

The INTERCESSOR

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

Volume 20

Number 3

No Independent Self

by Norman Grubb

This fundamental, revolutionary truth, when rightly understood and believed, sets us free from Satan's lies and from "the law of sin and of death."—Free to operate as unique expression of the Divine nature—Jesus Christ—in our forms in everyday life.

Part Two

Free at Last

So now at last we are clear. We are free, because we know ourselves as nothing but the expresser, vessel, branch, temple, body member, and slave of the Deity self, his Spirit joined to our spirits. And we have moved in by the recognition of faith, as in Romans 8:2 and Gal 2:20, to being right self-conscious selves, conscious of ourselves being Himself in expression. We act freely as ourselves because He has of His own choice by grace joined, fused, and identified Himself with us as ourselves. We are "driven" people, driven by His *self-for-others deity nature*. And we live freely in His keeping in our soul-body reactions as much as in our spirit (1 Thess. 5:23).

So then, what about those continual pulls that we still have to that old opposite—those invasions of fear, hate, worry, lust, self-seeking, and weaknesses? Now we are alive to Satan's

subtlest assaults on us. The subtle trick occurs when we feel those constant pulls on us and we go back to the old habit of thinking we ought not to respond to them. Bang! We have been caught out in the old habit of thinking we are independent, and thus need to respond to an "ought to" or an "ought not". This is the subtle trick. Those pulls make us think we are independent human selves again, and the moment we think that, back comes the law say-

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ing, "*No, you ought not to*". And we are caught right up into false condemnation. That "ought not" only reaches us because we have slipped back into thinking we should be watching ourselves, running our own lives, and combating the wrong pulls. That is where Satan has his laugh on us. There we are, inwardly condemned as if we ought not to fear, hate, anger, lust, or to want or react to these negative desires. And there we are struggling and con-

demned, or maybe following through to some actual sin.

Why? Here comes Satan's final subtle trick. We are *tricked* into thinking that having those pulls is sin; whereas, the real sin is the unbelief of thinking we are again independent selves who should not have these pulls. But independent self is really Satan-self again having his hold on us, and we then again "carnal sold under sin". That means we are back again under the law with its "thou shalt not". But we are bound and unable to keep that law because our false sense of independent self, to which the law addresses itself,

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is really Satan as us with his temporary control of us.

Paul puts the essence of Romans 6,7 and 8 into *three verses to the Galatians*—Galatians 5:16-18. "Walk in the Spirit," he writes, "and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." We are Spirit people, but are still in our flesh humanity, and thus open to all Satan's pulls on us in our soul-body emotions and appetites.

So now what happens? We become conscious of flesh pulls, for, says Paul, "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh,

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and these are contrary the one to the other." These contrary pulls make us conscious of the antagonistic opposites, "the tree of *the knowledge of good and evil*". We are Spirit people bearing Spirit fruit and loving to be so, but we now also feel the *pulls and desires of the flesh*—Satan's agency in this Satan-filled world for attracting us back to his self-for-self ways.

This consciousness of the flesh-Spirit antagonisms is the danger spot. Satan thereby seeks to drag us back to that separation through the fall, in which we again think we are independent selves instead of Spirit-united selves. *This independent self*—outlook is really the touch of the old Satan-

union on us. It also means that we immediately put ourselves back under the law again. And with what consequence? We are bound by that Satan-self in our separation and cannot respond to the law or Spirit, and so Paul says, "Ye cannot do the things that ye would." Thus we are under the condemnation of the law and experience guilt that we cannot fulfill it. Being in the lie of independent self temporarily puts us back under Satan's control. Therefore, we cannot do the things that we would. Properly caught, properly bound and condemned!

But now Paul says, "If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law." In other words, if we are temporarily in unbelief, which has resurrected the lies of the independent self, we then suddenly remind ourselves of who we really are—Spirit bound and Spirit led, our self expressing Himself. We then say, "Wait a minute. Of course I am not an independent self feeling these pulls of Satan. That is his lie. No, I am Christ-self." I do not deny or fight the reality of my flesh pulls (and those are precisely what my Elder Brother equally, continually had according to Heb. 4:15).

I accept and recognize the reality of these flesh pulls, but I am dead to them in Christ ("always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus" as in 2 Cor. 4:10). They can shout at me by temptation, but have no hold or right to me (Rom. 8:12). I am alive unto God, a Spirit person, and led by the Spirit. The only law on me is what I now instinctively fulfill, that "law of the Spirit" by which I spontaneously do the things of the Spirit. Through Christ, the Spirit has replaced that old "law of sin and death" by which I spontaneously did

the things of the flesh. *So I go free*—back to who I really always was.

This is Paul's definition of daily freedom under daily flesh-assaults or pressures. It is what James *told us to be very thankful for*—good constant practice in the application of our faith walk. We admit those lying pulls back to unbelief, but now we are spontaneously faith-conscious of walking as Christ as us. Therefore, we "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free" (Gal. 5:1). By admitting Satan's right to pull at us through the flesh, we are also free to affirm our right to our faith-consciousness of being Christ as us. Thus we express Christ's nature of love, joy, and praising. We swallow up the negative pulls, or rather use those very pulls to express His pulls: love replacing hate, faith fear, rest strain, strength weakness, self-giving for self-gratifying, and so on.

What to Do about Temptation

Because of its importance, and because it is the main reason for this whole "walking in the Spirit" sharing, I will address again what we do in meeting the assaults of the flesh. The answer is that we do not fight temptation, nor take condemnation for it. The very opposite. We recognize that the real temptation is to make me think I am the independent self that I am not. Then I am again "under the law", yet cannot fulfill it, because independent self is really Satan as me (Matt. 16:23). It is the sin of unbelief. What then do I do? I quickly recognize that the problem is not my having flesh-temptation, but rather my temporarily forgetting (2 Pet. 1:9) that I am no longer an independent self. Who I am is simply and solely an expresser of Christ in His nature.

Therefore, as quickly as I can, I accept the fact of being tempted, for we live in a totally tempting world.

Accepting that, I don't deny or resist the temptation. No, I resist the tempter (James 4:7) by saying, "That's not I you are pulling: That's only my outer soul emotions and body appetites, which of course are open to all that can reach me from your outer world, (for his is "the spirit of the world" - 1 Cor. 2:12). But I am not a bunch of outer responses, I am Christ as me. He is the real Self expressed by my human container self." As I do that, I am in fact

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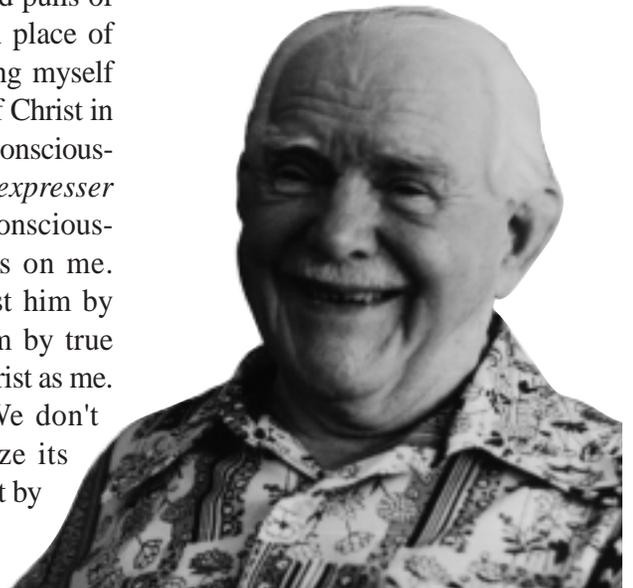
doing what Paul said in 2 Cor. 4:10: inwardly recognizing my place of death in his death to those old pulls of Satan on my human self. In place of these temptations, I am seeing myself in my true self-relationship of Christ in me as me. As I do that, the consciousness of myself as a *Christ-expresser* swallows up the negative consciousness of Satan and his pulls on me. Satan flees (Ja. 4:7). I resist him by replacing false belief in him by true belief in who I really am - Christ as me. Light swallows up dark. We don't fight the dark; we recognize its right to exist, but we replace it by turning on the light.

Our danger, then, is not

the fact that temptation pulls us. We shall always have plenty of that on all levels. The danger is that it tricks us back into thinking we are the selves who must respond to these pulls. But now we know that trick of Satan. We accept the pulls as normal and right on our humanity. But then we say, "That's not my real me. Those are only pulls on my outer clothing of soul-body. My 'me' is Christ as me, and light is on and the darkness swallowed up." And if we are tempted to think, "But yes, we are constantly assaulted by the same things," then we say, "And yes, that gives me continual practice in recognizing again and again who I am - Christ as me!"

More than Conquerors— Now Intercessors!

Now we are "more than conquerors" (Rom. 8:37), because we are freed from having to fight our own battles and watch out for our human responses. We are "fathers," not just "young men" (1 Jn 2:12-14). We are co-laborers, co-saviors (1 Cor. 9:22), and intercessors. We now move out to



meet the needs of others. We are more than just personal conquerors; we can lead others into conquest. We are the privileged ones to be "Knowers" by the Spirit of what is to us the total truth: That formerly we were Satan-I, but now through Calvary Christ-I, with no illusory independent self in between. This is such liberating light and the meaning of life in such fullness we have an unending drive of the Spirit to bring this "mystery hidden from ages and generations and now made manifest" (1 Col. 1:26) to all God's people. We are taking our share in this worldwide, church-wide commission. We know it includes also our share in the offense of the cross where the sword of the Spirit pierces too deep and disrupts established convictions. But we also have the glory of seeing an increasing number in whom the light is lit in clarity. And we know our calling, as with Paul, is "to open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel," and to "speak boldly as I ought to speak" (Eph. 6:19,20). And by God's enabling, this we will do.

For many years after his retirement as General Secretary of the Worldwide Evangelization Crusade, Norman Grubb traveled extensively sharing the truth of our union with Christ. He also carried on a huge personal correspondence with individuals throughout the world. He was the author of many books and pamphlets, a number of which are available through the Zerubbabel Book Ministry. Norman lived with his daughter, Priscilla, in Fort Washington, PA. Norman P. Grubb entered the Kingdom at 98 years of age.

Editor's Note

The Christmas season brings the reminder that the birth of Jesus Christ was the fulfillment of God's eternal desire and purpose to prepare a race of sons through whom He could rule the universe. From start to finish this issue of *The Intercessor* provides refreshment for the soul thirsting for the meaning of Christmas—and of life.

Brett Burrowes' study in Romans (Part 2) explores the revelation of humanity's desperate need for a savior. Moving through the first three chapters, we are presented with a thorough description of our total depravity and inability to do anything to save ourselves from God's just verdict of "guilty" and the frightening prospect of hell.

For those wishing to move further into the entire book of Romans, we offer a rich study in a five-tape series taught by Norman Grubb. This month's Tape Talk gives a taste of this sweeping study of the book of Romans recorded during series of lectures in 1976.

But the riches of God's purpose and ultimate plan for us as Christ-ones is not restricted to the Romans epistle. Scott Prewitt's survey of four of Paul's letters—Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians—explores this "mystery...hid from ages and generations, but now made manifest to His saints," pointing out Paul's clear and consistent teaching of God's purpose for us as containers and expressers of Jesus Christ—He in us and we in Him. Scott points out in rich detail Paul's repeated message that Jesus Christ is "not separated from mankind by space and time... [but] both formed and

revealed in us" and how we are to be "fulfilled with abundant life...Jesus, Himself, living in us"—the ultimate purpose for which we were created and redeemed.

Continuing from last issue, our lead article, Norman Grubb's "No Independent Self," reminds us that "we are 'driven' people, driven by His self-for-others Deity nature." This segment describes Satan's lie that we are independently-operated rather than spirit-operated and illustrates how he seeks to lead us back into temporary bondage by tempting us to confuse our vacillating feelings and thoughts (soul) with the truth that we are forever in a spirit-union with Jesus Christ—"not I but Christ" operating us. This topic is echoed in "Letters from Norman" in which Norman explains God's purpose for the trials and sufferings that come into our lives and how to persist in believing God's truth about ourselves and thereby "labor to enter into that rest."

"God's Obsession" describes Paul's obsession—and ours—to fulfill our two-fold commission—to bring men to Christ and to bring them into the total truth—bringing "His human family into existence, made of the stuff of His own being, so that they can contain Him, The Person, in their persons." Norman Grubb reminds us that we are not "becomers" but "containers" by revealing the origin of the lie of independence and unfolding God's ultimate purpose to redeem the human race by His spirit-indwelt "army of intercessors." In C.T. Studd's passage, "Christ's Nobodies," we have in his passion an example and an exhortation to Christians to share God's obsession to save the lost in his He calls for

Christians to share “the real holiness of God...a masculine holiness, one of daring faith and works for Jesus Christ.”

Since God’s obsession is to have a family of sons and co-saviors through whom to manifest Himself, how does our choice play into His plan? Brett Burrowes’ article, “Choice,” provides refreshing light on the question of our free-will versus God’s autonomy--an issue that has challenged Christians throughout history. Page Prewitt’s transcribed talk, “God Always Gets His Way” provides a complement to Brett’s article. Using familiar biblical and personal examples, Page explains how choice fits into God’s ultimate plan for humanity.

“A Message from Norman Grubb” is Norman’s brief summation of God’s plan that we be Christ-expressers. This article encapsulates the foundations of our total truth so that “our sole absorbing drive is to share with all whom we have contact with or can launch out on

to on a worldwide level this vast difference between being from birth a Satan-expresser in his self-for-self nature and now being a fixed Christ-expresser, who lays down his life for others.”

