

The INTERCESSOR

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

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Mankind's Radical Delusion

By Norman Grubb

In a fresh examination of Romans 7, Norman exposes the Satanic deception that keeps so many Christians living in failure—the lie that humans are independent, self-managing selves who are responsible (yet never succeed) in keeping the law through self-effort.

Paul reaches the least understood and most misused section of his Romans letter, or of all his writings—Romans 7:7 through 7:25. But when understood through Paul's own explanation and experienced by the inner confirmation of the Spirit, this section gives the desperate believer the one key that turns the lock into the whole freedom he seeks. In his need, the believer must find the full and final meaning of life, for which he was created and is now redeemed by grace.

We see [in Romans 6] how Paul pointed out that in our redeemed experience of justification by faith and new birth of the Spirit, we do not continue in sin. The reason is that as our Lord Jesus Christ died and rose again as representing us, we then died with Him to being sin-indwelt and rose with Him to being Christ-indwelt, as symbolized by our burial and rising in our water baptism. So now we live yielded to God and expressing His right living in our members.

But this is based on a further star-

ting fact of a different kind—that we are no longer “under law, but under grace,” and that we are “dead to law” as well as “dead to sin.” We are thus not only freed from the guilt of broken law, but from responding to and having to operate law at all!

But, steady! If we are not under law, do we not mistakenly conclude that we shall easily slip back into sin

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living? Paul then opens to us the basic radical delusion that we have lived in since the Fall, under the Satanic lie of us being independent, self-managing selves who must therefore see to it that we respond to law by our self-efforts. But the actual fact is that we were never created to be independent human selves. We were deceived into that delusion by Satan at the Fall.

Paul then points out that in fact we

have always been just slaves, either to the sin-owner or the righteousness-owner: branches bearing the fruit of either the false vine or the True Vine: married and producers of the seed of either Satan-husband or Christ-husband. There never has been such a thing as us being independent, self-acting, self-producing human selves, and responding by ourselves to a law of evil or good. Paul now proceeds to explain his own experience of discovery and release from his false deceived bondage in this radical misconception, and thus his freedom in Christ to a totally liberated life.

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Paul Identifies with Us All

In Romans 7:7-25, Paul turns from general statements to the strictly personal. How do I find that the Christian life works? How do you? To explain this and to identify with us all, Paul does a big thing. He deliberately backtracks from his actual present experience as “dead to the Law” and aligns himself with every born-again believer, using the present tense of “I, I, I.” He starts with his new-born experience, then shares with us his early years of spiritual adolescence, and fi-

Paul found an inner uprising over which he had no control, which he named sin and which “wrought in me all manner of concupiscence” (Rom. 7:8). He was devastated, not that there were these sin drives, but because he thought he ought to be able to control them. That was his condemnation and bondage.

nally his searchings and wrestlings right through to the final answer for himself, and thus for all of us.

Paul’s use of the present tense about himself in sharing what he had long left behind has been misunderstood through all these succeeding years by millions of sincere believers, who have themselves not entered into the release of the liberated “I.” Thinking that the furthest a believer can know in life is humiliation, struggles and constant failures under sin’s apparent dominion, they have falsely de-

duced a “two nature” condition, as if we humans are permanently caught up in the opposing strife of sin and holiness natures. If, as they say, these natures were both a part of our very selves, then we would have to oscillate despairingly between them and take them for granted as our normal experience.

The truth is that our God-created human self is merely a neutral vessel, or container. In Romans 7:17-18, Paul described it as being in itself neither the good nor the bad, which he was only then discovering was the sin dwelling in him. It is merely the fruit producer of whichever vine it is a branch of, and it can never be a branch of both at once (Rom. 6:20-22). And though vast numbers of God’s people still labor under that mistaken interpretation of Paul’s present tense, we say he boldly stepped back in order to identify himself as a true intercessor with what all believers must go through to find their permanent deliverance. So he is now saying, “I see myself with you. I am back with you confronting that old outer law, to which in actual fact I am dead.”

