negative background to Him, the Positive, revealing himself. We have it now altogether clear that there is none other Lord in the universe but that Perfect One, and that all imperfection is distortion

through devil or man - that evil is the misuse of good. And we know that Christ has come to swallow up death with life.

So now we take constant inner practical action. We immediately confront our negative reactions. We recognize them as negative human outlooks which mistake outer appearances for reality. Though hurt by them, perhaps badly and repeatedly, we from our inner center reverse our inner seeing. We die to the human outlook by "bearing about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus." We cannot change our soul-feelings, but we do change our spirit-attitude. Then we affirm that all is perfect, horrible or offensive though it may appear. We always see Him "meaning" that situation - even meaning persons to be in their distorted forms, but with Him at their hidden center. We see only perfect love and perfect power. We count the 'divers trials" as all joy. We glory in the tribulation. We believe against appearances, and accept and praise. We repeat this perhaps a thousand times in our daily lives, in things large and small, and it turns the distresses of life into daily adventure. He that sits in the heavens laughs, and we laugh with Him.

And that laughter rings out of us in word and look, and touches our world. "How can this crazy person be happy and thankful in evil circumstances? He's got something, crazy or no!" "I wish I could be happy and peaceful in my depressing conditions." a secret hunger is there. Some come and inquire and ask for help, and we give it to them. We always share what we've got; and some get fed and become feeders of others, and so the rivers flow.

So our faith attitudes give life, even before they come faith actions (which we shall shortly look into) "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." Daily, momentarily, we keep our inner attitudes God-centered in God's purposes, and life issues from us. This is the pure heart that sees only God, and views all circumstances with Him of whom it is said, "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil." It produces the thrill of our daily adventure, and is within reach of us all, in all conditions. Let us remember that nothing outer holds us. We are only held by our

own self-attitudes. If we see evil, and are held by our seeing, we have our inner hells of fear, hate, struggle, pessimism. If in all things we see Him who is always perfect goodness, we have our present heaven, and are busy introducing other to it.