Finally, Marian Kinahan’s “Look at a Book” reviews Norman Grubb’s short booklet *Intercession in Action* in which he describes God’s highest calling in his life—the five gained intercession—in his desire to “enlighten us so that we may walk in the same path.” But intercession also demands that a cost be paid—and this issue’s excerpt from “The Intercession of Rees Howells” describes the opportunity he was given—to follow in the footsteps of Abraham, Hannah, and God Himself—to give up his own son so that 10,000 souls might be saved.

It is our hope that this issue will provide light and inspiration to our readers as we move into the challenges of the new year.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this magazine is to further the great high calling of the Lord Jesus to carry His Gospel to the whole world. This calling is known in the Christian world as the Great Commission. Our interpretation of the Gospel is that Jesus Christ is the second member of the Trinity, fully God, made manifest in the flesh. He was tempted in all points as we are, but totally without sin. He was crucified for the sins of the world, was buried, and rose from the dead on the third day, according to the Scriptures. He gives the power to become the sons of God to all who receive Him.

Beyond this forgiveness of sins, *The Intercessor* is committed to proclaiming to every creature the mystery of the Gospel, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory (Col. 1:27). The outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Church at Pentecost means that Christ has joined Himself to us as one spirit (1 Cor. 6:17). Thus we see that Christ has reproduced Himself in our flesh, and we Christians are really Christ living as us (Gal. 2:20).

Therefore, there is not only the forgiveness of sins but also a life in Christ of knowing we are dead to sin (Rom. 6). Furthermore, we are dead to the Law (Rom. 7), since the power of sin is through the Law. Christ is the only Lawkeeper (Rom. 8), and there is no independent human nature that can keep the Law, though we are continually tempted to believe so.

Belief in an independent human nature is Satan’s lie and the root of sin. Non-Christians are really Satan-indwelt, expressing his lusts (John 8:44), just as we have come to learn that Christians are Christ-indwelt, expressing His righteousness (2 Cor. 6:16). Humans have no moral nature of their own, meaning that we are simply expressions of the indwelling deity nature, either of Christ or Satan (the fallen created being who is the spirit of error). Sin in a Christian is a result of believing again Satan’s lie that there is a human nature which can do good or evil.

Our full restoration, then, is to see ourselves as Christ in the world and to labor and travail to see Christ formed in others according to the mighty working of the Spirit. This is “intercession,” the definite laying down of our lives to present every man perfect in Christ (Col. 1:28). *The Intercessor* is committed to this great and thrilling commission, the cost of bringing it about, and the resurrection joy of reaping the harvest!

Our Resource—Christ Within

If all resources for all things on all levels are found within, what final resources are there for the most inward of all? the human self? What solution for the insurmountable self-centredness of the human spirit which is the cause of all the human chaos? And here is the answer. Christ within. The Holy Spirit within. God dwelling in us: then in that realized union through free choice, in Christ’s cross and resurrection, the human spirit of self-centredness is united to the divine Spirit of self-giving. “Dead to sin and alive unto God,” man becomes a human expression of God who is love: a perfectly normal man in his perfectly normal environment with his normal human reactions and human weaknesses, yet God’s strength so made perfect in weakness that it is not we living, but He by us; just as a branch is a normal expression of the life of the tree of which it is a member.

—Once Caught, No Escape

A Message from Norman Grubb

Dictated by Norman and Read at Zerubbabel's January 1992 Annual Meeting

My loved co-intercessors,

Once again, this year I can't be with you, and our faithful Lanny will take a message from me. Actually, there's not a further thing to say, because I have continued conviction that the Holy Spirit has put the liberating truth into focus for us, just as I wrote it as "My Last Word" in my Total Truth pamphlet.

The fact is that self is all we have and are, a marvelous by-product of The Self of the universe. Just as the message of AA's Twelve Steps is simple enough when you pay the price of full honesty, so the key to that door to the Total Truth is simple enough when we pay the full price of honesty, which admits the fact that our real "god" was self-for-self.

It was through the lying, self-for-self nature of Satan that he captured us through Adam's disobedience. But, the eternal truth of the universe is that of our God, whose fixed nature is self-for-others, the very opposite to Satan's lie, which swallowed up all humanity. Every human being starts life captive to Satan's self-for-self deceit.

The amazing truth, which becomes our own truth when we are conditioned to receive it in its totali-

ty, is that God's own Son took upon Himself our human selfhood captured by that lie, and met and for forty days flatly refused to go that same way under Satan's temptations. And that was the beginning of a life of tension and great suffering, to escape which He did not once take saving action against His Father's will. So He aroused all the enmity of Satan's human self-for-self armies under their false religious cloaks.

Never once did He deviate through to the final crisis question of Pilate, who asked, Who are you? and the answer came back, The Son of God. Right through those terrible crisis hours from Gethsemane to Calvary, He never moved from that word of Who He was, although taking the darkness of hell for our sakes in saying, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" For three hours He was alone on his face, sweating even blood in the faith that though physically killed, He would rise again. All this took place in the only possible One who could represent the whole human race.

What an unwavering human life, never once responding to those Satan self-for-self temptations, then believing in the resurrection, and from that onward to ascension and sitting with all authority at the right hand of God. And then at last, after those several thousand years, being equipped to

impart to us His own Spirit of Truth and Love, on which the First Adam had shut the door to us.

So now we humans, who were created to express Christ in His love nature, which was blanked right out for us through the Fall, are now restored to our overcoming Christ, who, God in the Garden of Eden had said, would bruise the Serpent's head. And now, in total humility which admits our years of Satan slavery—as indeed in the AA Twelve-Step program—by the one process of faith, we can come to Him seated at the right hand of God. And by His Spirit, Jesus is made into no formal "religion," but into our personal, enduring Christ living in and as us, having replaced that self-for-self lying nature of Satan in us by His self-for-others nature.

Now living in a new nature, we remain, however, still totally surrounded by the products of Satan's self-for-self nature in covetousness, deceit, envy and wrath, and we continue assaulted along those lines by all that surrounds us. But we now by grace have the clear insight between a Satan self-for-self temptation and the practice of believing in our glorious new self-for-others nature in Jesus. And as we move forward, often in forms in which we have to take up our Cross and die to world enticement, we joy knowers can

shout aloud, "O God, my heart is fixed, my heart is fixed" (Psalm 57:7), and we sing and give praise.

Then this passion takes hold of us—for we are all passionate people, created that way—and our sole absorbing drive is to share with all whom we have contact with or can launch out to on a worldwide level this vast difference between being from birth a Satan-expresser in his self-for-self nature and now being a fixed Christ-expresser, who lays down his life for others. That, of course, is the point in my Total Truth pamphlet.

I also thank God I got a shot of fresh Holy Ghost confirmation when I heard how you in Zerubbabel had come out with that word of faith for the millions needed for the Boone Center, and expecting some now. Dates and ways don't matter. In God's always surprising methods, what we said in faith means the money is already there and is en route to us in His ways.

With my love to you all, and waiting to see how the Spirit breaks through for this our Total Truth to become the Total Truth of all God's people.

Pass It On?

Do you have a friend or acquaintance, or even a group with whom you would like to share *The Intercessor*, but hate to give up your copy? If there is any reason you could use multiple copies, please let us know and we will be glad to accommodate you.

CHRIST'S NOBODIES

"Believing that further delay would be sinful, some of God's insignificants and nobodies in particular, but trusting in our Omnipotent God, have decided on certain simple lines, according to the Book of God, to make a definite attempt to render the evangelization of the world an accomplished fact. For this purpose we have banded ourselves together under the name of 'Christ's nobodies', otherwise 'Christ's Etceteras.'

"The Etcetera Evangelist must be a man of God and not a child of man. He is not the salaried servant of the Etcetera Committee. He is a servant of Jesus Christ with Whom he has settled terms of agreement already. He knows no other Master. He has not the ghost of a doubt about God supplying his need; he carries his cheque book with him always, and has no fear of the cheques being dishonoured. If death overtakes him on the battlefield, he knows such to be a special mark of Christ's favour, Who has thus honoured and promoted him sooner than he had any right to expect. As he looks to God to supply his needs, so also shall he look to God for his guidance and shall obey Him.

"Too long have we been waiting for one another to begin! The time for waiting is past! The hour of God has struck! War is declared! In God's Holy Name let us arise and build! 'The God in Heaven He will fight for us', as we for Him. We will not build on the sand, but on the bedrock of the sayings of Christ, and the gates and minions of hell shall not prevail against us. Should such men as we fear? Before the whole world, aye, before the sleepy, lukewarm, faithless, namby-pamby Christian world, we will dare to trust our God, we will venture our all for Him, we will love and we will die for Him, and we will do it with His joy unspeakable singing aloud in our hearts. We will a thousand times sooner die trusting only in our God, than live trusting in man. And when we come to this position the battle is already won, and the end of the glorious campaign in sight. We will have the real Holiness of God, not the sickly stuff of talk and dainty words and pretty thoughts; we will have a Masculine Holiness, one of daring faith and works for Jesus Christ."

—C. T. Studd

Tape Talk

by Gail Bedell

TAPE REVIEW:

Romans

by Norman Grubb

“Romans is a great letter that tells us what it is to be a whole human.” Norman’s simple statement in the fourth of this five-tape set belies the breadth of this magnificent study—the longest series of any of Norman’s audiotapes. Before a verse in Romans is ever cited, Norman begins by carefully and thoroughly laying his foundation. Starting in the first tape and halfway into the second, Norman describes the love-nature of God, His purpose in creating mankind, and the universal truths upon which His universe is founded. He describes God’s nature of perfection and total love that had to be expressed—first in begetting the Son and then, through the Spirit, in creating a race of people through whom He could manifest His nature of totally outpoured love.

Added to this foundation is a thorough treatment of God’s universal truths: evil as the un-manifested side of God—a potential to be selfish that was swallowed up in God’s choice to be poured out love; the necessity of opposites to reveal everything we know: sweet as not-sour, love as not-hate; the origin of evil and its place in God’s purposes—to name a few. From there, Norman sweeps through human his-

tory from God’s perspective—beginning with Fall and illustrating through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses and the Law—to prepare the human race for the manifestation of the Savior. Norman also explores freedom, choice, faith, and the need for a total disillusionment to prepare us for the way of faith—that one radical way—to receive a new life—the life of Christ.

Halfway through the second tape, Norman brings us into the text: “Romans 1-3 shows the totality of the first stage in our redemption”—the shedding of Christ’s blood for forgiveness of sins. In unforgettable detail, he describes the awful and glorious consequences of Jesus Christ’s pure life, His voluntary offer to be a physical sacrifice as the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world, His death on the cross and descent into hell—taking the full judgement for the sins of all mankind. But because of Christ’s obedience, Satan never enslaved him and hell could not hold Him. Anyone can believe in a historical crucifixion, Norman points out, but only by faith can we believe in the Resurrection—because the Resurrection transcends understanding.

Discussing Chapters 4 and 5, Norman elaborates on the difference between faith in self-righteous works and the imputed righteousness through faith in Christ, turning once again to Abraham’s remarkable faith that God could take his and Sarah’s

“dead” bodies and fulfill His promise to make Abraham a father of multitudes. Norman discusses the new birth, contrasting the dramatic change from distortion and discord to a life indwelt by the Holy Spirit resulting in harmony with the God of the universe.

Thus far, Norman says, we see our new relationship with God bought by the blood of Christ, but not yet union. This first stage of revelation shows the first effects of the new life: I know I have peace with God through the blood of Christ—the forgiveness of my sins. The first Adam, representing the soul/matter/outer life has been replaced by the New Adam (Christ)—a living Spirit. At this second stage of spiritual awareness, we become stabilized in our new life as an heir of God and move from incoming love—salvation for me—to outgoing love for others. However, Norman points out that although it is not stated in Romans, most people need a crisis to move from Romans 1-5 in which I know I have peace with God, to the replaced life of Romans 8—the replaced self. Moving on to Romans 6 through 8, Norman states that from Chapter 6 on, the blood of Christ is no longer mentioned. Discussing Chapter 6, which he calls the “death chapter,” Norman describes the immense significance of the body death of Jesus Christ—not a death for our sins (that

From a life of solitude, alone with God and his word, Rees Howells had been called to mingle again with people, to train for the ministry, and then to go to Africa as a missionary. But during those years in the village, reserves of spiritual power were built up which were to have a mighty outcome in later years, first in Africa and then in the Bible College in Swansea. During his time in the ministry he concentrated on preaching the New Birth as he felt that this was greatly needed in the chapels, some of which had not associated themselves with the preaching of the great Welsh Revival of 1904-6.

It was in Africa that he proved the power of the intercessions gained in the village, and in Africa that the Holy Spirit was poured out in 'rivers of living water'. The call to the mission field was preceded by perhaps the greatest intercession of all, an intercession that cost both Rees Howells and his wife to the depths. The Lord asked them, not just to leave their infant son, Samuel, behind, but to give up all future claim to him. In Africa they were to give their undivided attention to the winning of souls, and for this sacrifice Rees Howells claimed 10,000 souls in Africa; he was confident that he would get them and he did.