In order to underline that final necessary confrontation with the Law and its final depth surgery on him, as on us all, Paul describes in detail his past dramatic experience. It was the sudden impact of that tenth commandment, with it’s “Thou shalt not covet,” which so rudely awakened him. He had been blissfully ignorant of its having any personal impact. “I was alive without the Law once,” he says (Rom. 7:9); and that is how all the world lives until confronted by the Law. Paul had been “delighting in the Law” (Rom. 7:22),

as everyone new-born of the Spirit delights. But under the lie of independent self, when that “Thou shalt not covet” struck him, he blindly thought: “No, of course I won’t and don’t.” He was under that fatal delusion of us all that there is such a thing as self-management and self-control.

Trouble with “I”

Then the blast hit him. Paul found an inner uprising over which he had no control, which he named sin and which “wrought in me all manner of concupiscence” (Rom. 7:8). He was devastated, not that there were these sin drives, but because he thought he ought to be able to control them. That was his condemnation and bondage.

This is how Paul put it: “In my newly-born and responsive condition, in which my whole desire is to fulfill the Law and produce the fruit of the Spirit, there is this disturbing experience that when I want to do good, there is an evil presence controlling me (Rom. 7:22). Yes, I want to and will to live by God’s Law. I would do the good and not the evil (repeated in verses 15, 14, 18, 19 and 21), but I am driven by this humiliating condition to say that something grabs me and enslaves me.”

“I am carnal and sold under sin,” Paul continues (Rom. 7:14), “and there seems to be no escape. Here is the Law, which I delight in, hammering at me with its godly standards. But I find myself helpless and hopeless. I have the will; but there is nothing in my flesh—my human makeup—which has the capacity to combat this negative power drive, which has me in its grasp (Rom. 7:18). I am a wretched

man (Rom. 7:24): new-born, but still a sin slave! Where lies the trouble? Is there a remedy?”

The trouble is in that deceived, independent “I” (popping up 32 times in those 19 verses)—the enormous delusion, which the Law came to expose. Independent self reaction is first of all Satan’s delusion about his own created selfhood, and then the lie which he imparted to us all at the Fall.

We are all forms of God’s fire-self, the self of infinite desire. But God, by

So all self-effort is actually Satan-effort, whether good or bad in appearance. Paul’s good self-efforts to combat his uprising sin desires, unknown to him, were still Satan masquerading as Paul. And our desires and self-reactions, good or bad, are still Satan’s self-for-self expressed as us. Paul described his experience this way: “When I would do good, evil is present with me” (Rom. 7:21).

the begetting of His Son, transmuted His fire-self into the light-self which is eternally the self of other-love. Satan, however, turned his self of fiery desires into the consuming love of self-for-self, and imparted his own fallen nature to us as though it were ours.

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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!

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The great light is lit when we finally see that our precious humanity has every ability to respond on soul and body level; but the forms the responses take are not ours. There is no such thing as plain self reactions. Through the Fall, our responses formerly expressed Satan's self-for-self nature, whether in apparent good or evil form. But now through Calvary, having learned that our Romans 7 delusion of independent self-reaction is Satan, our responses express Christ in His self-for-others nature. This is who we really are, as we shall see further in Romans 8.

Slain by the Delusion

In his self-delusion Paul was so ashamed and humiliated that he said he was like a slain man (Rom. 7:7-11). In fact, that was what had happened. He had been slain by the delusion that he was an independent self who could manage himself, when there is no such thing and it was really Satan's self effort. So he said, "Sin, taking occasion by the commandment (as if he could obey it) deceived me, and by it slew me" (Rom. 7:11).

What a universal deceit in all us humans, and what an exposure and deliverance! The shame and humiliation of Paul's defeat was just the necessary negative God used to make him desperate enough to find the answer, and thus that final usefulness of the Law in exposing the lie of self-effort. So down Paul had fallen by the exposure of his

self-relying self, not yet knowing that self-effort is Satan.