"My wife and I were to go to Africa and because we loved souls, the Lord made a very great test on it. He said, 'You must prove to me that you love the souls of those people in Africa, who are to live for eternity, more than you love your own son.' I thought, 'Does he really mean this?' Yes, he meant it, even as he had told Abraham to take his only son up a mountain and offer him for a burnt offering. There are men God has tested, and he tested me whether I loved anything in this world more than I loved souls. Everything has to be tested and to go through the fire. God knew that 2000 years after he asked Abraham to give up his son, he would have to do the same thing. 'He who spared not his own son but delivered him up for us all...' (Romans 8.32). And as Isaiah said, 'It pleased the Lord to bruise him' (Isaiah 53.10). Your love for God must be proved - he does not take your word for it. The acid test of our love for souls was Samuel. God said, 'If you give him up you can never claim him again.' Not once has it ever dawned on me that Samuel was mine. God had said to Abraham, 'In blessing I will bless thee,' and the one thing I told the Lord was, 'I can claim the hundred-fold in souls from you in Africa.'

"I gave Samuel up on a point of intercession, and he was never to be ours again. The Lord said, 'This is

the price and you must pay it.' I had walked tests before but never anything like this. You may preach about God giving his son without being moved, but when you are called to give yours you are moved every time you see the name of the Son of God. How can you know what it cost God to give his only begotten son if you have the chance to give yours and you do not do it? We were not even to find a place for him, but my uncle and aunt sent for me. They had never seen Samuel but they said they were to take him; he was to be theirs entirely, and my sister was to be his nurse. I think in eternity we shall look back on what we went through the morning she came to take him. When he went, not only was the house emptied but our hearts were emptied too. I asked my wife that night how she had got through and she said that she had gone out into the garden to weep. The lines of a well-loved hymn came to her:

But we never can prove the delights of his love
Until all on the altar we lay.

Now she had to prove it. Then the Lord spoke to her: 'Measure it with Calvary.' She saw what the Father did with his son and she came through.

"I never once interfered in Samuel's life. They changed his name and they planned his education. I have always referred to my uncle and aunt as his parents and I never claimed him as mine.

"When I went to Africa I knew I was taking the Holy Spirit there and that as soon as he would get a chance he would pour himself out on that place as he did at Pentecost on Jerusalem. I knew I had a claim on 10,000 souls because of the sacrifice we made of Samuel. Everything the Lord had told us to do we had done. The price had been paid and not the least was the giving up of Samuel. I never thought to do anything else in Africa but to win souls. The Saviour said that rivers of living water were to flow out of the one in whom the Holy Spirit was living, and I knew he was living in me. He also said, 'Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse and prove me now ... if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it' (Malachi: 3.10), and I had brought the tithes into the storehouse. He also told me to pray that he would give the Saviour 'the heathen for his inheritance' (Psalm 2.8). There was power even in telling this and I went to Africa to get those 10,000 souls."

-from *The Intercession of Rees Howells*
by Doris Ruscoe

Choice

by Brett Burrowes

In Deut. 30:11-20, Moses sets before the people a critical choice that will determine the destiny and direction of their history, just as they are about to cross into the promised land. He lays before them the consequences of life and death, blessings and curses, depending on whether they choose to obey God or refuse. The choice that the people make is not something light or trivial, nor is it beyond their abilities: "Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach ... No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart that you may obey it" (Deut. 30:11,14). The truth about God and what He had commanded them was not beyond their ability to believe and obey, but within them, since God had created them free creatures with the capacity to respond either in obedience or disobedience. Otherwise, the command to choose life in verse 19 would be meaningless and cruel if it were beyond their capacity as human beings.

But choice is something we do have, since we are made to be the images of God in His cosmic temple of creation. How can we adequately reflect the moral character of God without the freedom to choose between good and evil? Our freedom, as opposed to God's, may be very limited in scope, but it is real. This measure of freedom is essential to our personhood: it is what makes us persons. Let us first look at what a choice is. A choice always involves two or more contrast-

ing alternatives. We must first perceive a distinction between two or more options before we can choose. For example, a person who is completely color-blind cannot choose one color over another because she cannot perceive the difference between them. Such a choice would be meaningless for her. Choice involves recognizable alternatives. This is the fundamental law of opposites: we can only know something by comparing and contrasting it with something else. We can only know hot because we know cold. We can know one state of emotion like

How can we adequately reflect the moral character of God without the freedom to choose between good and evil?

anger because we have other emotions with which to contrast it. This is true of choices as well. We can only perceive an option because there is some alternative to it.

Secondly, for a choice to be real, both alternatives must be available and realistic possibilities for the person choosing, that is, the alternatives must fall within the person's ability to accomplish. We cannot tell a crippled person to choose between running or walking to the park, because, although the cripple can perceive the difference between walking and running, he cannot accomplish either due to his physical limitations. That choice doesn't exist for the cripple.

Choice Must Be Real, Free, and Significant

Moreover, a choice cannot be coerced in any manner if the choice is to be real, free, and significant. It cannot be coerced externally by other persons; as when political prisoners are forced to sign a false confession. Nor can the choice be compelled by internal desires, motivations, or "sinful human nature." In that case, the choice would be no more real than that of an animal driven by instinct. If human choice is predetermined by external force or some internal nature, then it is an illusion and does not exist. We are not born with a sinful human nature that determines the way we act, yet we are not independent selves who control our own actions. Rather we are vessels containing either God or Satan, expressing their natures, and the only free choice we have as creatures is which spirit we will express in our lives (see 2 Tim. 2:20-21).

So human beings have only one choice that is truly free. All other choices are determined by this one fundamental choice, and there is nothing more important than knowing precisely what this choice is. Satan would fog our minds to keep us from this knowledge, for in making the right choice we will render him powerless over us. This one fundamental choice is what makes us spiritual beings, persons with a moral awareness, distinct from mere animals driven by instinct. This choice is portrayed for us in the garden of Eden,

where God places man in a situation where he will be tested and compelled to make a choice. Prior to God's command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Adam and Eve lacked any moral consciousness; they could experience the goodness of the Lord, but they could not know it, for they had never encountered any evil with which to contrast it. God gave the command and created the tree of knowledge precisely to bring humanity to the level of moral consciousness.

God also ordained for the serpent, Satan, to be in the garden, so that evil could be presented in a persuasive and powerful manner. If evil had not been presented in this manner, Adam and Eve would have been deprived of their choice, and therefore of their spirituality or personhood. Evil had to be presented persuasively because the goodness of God in providing for all human needs was so powerfully evident. Without an equal presentation of evil, the choice would have been meaningless and insignificant. For example, if you offer a child the choice between a bowl of ice cream and a bowl of spinach, it is obvious what the child would choose. The child does make a choice, but it is not a significant one. Choice is most truly free when the alternatives are almost equally matched. For this to happen in the garden, God had to withdraw His visible presence from Adam and Eve to permit Satan to work his deception.

Deception Does Not Negate Choice

But does Satan's deception negate the possibility of free choice, and therefore wipe out human responsibility for sin? By no means. For Adam and Eve knew the content of God's command,

and Satan could not erase that knowledge from their minds. Although Satan questioned what God had commanded, that is not where the deception took place. Rather, the deception concerned the consequences of choosing to disobey over choosing to obey. Satan minimized the painful consequences of disobedience: "You will not surely die" (Gen. 3:4), and magnified the pleasurable

Satan minimized the painful consequences of disobedience. And magnified the pleasurable consequences.

consequences: "Your eyes shall be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (3:5). Deception, therefore does not interfere with the exercise of choice, for although Satan's words were untrue, Eve had to determine who she would trust, and whose words she would bank her life on: God or Satan. Deception only works because a person wants to

All we get to choose is our view or perception of ourselves, and by that choice we determine what spirit operates us.

believe that something other than reality is the truth. Deception can only work where there is a self-will that wishes to remake reality according to its desires. Thus, the success of Satan's deception depended on Eve's desire to remake reality and to deny the truth. In 2 Thess. 2:10-12, Paul speaks of the end-times when there shall be false miracles and signs that deceive the perishing. The reason they perish, Paul says, is because they refuse to love the truth and so be saved. Refusal to love the truth involves

a willful choice to reject the truth. Deception, therefore, does not negate human responsibility or free choice.

What We Choose Enslaves Us

What was the alternative that Satan presented Eve? A surface understanding of the text would make it seem that the alternative was disobedience to God in eating the fruit of the tree. This is true, but does not penetrate to the spiritual core of the text. The real temptation was to lead Adam and Eve to rebel against God in declaring themselves as gods over against God, gods who could decide for themselves what good and evil were, decide for themselves how they would live their lives, without reference to God. The self would replace God at the center of their lives. The result of the choice would mean they would be operated by God's spirit as image-expressers of God's character, or be operated by Satan as expressers of his rebellious independent attitude. This is the only choice that human beings have: whether or not to believe Satan's lie that they can be independently self-operating selves who play at being gods. We cannot actually choose to be independent selves; that is the lie. All we get to choose is our view or perception of ourselves, and by that choice we determine what spirit operates us. Hence, our freedom is very limited and circumscribed in scope. It is not the freedom to be or do anything. In fact, once we choose whether or not to believe Satan's lie of independent self, every other action or choice is not free, but determined by the spirit which indwells and operates us. So, as Norman says in his books, freedom always expresses itself in a specific choice, and that choice results in the

enslavement of the will to what it chose. What we choose, chooses us, and we express the consequences of that fundamental choice in every area of our life.

As a consequence of Adam's choice, we are born joined in spiritual union to Satan in rebellion against God. To be joined to someone means to be in a covenantal relationship with him, as a wife to a husband or as a vessel to an overlord. To be joined to someone, then, means to be under their authority in a binding relationship. The joining to Satan fixed Adam's choice in his direction, so that Adam and the rest of humanity was no longer free to choose. What they had taken, took them, and the rest of humanity with them, since Adam acted as humanity's representative. Originally created free, humanity became slaves to Satan, fixed in their choice.

Unless God had intervened, humanity would have remained fixed in their choice for Satan beyond possibility of redemption. Once the choice was made, the human will was no longer free. But by His grace, God determined that, although humanity was in spiritual union with Satan, He would grant humanity the option of choosing out of that union. God does this when He promises to put enmity between the serpent and the woman in Gen. 3:15. God declares war on Satan, and works powerfully to draw men to Himself and to restrain Satan's control over humanity (2 Thess. 2:7), thereby restoring to humanity the opportunity to choose freely.

For each person, then, God graciously grants the opportunity to choose out of the spiritual union with Satan, and therefore the option to repent (Acts

11:18; Phil. 1:29; 2 Tim. 2:25). But the option to choose again is not a right, but a matter of God's grace, so that even our free choice to accept the offer of salvation in the gospel is not any grounds for pride or boasting. It is not a work that we independently accomplish, for without God holding Satan back from fixing us in the wrong choice, we would not possess free choice.

What of those who are ignorant of God's truth, whether in the form of God's standard in the law or in the form of the gospel message? How can God hold accountable those who have never heard the gospel and received a chance to accept it? How can they have a free choice if they never get the opportunity

The ultimate punishment for sin, then is the loss of the opportunity to repent, to freely choose out of sin. Hardening of the heart is not something for which we can blame God, but the result of willful and deliberate rebellion against Him.

to respond? But the Scriptures do not present the human condition in this manner. Romans 1:18-20 speaks clearly to this matter. Humanity willfully "attempts to suppress the truth by its wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—His eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse" (Rom. 1:18-20). The mind of humanity became depraved, because they do not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God. For that reason

they have become darkened and ignorant, because they harden their own hearts against God (Rom. 1:21, 28; Eph. 4:18). Humanity is ignorant by its own choice, not wanting to face the truth available to them. Some light is always available to people, whereby they may make the right choice to come into the light and so be saved. I believe God directs missionaries to those areas where people have already responded to the light they have. Perhaps the truth about God in nature is not enough to save a person, but if a person does respond to that truth, then God honors that response by getting the gospel to them. Thus humanity is without excuse before God.

God's Response to Willful Disobedience

But other verses seem to speak of humanity not having a choice, but rather of God hardening whomever He wills to harden, as in Romans 9:14-18. When Paul says that God will have mercy on whom He wants to have mercy, and harden whom he wants to harden, he is not referring to unconditional decrees before the foundation of the world, but to God's response to human choices. The original context of this quotation is Ex. 32-34, where Moses asks God's forgiveness for the sin of the golden calf. God responds by claiming the sovereign freedom to respond to the human choice to sin in whatever way He chooses to do so, to forgive whomever He chooses to forgive (32:19), and (as Paul adds) to harden whomever He wants to harden. God has mercy on and hardens people who have deliberately and willfully rejected God's way. God is free to respond to human choice either by fixing the per-

son in their choice, thereby hardening them, or by continuing to have mercy and allow them the freedom to choose again. Thus God's hardening of people does not violate their free choice, but rather is God's fixing them in their free choice, His confirmation and sealing of the human choice. God accomplishes this hardening by handing people over to the ultimate consequence of their unbelieving rebellion: He delivers them over to the devil, who in turn seals and fixes their union with him: "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes so they could not see, and ears so they could not hear" (Rom. 11:8). The ultimate punishment for sin, then is the loss of the

opportunity to repent, to freely choose out of sin. The hardening is the result both of human choice and God's withdrawal of His merciful restraint of Satan. Hardening of the heart is not something for which we can blame God, but the result of willful and deliberate rebellion against Him.

Therefore, as the author of Hebrews states, "Today, if you hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as they did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert" (Heb. 3:7-11). Today is the day of opportunity and the day of testing. Constantly we are faced with the choice whether or not to believe Satan's lie of independence. But

beware, lest you be hardened by sin's deceitfulness, and fail to appreciate the consequences of choosing to sin. For the Israelites, the consequence was that they never entered God's rest in the Holy Land, for us, it means failure to enter into the eternal Sabbath rest of God. Just as Moses confronted Israel with the choice at the River Jordan, so we too have a choice to make, we too have life and death set before us (Deut. 30:15, 19). Do not be fooled, because God is not mocked, whether we sow to the flesh or to the Spirit, we will receive the just recompense for what we do in our lives, whether eternal life or eternal death (Gal 6:7-8; 2 Cor. 5:10).

To Think About...

Intercession is revealed in the Bible as God looking for special men by whom He will give some special deliverance. In Isaiah 59:16, God wonders that there is no man, no intercessor, among Israel in its backslidden condition; and then the prophet leaps on from Israel's failure to have the man-for-that-moment to speak of the Man-for-the-whole-of-history: "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion . . . [for] My Spirit is upon thee" (59:20-21).

So we see the intercessor is the Spirit Himself through His chosen bodies. And the way of intercession is "death" in the soul and body of the human intercessor that others might live. Of Jesus it was said: "He hath poured out His soul unto death . . . and He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (Isa. 53:12).

And that means a completed task. "It is finished"; and when finished, the intercession is

gained and the fruit of it appears. It was said of the ascended Jesus, "Wherefore He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25). That was the completed intercession of the great High Priest.

So it is the calling still today of us as priest-intercessors to fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ for His body's sake. It is the law of harvest: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." If a corn of wheat remains comfortably in its bin, it feeds no one. If it is sown into the ground, wrought upon by rain, snow, and frost, it disintegrates, but reappears as food for the world. That is the general body principle of intercession, just as we saw a general spirit principle of faith.

The Mystery of the Union

by Scott Prewitt

I remember when I was young learning the books of the Old and New Testaments. My Bible teacher in school taught us using a catchy tune and song to help us. Yet, I always seemed to get confused around the New Testament books of Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. My teacher then taught me a little trick. Think ‘General Electric Power Company’ to remember the order of those letters from the Apostle Paul. Remembering GEPC made it easy for me to remember Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. I was so pleased to be able to get the books of the Bible right and in order. I did not understand then just how much I would enjoy the books of the ‘General Electric Power Company.’ In these books, Paul reveals to his reader, recorded for us in the Holy Bible, the glory of our lives as Christians being hidden in the life of Christ. Each of these letters contains the sum of the great treasures of Paul’s revelation of Christ in us and as us.

Paul writes his letter to the believers in Galatia in order to combat the false teaching of legalism. His frustration is seen most evident in Galatians 3:1 when he asks “O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?” Paul had taught these believers the freedom in Christ found by believing in his death and resurrection for our sins. Yet since his departure from them, the Galatian believers have fallen prey to those who would preach the false doctrine of

legalism. Paul though, gives reason and hope for the work of faith in the believer. Paul states that he was “called by God’s grace, to reveal His Son in me” (Galatians 1:15-16). He also speaks of his angst for his beloved Galatians while “Christ be formed in you” (Galatians 4:19).

Paul’s chooses his words here to describe Christ as someone who is not separated from mankind by space and time. Clearly Paul understands Christ to be both formed and revealed IN us. Christ is not found at some far-away place, choosing to be near to us at certain times yet not at others. Nor can we on our own work in such a way or believe ‘hard enough’ so that Christ will then come to us and be near to us. Paul says that He is in us; how much closer can Christ be to us than to be in us? So, if He is in us, then we must be created to contain Him. For one thing, to be able to be in something else, the thing must have the capacity to contain. So now since Christ is in us, what does that look like? Paul gives us the boldest of statements in Galatians 2:20 when he says “I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” Paul’s radical statement reveals to us the freedom we have in Christ. We share the cross with Christ by putting to death the notion that ‘I’ can live by myself and unto myself. This is the lie of the independent ‘I’ that Paul states must be put to death. Gloriously, though, that death of the ‘I’ manifests the life that we have in

and by Christ Jesus. Though ‘I’ am dead, I nevertheless live. But Paul quickly catches himself and replaces the ‘I’ for even a great emphasis by saying no, it’s not the I that lives but it is Christ that lives. Jesus Christ has replaced the independent ‘I’ that I have believed about myself. So not only does Christ live in me, but Christ also lives out through me. My life and His life mix and mingle where it is impossible to say where one stops and the other starts. The boldness of the message of union with Christ is found here in Galatians 2:20.

Paul tells us again in his epistle to the Colossians that our life is mixed with Christ’s life. He also explains that our union with Christ is hard for us to see with our human eyes. In fact, he calls it a mystery. Paul says, “Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints. To them, God would make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:26-27). The union reality is both wonderful and mysterious at the same time. Even Paul’s own teaching on union is done not with detailed exhortations on the subject. Even though the riches and glory of the ways and will of God were revealed to Paul unlike most any other man or woman, the union reality is still not easily taught and imparted. There is no single letter of his that can contain the depth and breadth of Christ-union.

However, he weaves a tapestry of faith and doctrine and revelation throughout his letters to the believers in the early church and for us today as recorded in the Scriptures.

Again, he chooses his words carefully to show that Christ is found IN us. We can see this over and over again in his letters, and he reinforces this point. Christ is not found out there somewhere, separate from us. He does not visit us or become near to us at moments in time. He is found IN us. Now, Paul proclaims this magnitude of union. Riches and glory are words used to describe our position of Christ-in-us. Union must not be passed over or taken lightly. Riches and glory are wonderful, magnificent, and something to be sought and treasured. We know that Christ came so that ‘we might have life, and have it more abundantly.’ Now we can see how we are to be fulfilled with abundant life. Our abundance is Jesus himself, living in us.

Paul once again reinforces his point in Colossians 3:3-4 when he says, “For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.” Paul says that you (or we) are dead, and we see the message of Galatians 2:20 here again in this verse. We have been put to death, sharing in the cross with Christ. Again, the ‘I’ has been nailed to the cross, and the futility of a life independent of Christ has been buried. Our new life is the shared resurrection for we now have new life. This new life exists in union with Christ. Paul even says that this life is ‘hid with Christ.’ Since our life is hid with Christ, then the part of ourselves that does remain cannot be detected nor determined.

Though we retain our humanity by our flesh (body) and mind and emotion (soul), our core (spirit) is joined with Christ and becomes hidden there.

In his letter to the church in Philippi, Paul again gives us these bold pieces of truth. Christ does not exist in a far away place where He is separate from us. Paul bluntly says in Philippians 1:21, “For me to live is Christ.” His words are clear and concise. Paul’s mere existence is the life of Jesus Christ. Paul does not make exception to the rule or caveats to the statement. Paul doesn’t say that most of the time he tries to be Christ-like. He does not say that when his faith has been elevated to a point of perfection that Christ will be with him, strengthen him, and comfort him. No, Paul simply and succinctly states that simply living, simply being, all aspects of life are Christ. This can only be true if Paul and Christ are joined in union, and that Paul’s life is the glorious manifestation of Christ’s life lived by Paul’s human form.

Paul digs deeper and explains that the Spirit of God in us lives out the will of God through us. As we are in union with Christ, God uses us to do his business, to be His agent in this world. Philippians 2:13 says, “For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure.” We can easily understand how we are used to ‘do of His good pleasure.’ God has always used humanity to be the force of action in the destiny of the world. We serve as the mouthpieces, the foot soldiers, the teachers, etc. of God the Father. Yet within the verse, we easily pass by the boldness of the statement that God works in us to both do and to WILL. We do not simply take orders like an

army private or follow instructions like a computer robot. We do the work of God AFTER we have willed that it be done. Yes, we can boldly say that our desires are the desires of Jesus Christ who lives in us and is our life. His will is expressed out through us by our Godly desires.

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul explains that our lives are a reflection of the spirit that we contain. He says, “In times past, ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2) and we were the “children of wrath” (Ephesians 2:3). Yet, “even when we were dead in sins, (God) hath quickened us together with Christ” (Ephesians 2:5). Now, “We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:10).

These first verses in Chapter Two of Ephesians take the reality of spirit union and show that this union is found in believers and non-believers alike. Paul says that we all have been operated by Satan, who he refers to as ‘the prince of the power of the air.’ We are born into union with Satan’s spirit, and he then does his work of evil through us to accomplish his evil will. But when we are saved by grace through faith in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:8), we are transformed to ‘do good works.’ By Christ’s death on the cross, we put our faith in Him. Through this faith, the spirit within us is switched, and we become what we were created to be. ‘For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus’ (Ephesians 2:10). Now we will bear fruits ‘unto good works’ because the Spirit of Christ in us pro-

BIBLE STUDY: The

by Brett Burrowes

Part 3

No Grounds for Superiority: Romans 2:1-3:20

In the first chapter of Romans, Paul described the sins of the Gentiles, those who were not God's people. In the next two chapters Paul turns to the Jews and reaches the surprising conclusion that the Jews are no better off before God than the nations around them. Apparently many Jews had the opinion that because they were members of God's chosen people and possessed God's law, they were superior to the nations around them, since they didn't live in the same idolatrous and sexually immoral manner they did.

But Paul contradicts this assumption, saying that those who pass judgment on others are without excuse, since they do the same things (2:1). How can this be? Just because we have not committed adultery or murdered someone does not mean we are more righteous than those who have. Neither we nor the Jews can claim to have attained God's perfect law. James says that those who break God's law at one point are guilty of breaking the whole law (James 2:10). The reason for this is that the same rebellious spirit is behind all manifestations of sin, no matter what form it takes, and therefore, any sin is equally offensive to God. Some sins may have more severe consequences for one's self and others, but in intent all sins are rebellion against God's absolute claim upon our lives. We think that some sins are worse than our own in order to justify our own behavior: what we did isn't really that bad compared to what so and so did. This is really just an attempt to suppress the truth by our wickedness (1:18) and shows how our minds have been perverted by sin (1:21-22, 28). So whenever we pass judgment on another, and play this comparison game with a false attitude of superiority, we are in fact condemning our-

selves before God. This attitude of superiority itself is evidence of our sinfulness.

God Does Not Play Favorites

But even if we admit that we are just as sinful as everyone else, wouldn't the Jew, or for that matter, the person born into a Christian family, have an advantage over others at the final judgment? The typical Jewish view of the time was that God would be more lenient toward Israel than towards

...the same rebellious spirit is behind all manifestations of sin no matter what form it takes.

the rest of the world, since He had chosen them to be His own people. After all, wouldn't being exposed to God's Word in the Bible and being a member of God's people, the church, somehow give you an advantage? But Paul says that God does not show

The God who makes an unrelenting demand for obedience at the same time perfectly supplies the means to keep it.

favoritism (2:11), since He is an impartial judge, who judges according to truth (2:2). That is, He judges according to the way things really are, and is not deceived by lies or illusions, but is faithful in adhering to a standard of strict and absolute justice. God cannot show special favor to a person or group of people at the final judgment, as if to hold some people accountable for their sins, but not hold others responsible. God has declared that death is the wages of sin (6:23), and therefore, He must always give

this consequence to those who sin unless there is some kind of intervention on God's part to prevent this inevitable consequence.

God's Unrelenting Demand for Obedience and His Perfect Provision

So Paul says "God will give to each according to what they have done" (2:6). At the final judgment, everyone's lives will be examined by God, and those whose lives pass the test will make it into heaven. Whether a person is a Jew or Gentile, believer or unbeliever, everyone must have the quality of life that pleases God. Everyone is judged by the same standard: whether or not we obeyed God's will to the level that we understood it. Paul says, "to those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor, and immortality, God will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger" (2:7-8). Obedience to God is an indispensable prerequisite to salvation at the final judgment. In other words, without obedience no one will be saved.

Salvation Not Earned or Deserved

As Paul will go on to describe, this is not a matter of earning or meriting our salvation, since we have already sinned enough to make that option impossible, as if we were ever in a position to earn something from God or to put God in our debt. If salvation were a matter of what we deserved or earned, we would all end up in hell. No, we can never put God under some kind of obligation to save us, but God can and does lay down conditions or requirements to receive His gift of eternal life. Because He is God, He lays down the rules: If you live a sinful life, there are eternal consequences. If you want eternal life, you must obey God. But fulfilling the condition of obedience or persistence in doing good (2:7) does not mean that you

Letter to the Romans

earned or deserve salvation, only that God has promised in grace to give eternal life to those who fulfill the conditions. Salvation by grace is not incompatible with judgment by works. As we will discover in chapters six to eight, it is Christ who will fulfill the condition of obedience through us by living His life in and as us.

Christ Produces the Required Obedience in us

Paradoxically, it is not we ourselves who fulfill the requirements of God's law, since we cannot (7:14-25). Instead the God who makes an unrelenting demand for obedience at the same time perfectly supplies the means to keep it: He gives us His Spirit so that now Christ lives His life in us and as us (Rom. 8:2; Gal. 2:20; Phil 2:13; Eph. 3:17). Christ fulfills the condition of obedience not only for us by dying on the cross but by daily living our lives. The church has tended to water down God's demands so that they do not have to trust God for the supply. By watering down God's demands, they never become desperate enough to seek for God's provision. Jeremiah promises that we will find God if we seek Him with our whole heart (Jer. 29:13). But how will we find the motivation to seek God for the answer unless the impossible demands of the law force us to do so? Removing the demand destroys the one thing that drives us to find the answer. This would be the reverse of the good news. The demand remains, but God graciously provides the Spirit to produce His fruit in us. What God demands, He provides. It is not some effort of our own, independently of God, that produces the fruit, but the result of Christ's replacement of Satan in our spirit-center that causes the change. We have one single choice that we are continually making: whether or not to trust God to do exactly as He promised: to live His perfect life through us. So our lack is met by His infinite supply, our need by His provision. But

the requirement for obedience is never removed.

The Inner Law of Conscience

In verses 12 to 16, Paul discusses the standard of God's judgment. Merely possessing the law will not be enough, one must do or keep the law in order to pass final judgment (2:13). God will judge those who have His law by that law and He will judge those who do not have the law by the inner law of

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conscience that He has given to all humanity (2:12, 14-15). Paul says the requirements of God's law are written on our hearts, with our consciences bearing witness as to the

**We make moral choices,
which is the essence of
being persons.**

moral quality of our lives (2:15), showing that we inherently know the difference between right and wrong, even though we may be misinformed as to the exact nature of right and wrong. We fail to live up even to the standard of our conscience, let alone to God's perfect law! Even though the conscience is not perfect and can be corrupted, nevertheless, all human beings know right and wrong and know when they have wronged another person and when others have wronged them. We are moral beings by our very nature, able to discern right and

wrong and make moral choices, which is the essence of being persons and which distinguishes us from mere animals who act from instinct without moral consciousness. So a day is coming when all the innermost secrets of our hearts will be laid bare and we will answer to God for all the things we have done (2:16) and the standard He uses to judge us will be the level of knowledge which we possessed in this life. But no one will escape entirely, for all know right and wrong at some level.

Inward Obedience not Mere Outward Law-keeping

In verses 17 to 29, Paul turns to the specific case of the Jews, who were under the illusion that because they were God's chosen people who possessed the embodiment of God's will in the law, they would not be held to as high a standard as the rest of the world, since they were favored by God. But this is not so, according to Paul. If anything, they will be held to the highest standard of all, since even while possessing such knowledge, they still failed to keep the law. Amos says to the nation of Israel: "You alone have I chosen out of all the nations of the earth, therefore I will punish you for all your sins" (Amos 3:2). The more knowledge we possess, the more responsible we are before God to produce fruit. Thus, the Jews have no grounds to brag about having the law, since they break it (2:17-24), causing God's name to be blasphemed or treated as worthless by the Gentiles. Why should the nations pay attention to a God that the Jews don't think worthy of obeying (2:24)? What counts is not an external circumcision of the flesh, a mere outward keeping of the law's ritual requirements, but the inward keeping of the law's inward spiritual intent, the result of having one's heart circumcised (2:25-29). Circumcision was an outward symbol of having been separated from the world as a

continued on next page

member of God's people, so that unless one is also inwardly separated from the spirit of the world in one's heart, the outward symbol means nothing. What the Jews failed to understand was that it was necessary not only to possess the law and keep its external requirements, but also to keep it in the most deepest inward spiritual sense. God does not show special favor because one is externally a member of Israel or the church: it is true inward obedience that matters.

God's Faithfulness to Israel

If God does not show special favor to Israel at the final judgment, wouldn't God be unfaithful to His promises, specifically to save Israel (3:1-8)? This question may not seem important to most of us, since we are not Jews, but the question of God's faithfulness is of prime importance. If God cannot be trusted to keep His promises to the Jews, how can we trust Him to do anything for us Gentiles? If God is unfaithful, how can we trust Him to be outpoured love for us and to save us? So Paul says: "Let God be true and every man a liar" (3:4). God's faithfulness and justice must never be questioned, for unless we can trust Him to be both completely just and merciful in His ruling of the universe, we have no hope. So God is showing His faithfulness to Israel when He judges her for her sins, because He promised that there would be certain consequences for disobedience. If God did not judge sin, He would be like the unreliable and unloving parent who refused to give his children consequences for their misbehavior. Ultimately those children will destroy their own lives because the parent refused to do the hard thing by laying down and carrying out consequences for disobedience. If God saved people despite their disobedience, where would His love and justice be? So God, to be faithful, loving and just, must carry out the consequence He laid

down for sin, the sentence of death which He threatened as the wages of sin.

All Have Failed, but God has Provided an Answer

So Paul concludes that Jew and Gentile alike are under a sentence of condemnation (3:9). No one is righteous, no one seeks or fears God, no one does good, but rather all have become

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useless vessels (3:10-18). But since it is true that everyone in the whole world has failed to keep God's requirements, and since it is also true that God will judge everyone according to what they have done, how will anyone avoid going to hell? How will anyone be saved if judgment is according to works? One might expect that human-

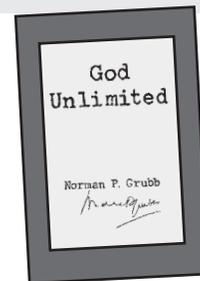
The law only reveals the
rebellion that lurks in the
depths of the human heart.

ity would do better once they were given the explicit laying out of God's requirements in the law, but such is not, in fact, the case. Even with explicit knowledge of God's will, humanity has not done better, but worse! Through the law we become conscious of sin (3:19-20)! The law only reveals the rebellion that lurks in the depths of the human heart. It cannot save us from our sinful condition. Therefore, no one will be declared righteous at the final judgment on the basis of keeping the law,

because an external law cannot change the condition of the human heart. If even with the help of the law the Jews are exposed as rebellious and sinful, how much more we Gentiles who were never under the law! So in giving the law to the Jews, God takes away our excuse that we never knew God's will in order to keep it, for even when we have a knowledge of God's will, we still fail to do it.

How will we escape such a hopeless situation? Paul has exposed our absolute powerlessness to save ourselves, a powerlessness that is universal and without exception: everyone is a slave to sin. Since God will judge us according to our deeds, how will anyone be saved? In Romans 3:21-8:39, Paul will give a two-fold answer to this dilemma. First he will show how God will deliver us from the consequences of our sin, namely the sentence of condemnation and death (3:21-5:21), and then he will show how that it is the Spirit of Christ who delivers us from the power of sin (6:1-8:39), so that we might have the obedience that is required at the final judgment, since it is He who is living our lives through faith (Eph. 3:17).

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A Look at a Book

by Marian Kinahan

BOOK REVIEW: *Intercession in Action* by Norman Grubb

This short booklet (just 38 pages), penned at the age of 95, is Norman Grubb's last written word to the church and is described by him as, "the ultimate summing up of the grace of God in the years since He first took charge of my life at age 18." This flags it as a 'must read' for all who are interested in the practical application of God's grace in their lives. By detailing five gained intercessions in his own life Norman strives to enlighten us so that we may walk that same path.

Norman is passionate for us to know fully who we really are, and says "it may be that the reading of this might awaken you to know by the revelation of the Spirit who you really are and enable you to function more realistically as both king and priest."

In the simplest way possible he takes us through the essential elements of intercession—commission, cost and completion. Norman starts with his life in the army as a young officer during World War One and recounts the cost of giving up his first relationship with a girl because she did not want his kind of faith. This simple, costly obedience of faith resulted in what he calls the "overwhelming love of Jesus" replacing that former self-interested love. Christ now came first for Him. However, his zeal for Christ was not too popular with his colonel and he was never promoted

despite the fact that he was decorated. These were, according to Norman, preparatory and discipleship years. He was presented with a series of choices and in making the right choice there was a real death for him, followed by such wonderful fruit. He talks of John 12:24 (a corn of wheat falls in to the ground and dies, if it is to bring forth fruit).

This pattern is continued as he recounts the second and subsequent intercessions. In the founding of the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, he resisted joining with the then more popular Student Christian Movement of that time. Next came the translation of the New Testament, for which he chose Bangala, the common trading language of the Congo (now Zaire). This too proved to be God's choice, since Bangala went on to become the national language of that country.

He gained new understanding from Rees Howells on how to apply faith when confronted with the impossible and incredible and to see how faith could then be changed into substance. This prepared him for the next commission—the expansion of WEC (Worldwide Evangelical Crusade) from 10 workers to 1500, from their first base in the Congo to a worldwide mission.

The faith lessons learned now lead us to his last intercession, which he calls the mightiest. This is the sharing of the revelation of "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col.1: 27). What sustained Norman and ensured the fulfilment of his life's intercessions was this truth,

which he is passionate to share with every believer. He talks about this being a radical message. The fact that we have no human nature of our own but that we are, rather, expressers of the deity-spirit nature (formerly satan now Jesus Christ) challenges the commonly held Christian view that we can become more Christ-like. We now see that there is no room for self-betterment or human self-activity since we are merely expressing the life of Christ within us. There is a cost here also—frequently that of losing our reputations as sound or sensible Christians.

This booklet is easy to read and takes us on a journey through Norman's life from the simplest beginnings, step by obedient step of faith, to glorious intercessions gained. Norman could not imagine how the fulfilment of each intercession would be manifest, and we have no idea what God could do through us either if we are faithful to believe who we really are. Norman's enthusiasm for all of us to fully know who we are in Christ is evident as he shares his gems of knowledge, expounding Biblical truths and opening our eyes to the revelations contained therein.

In this booklet Norman succeeds in doing what he set out to do, "to outline the route for those who have ears to hear, from Intercession Commissioned to Intercession Gained, with the principle of John 12:24 laid down by Jesus in between the two."

God Always Gets His Way

In this excerpt from a talk, Page Prewitt uses familiar biblical and personal examples to explain how choice fits in to God's ultimate plan for humanity.

by Page Prewitt

For love to be love there has to be choice in it. Because God is universal love, the reason we can know His love is unique is because He didn't have to be that in the first place. And if He hadn't chosen to be universal love, He never would have made us.

I woke up this morning and was trying to fit that together with the fact that God always gets His way. Then I thought about two things: one was when Jesus said, "Oh, Jerusalem,

If it is not the father's will that any should perish, and we know that people perish, how does this fit in with the fact that God always gets His way?

Jerusalem, how I would have gathered you under Me as a hen would gather her chicks under her, and you would not." So Jesus was sad about that. The other was when He called the rich young ruler and said, "Give away all you have"—we know the story: he had kept the law perfectly and said, "I kept the law perfectly from my childhood, now what do I do?" Jesus said, "Give away everything you've got and follow me." And he couldn't do it. Jesus was sad; he was sorrowed by that. So I thought, how does that work? If it's not the Father's will that any should perish, and we know that people perish, how does this fit in with the fact that God always gets His way? Because I have no doubt that God's purpose and plan will always be accomplished and nothing man can do or Satan can do will thwart it. It all works together for His plan.

God's Ultimate Plan

What I began to think about was something I hadn't

All I can choose is to say "Yes" to God, or to not say "yes" to God. My freedom is limited to that.

thought about in a long time—is that God has an ultimate plan. His ultimate plan is that He will be outpoured love. And for that outpoured love to be what it is, it must have a recipient. So He breathes man into existence and breathes Himself into man, and the part of Himself that man receives is this total freedom to choose. Not to choose whether I'm going to town or not. Not to choose who I'm going to marry. Not to choose what color toothbrush I buy. All I can choose is to say "yes" to God, or to not say "yes" to God. My freedom is limited

to that: as I say "yes" to God then He lives His life in me; when I don't say "yes," it's a "no," and Satan expresses himself through me.

The big chance that God took was to have a creature like Himself and not a dog (which He already had), or a cow, or a monkey, or a tree—that don't make choices. Part of the process is that a person is a person and not a cow or a tree because a person can make a choice and choose between opposites. And that's what God did: He chose between whether He was going to be light or fire—He chose whether He was going to be self-love or outpoured love. And

He gives us that same freedom. But He took a chance. His chance was that man wouldn't go God's way, and man didn't. But God in His eternal purpose remedied that, as we know, through the Cross.

A Cross In God's Heart

There was a cross in the heart of God from the beginning. The cross in the heart of God was that He died to what He could have been—a self-grabbing self-for-self—and He died to that eternally. Out of His freedom of choice, God chose to be light. He died to what He could be to live to what He chose to be—which was light and love and all that we know God to be.

In His taking a chance, God's ultimate, ultimate goal was to have fellow sons, not puppets. And for a son to be a son, he's got to be a person. And to be a person, that person has got to have total ultimate freedom to choose between alternatives. The two alternatives that we get to choose from are "yes" to God and "no" to God. His ultimate desire, then, was that the people who would be His sons would only be those who would choose to come.

But God's heartache (and what gives me identity with Him and what makes Him a person, too) is that He would grieve over those who would say "no." So He does get what He wants—real persons to fellowship with and identify with and reproduce Himself in. But in so having real persons, He loses many because many, as we know from Scripture and as we know from life, ultimately choose to say "no."

This is why, to me, "God picks some and He really doesn't

care about others" is out the window. It would make no sense that God would pick me and not pick the rich young ruler and then grieve over him not coming. That makes Scripture an absolute joke. Or for Jesus to say, "Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, I would have gathered you..." when the truth is He and the Father would really mean, "We know we didn't pick two hundred of those guys, but we didn't tell anyone."

Somehow God gets a family of sons—free people who can exercise the choice between yes and no, goodness and badness. In other words, whatever you say—whatever light the pagan African gets and however he says his "amen" to the Father—is God's business and his business. I don't know what people say when they respond to the light they are given. There is some kind of upward positive response that does take place, can take place, and in proof and in fact does take place.

Response of the Heart

I can't tell you my words when I said "yes" to God; I can't exactly tell you when I did it. I can't remember ever saying "no" to God. Starting as a very young child, I can never remember not knowing that God existed, that He knew everything I did, and that I was in bad trouble if I disobeyed God. That was as fixed in my brain as a little, tiny person as the grass was green. All that time I knew that even if my mother didn't know it, God knew it. It was like I was the only person He had to watch, and He watched and knew everything. I've always known that. So I don't know when my saying "yes" was. Was it when somebody introduced me to Jesus Christ and said that He died on a cross? Or was I being led that way the whole time? I can't tell you. I can just tell you today where I am today.

So the "yes" response in a person's heart has very little to do with the words you speak. People give you words so you can understand it yourself. You see, God understands your heart, and you understand your words—"With the heart man believeth unto righteousness," but "with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." You can talk about, and it becomes clearer to you. But your heart response is something God knows. Maybe when you don't even know it. Maybe when you do know it. Maybe when you can't put words to it. So when I say that I'm walking in belief, that I'm believing who I am, only I can know what my little tricky, sneaky, vague unbelief things are. Something as vague as, "Well, there you go again—you never do it right" is a blatant lie and an unbelief statement. If I am making that statement to myself—if I'm having the essence of that in my spirit and I'm believing that—then Satan is going to live out through me to some degree. I can come back and correct it by saying, "Wait a minute, Christ is living here. How He's

doing it is how He's doing it"—and clean it up like that.

So how we do that little technical part in making a "yes" response remains a mystery. I'm not saying that people say, "Yes, God, I'm going Your way!" You may say it that way. It's not that clear-cut. But there is a response of the heart that says "yes" to God or there is a response of the heart that refuses to say "yes" to God, and in so doing, says "no." I don't think the vast majority of people end up saying "no" to God; they just never get around to saying "yes." And they remain eternally lost and Satan's captives.

True Choice Makes Real People

What God gets, even though a lot drop through the cracks, is a family of sons who are real people, and they are His real people because with some response to His call, they said "yes" back. They weren't forced to; they didn't have to; they weren't preprogrammed. We are not robots. And so ultimately He does get what He wants: a family of sons. In the process, God has heartache because to let sons be sons and make choices, some people were going to choose not to choose. And so He loses people. And God grieves over that. But it would be ludicrous for God not to let us have free choice—to fix it some way that I would choose Him while

He had to get the conduit cleaned up and get the kink out of the hose that His forceful love was going to pour through—and it cost Him everything to do it.

someone else was programmed not to choose Him. Suppose I'm representing Him—I'm living His life—and I am pouring my life out for somebody to know what I know, and He hadn't pre-programmed them or tilted their choice to go His way. I'm lamenting over somebody in that state, and I'm grieving that they're not coming. It would make loony-tunes sense that I would be grieving over somebody who's slipping through the cracks, and God's sort of filing his fingernails—He had never programmed their computer to the same degree he programmed mine to where they would come to where I came, anyway. To me, if that's what He's doing, He will never see me again try to win anybody, witness to anybody, or anything else because He's monkeyed around with their parts to where some have more freedom to come or are somehow pre-programmed to come, and others haven't quite got it.

I can see that God's going to get His way. But His ultimate way is to have a vast family of sons who can glorify Him forever. And glorifying God, to me, just means no more or less than recognizing God for who He is. The greatest glorification of God, really, is that He would choose to live in me and live His life out through me and reproduce Himself through me by me reaching other people.

Love Reproduced

God didn't just look down one day and say, "Oh, I just

continued on next page

Love you" like you meet a child or a person of the opposite sex and say, "Oh, I just love you." Love is the force of the universe. And for it to be that, it has got to continually be echoing through the universe forever—going on, going on, going on. It's just like thunder that rolls, and rolls, and rolls out into the universe and never stops, or the waves of the ocean. It is ongoing.

God's ultimate plan was to have a vessel that this love could pour out to and then pour out from. And it wasn't like little folks down here like Tinkertoys and God says, "Oh, gosh, I just love you little folks to death. I've just got to get you back." He had to get the conduit cleaned up and get the kink out of the hose that His forceful love was going to pour through—and it cost Him everything to do it. It cost Him His life to do it. But He had to go to the Cross to get the universe back like He planned it in the first place.

We're not just little things he loved and then He redeemed. His plan was to reproduce Himself through these vessels. And when the vessels got screwed up—you know, when your pipes get stopped up, you've got to call the Roto Rooter and they've got to come clean them out so the water can flow again. So He had to call in the big guns—His Life itself—to get the conduit cleaned up—to get us back func-

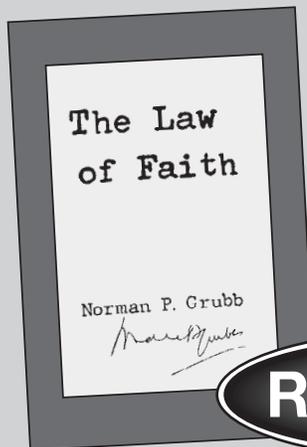
tioning as we were supposed to function. And that was to be the echoing out of love through the universe forever.

It's a much bigger picture. Satan had stopped the life-driving force of the universe by stealing the vessel through which it reproduced itself. And God had to get His vessel back. It cost Him His life to get it back—the life of His Son. He chose to reproduce Himself in a human being—His Son, Jesus Christ—and come here and pay the price to get the conduit back so that love could reverberate through the universe for eternity.

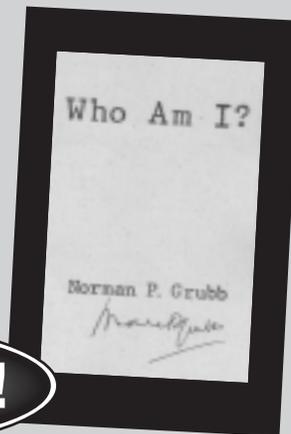
So that's how I see that God always gets His way. You see, I can get my way that my children would live with me. I could build a cage and lock them in it. I could do that. But would that be my ultimate way? My ultimate way would be that they would choose to be here and to be around and to be a part of my life. Not that I would chain them to some post somewhere in some cave. My ultimate dream would be for my children to live here. Well, how am I going to do it? I would hope that they would choose to do that. Not that out of my selfishness I would chain them here. If they don't come, I would grieve over that. My ultimate would be fulfilled if they would be free-functioning whole people. And that was God's ultimate.

Norman Grubb's Who Am I? and The Law of Faith

Unedited from the original.



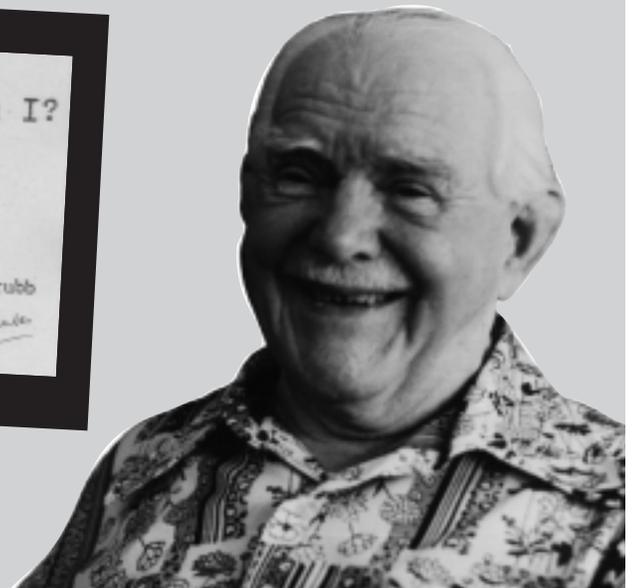
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God's Obsession

by Norman Grubb

The Basis of Our Calling

Paul was a man obsessed. "To me, is this grace given, to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ: and to *make* all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery": "Forgetting those things which are behind I press toward the mark of the prize of the high calling." And that same Spirit obsesses us.

We are an obsessed people. We are among the Pauls of our day. Like Paul, "This one thing I do." Paul had a two-fold commission (Col. 1:23-28). The first was to bring the Gentiles to Christ. The second, to be sure that when saved, they know the total truth—what he called "fulfilling the word" to them—the completion, the total: that it is not merely a reconciliation relationship to God as His redeemed sons (wonderful enough), but the marvel of the revelation that He brought His human family into existence, made of the stuff of His own being (Acts 17:28), so that they can contain Him, The Person, in their persons. This is the "mystery hidden from ages and generations now made manifest, which is Christ *in* you," and not "in" in the separate outer concept we external people have of relationship between the separate things, but the "in" of union—"joined to the Lord one spirit." In Jesus' words, "I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one."

Thus He, "the light of the world," and we "are the light of the world" (Matt. 5:14). And it does not say "have"

but "are"—it is lamp (we humans) manifesting light (God)—which is it, lamp or light? But a complete light can only be manifested by a complete lamp, which means, as Paul said (Col. 1:28), not just a complete Christ in us, but a complete "us," perfect in Him." And that is out total. But how?

Our obsessed commission, now thank God shared by many of us, therefore is to show how we are those completed persons, and we *are*, and then share our discovery with all our brethren in Christ.

We are an obsessed people. We are among the Pauls of our day. Like Paul, "This one thing I do."

Most of our writings and sharings, as we go from place to place, as in my most recent book, *Yes I Am*, and in the pages of this our *Intercessor* magazine, are giving this one total answer. Regretfully, however, we have to face the fact, even in God's redeemed family, as Jesus said, it is still "few there be that find it," for it is only those who, in the Sermon on the Mount, will not take no, but "hunger and thirst after righteousness" until they are filled—and they are still few.

Put very briefly, this vital radical "knowing" is the revelation by the Scriptures (especially Paul's writings), inwardly and individually confirmed by the only reliable witness, the Spirit Himself. It is that God has forever been

the "I AM," not the "I have": He is an Is-er, not a Has-er. All He gives is Himself in His own nature. He IS the love, light, power, wisdom, sanctification, finally "All in all" (1 Cor. 15:28). Not qualities He gives, but Himself expressing His own qualities by our human forms.

Not "Becomers" but "Containers"

This gives a radically different understanding of who we humans really are; not as "becomers" but as "containers," not as self-expressers but God-expressers, not our nature but His, and we humans having no nature of our own. We are called vessels, but it is not the nature of the vessel but of what it makes available. We are branches, but the nature is that of the vine whose fruit it reproduces. We are temples, but it's not the type of form of the temple but of its In-dweller. We are body-members, but it is the head which operates through the body. Or in modern terms, we are computers with great potentials, but only operate what the programmer puts into us.

The whole universe as His creation only operates by one other basic reality. All consists of pairs of opposites, and the one utilizes the other to express itself: light, dark; sweet, bitter; hard, soft; yes, no; heat, cold. All is "rhythmic balanced interchange." So it is the same of our personhood, the central reality of the universe: our God-made selves made in His likeness. We can only operate by the interaction of oppo-

sites. Our human faculties can express the negative of the "spirit of error," self-for-self, or the positive "Spirit of Truth," the self-for-others.

God had eternally settled that for Himself by never being a lonely One who would be for Himself, but in the intensity of His love-longing, eternally begetting His Son as the express image of His person, so that the Two are bound together in their love bond, and the Third, the Spirit then expressing that divine other-love nature in His universe. Tit. 1:2 declares that.

But God then used His rebel heavenly being, Lucifer, who chose the opposite to His Creator and became fixed as the god of self-for-self, to entice our first Adam progenitor, and Eve, into his own false choice, and thus be captive to his nature (Eph. 2:1-3). And this has been the fact of us all, by which we could learn the hell of that way of self-destruction. And this Satan-nature condition has been marvelously replaced by our Last Adam, our Lord Jesus Christ, representing us in His body on that Tree. He died as us "made sin," (2 Cor. 5:21), expressing as us that sin-nature; and in that death out went the false spirit, and therefore out of our bodies (Rom. 6:6, 10), and rising with His own Spirit of holiness in that risen Body representing us.

Seeing the Final Deceit

But before we can enter in fullness of understanding and consequent confident living, the final deceit of that error spirit has to be exposed and gotten rid of. That deceit is that he, Satan, was himself never an independent self, for there is no such thing in the universe, but was God's creature and thus His negative convenient agent, deceiving

himself about his false self-sufficiency (Is. 14:13-14), though given limited authority (Lu. 4:6). This self-deceit he imparted to us, giving us this lie of being independent selves. The purpose of God was that, in order for us to become totally reliable inheritors and managers of His universe together with our Elder Brother His Son (Rom. 8:17), we must fully know, experience in all bitterness, and discard forever this false

But before we can enter in fullness of understanding and consequent confident living, the final deceit of that error spirit has to be exposed and gotten rid of.

concept of independent self. Then we can become totally reliable by totally knowing that the hidden secret of our free actions is that it is really He as we, in place of that false vine (Rom. 6:21); the True Vine by branch, Light by lamp, liquid in the vessels, etc. Not to be fooled again!

Yet that bitter dose of that deceit is the very nitty-gritty of our permanent

My human self made by God was never a wrong self in itself...

awareness of the trick played on us (Rom. 7:11): the lie that we ever "ran" ourselves, when as Jesus said, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father (not our lusts) ye do." That lying deceit, as if we are self-acting, self-operating, self-relying independent selves is finally eradicated by Paul in Romans 7, when in the solution to his negative self-reactions and the misery they caused him (7:24), the light was

finally lit, never again to be extinguished, that those negative self-reactions in him, when he was a new creature in Christ with the fruit of the Holy Spirit, *were not really he at all*, because we humans never have had a nature of our own, but were the lying deceiving self-reactions of "sin dwelling in him" (7:17, 20)—sin the expressed nature of "Mr Sin," that evil one; and he had been cast out at Calvary forever from our bodies as his dwelling place. Then Paul wrote, with his glory shout of confirmed deliverance, "I am free" (Rom. 7:25; 8:1-2).

My human self made by God was never a wrong self in itself; all that God makes in all appetites and faculties is "very good;" it was a misused self by the lying indweller, but now a rightly used self by the Right Indweller: change of indwelling deity, not of the containing vessel or reproducing branch. I am free. No more condemnation of my apparently devious self.

My True Self At Last

And so Paul enters in by his word of affirming faith, such as Gal. 2:20, which is now also ours. "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but *Christ* lives in me." His own inner knowing of Rom. 8:2, not by some desperate self-effort of trying to commit oneself to be changed, but the simple, though totally radical, recognition of faith that I was and am freed from my false deceiving indweller through Calvary; and now Christ has taken Satan's place, as I boldly possess my possessions. And what I affirm and confess by the spoken word of faith, the Inner Spirit confirms (1 Jn. 5:10) ... I go free—a completed human self containing our Complete Christ.

Thus with that personal freedom to be my true self (really my human self with its exchanged operators), I am at last my true self. In this Satan-infected world, all the assaults of false self-responses by temptations will pour in on me, as they did on the Perfect man (Heb. 4:15); but no condemnation. I accept, not resist or deny, Satan's rights to pull at me by every means, to get me back to my old reaction of false independent self. I don't deny all forms of temptation, nor take condemnation; but by recognizing his rights to "roar" at me in this world, I am now free to respond by recognizing who I really am—Christ in my form; and that is turning on the light which swallows the dark—and replaces Satan's pulls by the Christ-nature which I now express—love for hate, faith for fear, self-giving for self-gratification, etc. Gal. 5:17 thoroughly replaced by 5:18.

But now and only now, can I in the fullness of my liberated reality be my true self. And now what is that self? We have sought to make it fully plain—it is my human self expressing His divine self (2 Pet. 1:4). But now what is the nature of His divine Self? We well know through Calvary (1 Jn. 4:10). It is my Father's nature of other-love, totally absorbed with bringing all of His human family who come within hearing distance into who they really ARE, through His own Calvary completion of 2 Cor. 5:21. He as we! That same Spirit who entered Jesus and established His Life's purpose, when the Spirit came on Him in the form of a dove. From then onward He knew it was the Spirit operating in His human Jesus-form ("The Spirit of the Lord is upon me to preach the gospel to the poor..." Luke 4:18-21). I, the Son, "do nothing by myself." And

even His going to Calvary was by the Spirit (Heb. 9:14). So also of course His resurrection. And then His plain word at the supper table that the same Spirit would indwell and operate us, and would come to us at Pentecost. So for us all, who are now made conscious of our own Pentecost by faith and confirming witness, by the same Spirit we are AS HE. We are "in the light, as He is in the light": we walk as He walked; we know as He knows; we live the right life as He lived it; we love as He loves; we believe with His believing; and all is headed up by John's final all-inclusive statement that "as He is, so *are we* in this world." (1 Jn. 1:7; 2:6, 27; 3:7; 4:16; 5:10, 20; 4:17).

...in His original ways, He has divorced us from not only our former sin habits but also from the domination of good self-loves.

So then what? It can only be that that same Spirit-obsession which "drove" Him to die in faith and rise that we might first die and then live, now obsesses us, if He is the real we! So here it is. This is why I've spent so long running through what I've just said. If I know who I am - and I must know that I know - then I am totally caught. I am enslaved. I am a Godaholic. And that can only mean that I have one real drive, like Paul, "to make all men see." The Total Self-giver, that Lamb slain for the world, that Lamb now on the Throne, can only be Himself as me, not just in me, but as me. The same "zeal of God's house" eats me up.

God's Obsession

We have come to the point of why

our magazine is named *The Intercessor*. If you are a co-knower of the glorious truth of who we are, then you are obsessed. Only the Spirit, however, reveals and confirms this to each of us. Whether you feel it or not, the One who is the real you compels you to have one basic inner purpose. It is Paul's "this one thing I do" purpose that all the redeemed know and be who they are: He as them. In our feelings we may question our purpose, but we walk discerning soul feelings from the spirit facts.

Thus we are driven persons, and must be, for He has no other nature than the lamb for others and the lion of faith conquests. This is the divine nature we partake of. His one delight is "for the joy set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame" (Heb. 12:2). Therefore, it is our delight. But this means that, in His own original ways, He has divorced us from not only our former sin habits but also from the domination of good self-loves. Our family, friends, possessions, physical health, self interests, and hobbies do not master us. This looks like hate to those who do not yet themselves share in the nature of divine love. We are taken over as knowers by "If any man hate not ... he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:25-35).

If you are among us knowers, the Spirit has been doing His confirming, enduing work in you. You are a Luke 14 disciple, now being turned into an apostle. Move in by faith, which then becomes substance: don't slip back into mixing such faith with the hard-slogging self effort to attain it (back into independent self outlook). Boldly dare to align yourself, not with the redeemed, even Spirit-gifted, brethren

of the Corinthian church, who were delighting in their new found riches (1 Cor. 4:8), but align yourself with the Spirit-obsessed few involved in the apostolic life of 1 Cor. 4:9-13. Wise? No, fools. Honorable? No, despised. Strong? No, weak. "Reviled, we bless; persecuted, we suffer it; defamed, we intreat; we are made the filth of the world." Yes, "death in us, but life in you." And Paul warns those Corinthian brethren (4:14-16) lest they miss out. But again remember it is the Spirit who alone takes us this horrendous, no, glorious way. All that is required of the totally earnest is the declared and persisted in faith in Jesus' heart cry of John 7:38: "He that *believes*, out of his belly shall flow rivers" If we believe, the Spirit will see to the outflow. But we must believe with the same total heart believing which took us into John 3:16 and on into Gal. 2:20—the belief which is the leap, once for all.

Army of Intercessors

What then does it mean to be conscripts of this army of intercessors whose inner ears have been attuned to the Spirit's battle cry? Paul uses many battle terms such as "war a good warfare" (1 Tim. 1:18) and "fight the good fight of faith" (1 Tim. 6:12). Paul gives us three challenging standards in 2 Tim. 2:3-7. We are soldiers who, though involved in the daily life of home and profession, are so disentangled in spirit that our real absorption is fighting God's battles. We are in an athletic contest, and know what victory we are out to gain and how to gain it. We know our skills and how to apply them. We are hardworking farmers who fulfill all the necessities for obtaining a good crop and obtain it.

Dedicated soldiers, trained athletes, and hard working farmers. And all of this laboring and striving is not by that old, false self effort, but by an endless upsurge of another stream of inner energy (Col 1:29).

This is the real meaning of the word "intercessor." It is a different category from what is often referred to as intercessory prayer. It includes prayer, but the quality of prayer that "gets there."

If we believe, the Spirit will see to the outflow. But we must believe with the same total heart believing which took us into John 3:16 and on into Gal. 2:20 -- the belief which is the leap, once for all.

An intercessor is a person wholly and specifically commissioned to gain a certain objective by the Spirit (Isa. 59:16, 20; Ezek. 22:30). The intercessor accepts his commission, which will cost him all he has to fulfill it. He will participate in the law of the harvest by which a corn of wheat must die before it rises

An intercessor is a person wholly and specifically commissioned to gain a certain objective by the Spirit.

to give life to others (John 12:24).

There is a daily dying, Paul says, in meeting the normal negative pressures of life. We die daily in Christ to the negative stirrings of temptation toward independent self outlook: in their place the risen life of Christ is "made manifest in our bodies." "We are cast down, but not destroyed" and all Paul's list in 2 Cor. 4:7-10. This, however, is not intercession, but the daily overcoming walk.

Intercession is found in 2 Cor. 4:11 where we are always "delivered unto death for Jesus' sake." That means some specific form of death produced in us, but life in others (2 Cor. 4:12). This commission is specifically for me (though it may be along with others), and I know it. And I know the difficulties or impossibilities that confront me in it. For Moses it was going back to face Pharaoh: "Come now and I will send you" (Ex. 3:10). God said to Gideon, "Go in this thy might and thus shalt thou save Israel" (Judges 6:14). John was "a man sent from God" (John 1:6). And so on throughout the history of the true Church of Christ. Read E. H. Broadbent's Pilgrim Church, which we boldly claim contains present day members in both suffering and action. The size and type of commission has nothing to do with being commissioned. You simply know what your present intercession is.

Prayer of Faith

Certainly it does include intercessory prayer. But now it is that Elijah-like prayer of faith set forth in James 5:17, 18. The emphasis is on the faith. It is no longer just the walk of faith by which we are in our fixed union relationship with Christ. It is the developed faith which now is stretched to inwardly see God as meaning evil (Gen. 50:20; Acts 4:24-28). Prayer has then moved on beyond its former basis of making requests. Now our first inquiry of God is "what are you up to?" however dark the apparent situation may be. For behind the devil's fiercest attacks are God's meaningful purposes. Then, after inwardly discerning His purpose, what is *our* desire? When that is settled, we express our desire by a word of

faith which declares that it has been received. This is the "whatsoever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive" of Mark 11:24. And with that word of faith, there is the patient persistence of faith which anticipates and watches for the substance. Repetitive thanksgiving is more the occupation of our praying. This is the authority of the intercessor who is king as well as priest.

So many of us have learned intercession from Rees Howells. There was one famous occasion when he and all with him, and indeed all Europe, were confronted with an advancing and victorious Hitler who would surely cut the world off from the spread of the gospel. After many sessions of prayer, he announced, "Prayer has failed. It must be intercession." Through the intercessions which followed, many of them with fasting (see Doris Ruscoe's small book, *The Intercession of Rees Howells*), the word of faith came fully through that Hitler was defeated and would be destroyed with all his power. After this word was spoken, the celebration of victory was publicly held and described in the newspapers. Yet that was the very time in which Hitler's panzers overwhelmed Holland and Belgium, seized France, and threatened Britain! What an absurd celebration! Most English Christians dismissed Rees Howells as a madman and a ridiculous false prophet. But he and those with him persisted, though it first cost him his reputation and ultimately led to, I believe, his early death. And today? Where are the dictators? Was the world ever so free and so responsive by millions to the gospel in nearly all the nations? The greatest harvesting in history is now being reaped. There it is: commission, cost, and completion.

With the inner warfare and victory of faith, there is the body action in some form by which we "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ for His body's sake" (Col. 1:24). There are physical martyrdom of intercessors through the centuries. But death there will always be, which is the negative pressure that intensifies living faith. "A body thou has prepared me" and "we are sanctified through the offering of

This is the GAINING of the intercession. Prayer may. Intercession MUST. We intercede to see it come into being.

the body of Jesus Christ" (Heb. 10:5, 10). So the intercessor will have all sorts of costly bodily activity. It may be the willing service of the toiling missionaries, the building teams, the editors and secretaries, the open homes, or the sacrifices of time and money.

Faith in action and persistent labor bring the vital outcome, apart from which there is not an intercession. This

It does help to know that we actually start being intercessors from the time of our becoming new creations in Christ.

is the GAINING of the intercession (Heb. 7:25). Prayer may. Intercession MUST. We intercede to see it come into being. Yes, we see it. In a sense we all die in faith, not having received the promises. But we surely received the promises. But we surely receive a good portion enroute, as in Hebrews 11. We are "in it to win it," as my friend Roy Putnam said. Let us make no mistake about that. Intercession is gained. We

do not enter into and recognize it as a Spirit's commission to us unless we have that settled in our conviction. We are called to see it through. Such was God's word to Joshua when He commissioned him: "Then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Josh. 1:8).

To Our Summit

So let us have it clear that my sole purpose for writing this is to call us who are knowers on to our summit. It has been necessary for us to first know the total truth of how we are fully liberated selves in Christ, and can be and ARE ourselves. That was why I gave the title *Yes I Am* to my last book and not the title *Yes He Is*, which would have had more appearance of giving our Lord Jesus Christ all the glory. Why? Because His whole heart satisfaction and purpose is fulfilled when we, His co-sons and brethren, ARE HE in all His love actions by our human selves, yet in such a paradoxical (and we might also see it as humorous) method that it is WE IN ACTION, while it is really He!!!

Only when that is our fixed, eternal inner knowing by His Spirit revelation and we are happily settled into it, do we move on to our full functioning as intercessors, fathers, soldiers in battle, laborers, harvesters, and all the rest of it. The real purpose of all of us linked together in this high calling, and expressed in *The Intercessor* magazine, is to see all settled in the recognition that this is who we now are by grace.

It does help to know that we actually start being intercessors from the time of our becoming new creations in Christ. I have written a series on my own life experiences, covering my

ninety years, to illustrate this fact. From my first born-again days in 1914, at the start of World War I, there was that first step of giving Christ the lordship over my body interests, as well as my heart love. I faced a choice when my girlfriend did not want what had happened to me in finding Christ. I could not have two masters. After a three week battle, He won, of course. From the moment on, His intercessor Spirit grabbed me. I had no further say in it. Perhaps the reason why more born-again brethren are not grabbed by the intercessory life is that some have not made that initial, total body committal. Jesus said, "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out!" (Mt. 5:29). So from that moment onward, I was caught. "Once caught, no escape!" In my five army years, I had to be more a witness for Christ than a British soldier (though I did my soldier's job also!). In my college days I had to be a witness, which brought the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship into being. Then I had to join C.T. Studd in the heart of Africa. There was always a "have to," a compulsion, and my pressing through by grace was often with painful labor. I was an intercessor without knowing who I really was.

But how different when, after those first years, the Spirit led me, in the Congo forests, into the total truths of who we are. Since then, and largely through my close fellowship with Rees Howells, as well as C.T. Studd, I learned the Scriptural and Spirit meaning of being an intercessor, not a hit and miss one. I know now where my fifth, and probably final, intercession is—our present high calling. Thankfully, there is an enlarging number of us, including many of you who read this. We are bringing within reach of the whole

redeemed body of Christ a total, Biblical, Spirit confirmed reality: the news that we were formerly Satan-I, and now through Calvary are Christ-I. Now we enjoy the right human self-sufficiency—the right "yes I am"—in our commissioned intercessions, having moved from little children, to young men, to fathers, and thus co-saviours.

The Last Stronghold

We know there will be suffering and opposition. Satan's last stronghold of resistance is the lie that we are independent selves, functioning in our Christian living and service by our helping the Lord, our counting on Him,

Satan's last stronghold of resistance is the lie that we are independent selves, functioning in our Christian living and service by our helping the Lord, our counting on Him, our working for Him, and our battling areas of sin and failure.

our working for Him, and our battling areas of sin and failure. It is THE LIE. But that false belief in independent self is not easily given up. It is the last lying deceit to be recognized and died to. It is the false idea THAT WE HAVE GOOD SELVES THAT CAN WORK FOR HIM. In actuality, a so-called good self is still Satan's lie of independent self, which he has tricked us into believing is our own self-nature. Of course, there is no such thing. This is the final stronghold to be captured, seen in Romans 7. Only the desperate, who will take no substitute, are conditioned to discover what the Spirit showed Paul in those Romans 6-8 chapters. Therefore, we know that we shall, and already fre-

quently do, meet with cries such as: dangerous heresy; keep away from such teaching; preserve our human nature; and be a good self!

But knowing as we know, we press on, and the glory outweighs the negative oppositions. But how we welcome the brotherhood in the Spirit of any who know, share and teach this total reality, though we have to say that at present we don't know many. Coming to the edge, but not taking the leap won't do. There are many victorious life teachers who take us a good way, but not the final way of from Satan-I to Christ-I, which is the total leap of faith.

For this we continue our forward march and welcome all who join arms with us. Much of our message has to be for folks to find the truth of the young man stage: who we really are. Therefore, we spend much time on sharing and teaching just that. Yet we are, by infinite grace, the fatherhood intercessors in its full meaning—the Spirit by us. We are Royal Priests. Our royalty is in knowing we are the faith operators; our priesthood as lambs is in bringing many sons to glory.

What We Believe, We Propagate

Now faith is potent. What we believe in we are producing and propagating. Our very looks, words and actions are always propagating our faith. We are always ministering either faith or unbelief, life or death, Christ or devil, every minute of the day. One or the other streams from us.

—The Law of Faith

The First Stage of Restoration: The Precious Blood

By Norman Grubb

We will now see the way by which this combination of the law given by Moses and the grace and truth by Jesus Christ is not only the Total Truth, but the Total Truth to me in my personal experience—see how it is the only answer with a totally workable application to every situation, whether mine or other folks'—which makes it possible for me to say to myself, "Yes, this is it," and then declare it to the whole world within my reach. If this takes further digging into details (with Paul as our guide) to find out the total solution, we will be like a German pastor* wrote:

God needs men, not creatures
Full of noisy, catchy phrases.
Dogs he asks for, who their noses
Deeply thrust into—Today,
And there scent Eternity.

Should it lie too deeply buried,
Then go on, and fiercely burrow,
Excavate until—Tomorrow.

Some of us have been doing this for years. I could not stop. I must be satisfied. I must have the complete answer. It must be wholly workable in all of life. And we boldly say we have come up with the answer: not our own, but revealed in the Scriptures and confirmed by the Holy Spirit in personal inner revelation. The law given by God to Moses in its outer written forms, underlining the outer standards of conduct such as the sins of stealing, lying, adultery, murder, malicious destruction of another's character, is obviously intended to produce outer responses. So it does, and for the simple reason that in our blindness we cannot penetrate into sin at its source, but can only recognize its outer products of committed sins. So the first purpose of the Ten Commandments is to pinpoint our guilt before God and produce in us a realization of His wrath, judgment, and our coming condemnation. This it effectively does by awakening in us "the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom." Most of us were

stirred from slumber by some person or event alerting us to the reality of our condition as lost, guilty, and hopeless sinners—unless there be some means of pardon. At such a time we neither considered nor were concerned about our inner sinful condition, but saw only our sins and their fearful aftermath. Verily, for this was the law established—that by it "all the world may become guilty before God."

Now comes the revelation by Paul of the first deliverance stage of the cross of Christ, the amazing but solid replacement of condemnation by justification, as if the sinner had never sinned—the overplus of grace by the shed blood of His crucified body. Paul speaks of Christ Jesus being "set forth" by God on that historic cross as a public, outward demonstration that He had truly died. That meant that as the penalty of sin is death, so He who "bore our sins in His own body on the tree" really died, having taken our place in death.

But bodily death is but an outer detail. The real meaning of death is not body but spirit destiny: Where do I, an immortal spirit, go? If lost, I shall be among "the spirits in prison"; if saved, among "the spirits of just men made perfect," Scripture reveals. So Peter proclaimed in his Pentecost speech (using David's prophecy in Psalm 16) that the Savior went to hell where we were destined to go. But hell could not hold Him, for Satan had no hold on Him, and so His "soul was not left in hell." But He could not rescue Himself, for He was there representing us in our lost sinnerhood. He was "raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father."

So through the Lamb's shed blood, death, and pangs of hell, all that should come to us by way of guilt, condemnation, curse, and uncleanness has disappeared forever for all men. "God was, in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." So no man now goes to hell for his sins, but only because he has rejected the light of Christ as Savior—the light which has shone into the world. But until the Spirit does His convicting work in us, we love our darkness rather than that light and refuse to come to it.

—from *Yes I Am*

Letters from Norman...

*The Worldwide
Evangelization*

C. T. STUDD, Founder



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Dear Joan,

The spirit does play His games with you. "The game of life and how to play it"—I remember a booklet I have named that. You can't return a tennis ball with vigour unless it has been first driven over the net to you! Negatives and positives are the two sides of the same thing. Saying "Yes" to something means you have said "No" to the alternative.

(So God is giving His Joan form of His Self-manifestation—The Permanent Positive—by giving you a necessary valuable dose of the negative, valuable, but only negative self-thinking self—Joan!)

That is where the Written Word comes in, as the medium. That Word only conveys THE WORD, whom John reveals to us in his marvelous gospel from its very first phrase—read it. And he starts his marvelous first epistle by precisely the same—manifestation of The Word which is THE PERSON. Read it again.

So, yes, you are in a training stage, to establish you in your fixed REALITY which is you the red hot iron, but what glows is not you, but iron. THAT IS OUR PERMANENT ONENESS, expressed in that marvelous phrase—"They in Me, and I in them." Both separate entities, but inextricably interlaced as an eternal one!

Therefore James says you start by trials, the pressures of the negative on mind (for you) and body. You "Count them joy"—"ALL JOY", and "count" is not soul-feeling, but obedient spirit! And why? Because it gives you the constant practice of "faith"—deliberate believing—and that James said "worketh" patience. You can't hit that ball back except first hit to you. And as you settle into it, it becomes fun, zest—only at first in the practicing rounds feels a bit

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laborious. But that practice produces stabilised perfection. Again read James 1:1-4. Read those passages even if appearing at present distasteful and boring to you.

And Peter said to beginners, for his letter is to the new-born—"After you have suffered a while, stablish...you." Read it again in 1 Pet, 5.10.

So you just don't have glory without suffering, Paul said that in Rom.8.17. GOD said His Son (Himself in His Son form) can only be a perfected Saviour—of others by being the "perfect sufferer"—Wow! And that was God's way. Read again in Heb.2.10. And so your mental "sufferings" are really love, you being conditioned to help so many others and thus save them as you are in the process of being "saved" yourself. Paul in Heb, said "Labour to enter into that rest!" Again read it in Heb.4.11, and that "labouring" means, not hard outer work, but persisting in believing. See how that verse ended!

So, love, all your "labours" are reactions of your own precious but often interfering human mind how you think or feel this or that. And "YOU are dead and Christ is your life." Again read Col.3.3.4. so keep saying and BEING what you ARE in Christ and He in you. The more you fling your arms around and shout for "knowing", the slower it will be in coming, because your "flinging" is blocking the knowing. BE STILL AND KNOW that I am God. So back you come to ACCEPTING (your mind storms), but then believing (what HE says to you in His word), and praising (by word if not yet in feeling).

Now love; send me your next "epistle according to my loved Joan!" I'll await it!

Loving you

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Scott's article

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duces the good fruits. Yes, God has created us not to live life separated from Him, but to CONTAIN His spirit and produce His good works.

Paul similarly states, "In Christ also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Ephesians 1:11). He goes on to say that Christ "fillesh all in all" (Ephesians 1:23). Christ works all things by working through us. He fills everything. Since He is 'all in all,' then we are assured that He is in us and He fulfills His desire by working through us. Paul uses the word 'all' multiple times here so that no doubt can be raised. 'All' does not leave any room for alternatives. Independent 'I' has no mention or place in our lives as Christ is 'all in all.'

God has proved His love to us by sending His only son to die on the cross for us. We know that Christ's blood washes away our sins and serves as the singular and eternal atonement. Our penalty has been paid with the perfect blood of Christ. Yet we have been given so much more than just simple atonement. We have been given a new life, and that life is in Christ. Now, in union, we are joined to Christ as the lie of independence has been crucified with Christ. What an awesome treasure to know and acknowledge and live by faith the 'riches of the glory of the mystery' of the union life with Jesus Christ.

Tape Talk

continued from page 8

was the blood), but the body death that set us free in Him from the indwelling sin-principle. In death, the spirit is separated from the body—and since all died in Christ, the spirit of self-centeredness indwelling us was destroyed when Jesus died. In Him we were raised by the Holy Spirit when He entered and raised Jesus. Out went self-centered self, and in came the Spirit of outflowing love. We who believe in Christ are forever cut off from the false deity to whom we were enslaved and forever joined to the God of love to manifest His perfect, outpoured life.

For me the most exciting and helpful part of the entire study was the third tape because of how thoroughly Norman dwells on temptation and how to handle it. This is not the outward temptation to commit a sin, but the inner temptation that precedes it—to believe I am independently operated and must "handle" things. For example, I feel "bugged" by some negative pull—resentment, fear, inadequacy—and instead of believing that I am resentful, fearful, inadequate and "ought" not to be (bringing me under the Law), I affirm the truth—and replace the negative believing with the truth: God, You meant that situation, You're here living in me—total love, courage, completeness—You handle it! What an answer to the constant temptation to respond to the lie that I function independently! What a hope after years of mouthing the words, but not really believing the fact!

In an abrupt change in the operation of the Spirit through us, Romans 9 through 14 moves from God meeting our personal need, "the trivial"—to fulfilling His universal purposes, the "magnificent"—with suffering. Free from the nagging questions of self, says Norman, we now have the detachment to express the effects of our union with God. We are now available, in union with Christ, to manifest His love and to suffer to bring others to Christ. We function as intercessors like Moses and Paul—with an intensity and passion for the lost. Norman reminds us that God uses humans who will lay down their lives—all that they are—to meet the needs of those around them.

Norman brilliantly treats some of the most disputed topics of Christendom: the sovereignty of God, the hardening of Pharaoh's heart; the statement, "Jacob have I loved and Esau I have hated"; God's creating some vessels for honor and some for dishonor. In the final chapters, Norman discusses the word of faith and other concepts by which we function on this highest level of spiritual experience. Throughout his study in Romans, Norman brings in support from other sections of the Bible, particularly James and the first letter of John, to take us to the depths of the Biblical truth and show us how we function as humans.

I found Norman's study in Romans to be totally engrossing. His narrative is so eloquent and full of biblical wisdom that any tape, no matter what the sequence, triggers new thoughts and connections. This series would also be ideal for a group Bible study.

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What a Wonderful God!

Oh, what a wonderful God we have! How great are his riches and wisdom and knowledge! How impossible it is for us to understand his decisions and his methods! For who can know what the Lord is thinking? Who knows enough to be his counselor? And who could ever give him so much that he would have to pay it back? For everything comes from him; everything exists by his power and is intended for his glory. To him be glory evermore. Amen

—Romans 11:33-36
(New Living Translation)

Words to Live By...

The new outlook is this: This has happened to me as some way by which I am to meet the need of others. As Paul says in that Second Letter to the Corinthians, in which he most fully shows what living other people's lives means: "All things are for your sakes."

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The following audiotapes are offered as an aide to affirming the Lord's revelations of "Christ in you." They will be of interest to those Christians who are seeking to further their understanding of living in union with Christ. All tapes have been recorded live at various gatherings and may contain some background noise. Editing has been kept to a minimum in order to preserve the precious truths these tapes contain.

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