Having used his own dramatic experience to underline the necessary negative operation of the Law on us, Paul then asks, "Does such an exposure by the Law make it a death-dealing and dangerous weapon?" "The very opposite!" he answers (Rom. 7:12-14). Only by that sharp, personal law exposure of his helpless self in response to those self-gratifying desires could the roots of the independent self lie be exposed. At first he struggled, wrongfully condemning himself in-

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stead of Satan-Sin. But this drove him to the great final discovery: not of an evil human self, with the false self-condemnation, but to the great light of a right, God-made human self, with the sinner in him really being the sin spirit.

Paul knew, by the revelation he had when in Arabia (Gal. 1:11, 12, 17), that Satan-Sin had been cast out by Christ's body death on Calvary (2 Cor. 5:14, 21). (We shall explain this in detail later.) But he had not yet come to the necessary point of personally appropriating that tremendous fact. He was still confused by the self-condem-

nation of false, independent self, instead of laying the rightful blame on sin. So by the use of the vivid present tense, as though he were a young, struggling believer, he underlines the value of the Law in its disturbing effects on "me, me, me!" But finally there would be a right adjustment of the human "me."

Law's Impossible Demands

Have not I, like Paul, vainly thought there should be some way in which I could combat and overcome this evil bias in myself? Does not the whole world operate by doing its own stuff? Isn't "I must," "I can," "I will" or "I'm going to" the sole, absorbing incentive of human living? Yes, it is. That is humanity's vast, lost blindness, even though sin is not imputed when law hasn't yet confronted us (Rom. 5:13-14). All of us in this fallen world, with no exceptions, really live by that Satan lie, with which we were inoculated at the Fall: that self by itself, in its apparent independence, can run its own life.

While in our deceived, self-relying state—"living in pleasure [and yet] being dead while we think we live" (1 Tim. 5:6)—we have to be confronted with the Law and the standards by which the universe was created to function. These laws were first embodied outwardly for our enlightenment in those Ten Commandments, from which any deviation finally brings total destruction. We are forced to accept the realization that first we didn't fulfill them (conviction of sins), and second, we can't fulfill them, which is the final discovery of this Romans 7 chapter.

Why are we not able to keep the

Law? It is because we created humans can only function by the deity self who manifests his nature through our forms: our Creator-Father's "divine nature" (2 Pet 1:4), or alternatively, so that we might experience and get the opposite into focus, Satan's self-for-self nature (Eph. 2:1-2). Always we humans are vessels, branches, slaves, body-members; or in modern terms, we are computers, who can only develop what is programmed into us. There never was such a thing as a created selfhood which could operate by itself.

Paul, recounting in this Romans 7 crisis statement his former experience, was compelled to discover that he could not manage himself. And now we all, with whom Paul links himself, are compelled to discover that we cannot manage ourselves. "To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not" (Rom. 7:18). Precisely. Yes, I am a slave, "sold under sin" (the nature of self-for-self), with no escape. However much I want to, resolve to, or try to keep God's law, I cannot, because I was never created with the ability to manage myself. I am a managed person.

Through the Law's impossible demands on me, I have to discover that I started my human life in sin. "In sin did my mother conceive me" (Ps. 51:5), as a slave, a branch and a vessel. Of whom? Of that false upstart "god of this world," that "spirit working in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2). He is that "spirit of error," that "father of lies," that devil "who sinneth from the beginning"; and it is his lusts I have been doing and can't refrain from doing (John 8:44).

Then at last, as Paul says in Romans

7:14-25, I am driven to my limit. I am finally among the desperate ones who seek the highest and then find I can't reach it. The poet Browning wrote, "A man's reach must exceed his grasp, or what's a heaven for?" But in my desperation, at last I can see my deceived limitations. A tremendous seeing!

I see plainly now that the disrupter is not the Law, for the Law is "spiritual" (Rom. 7:14). And it is not "me,"

I see plainly now that the disrupter is not the Law, for the Law is "spiritual" (Rom. 7:14).

And it is not "me," because I hate these things I do. It is the intruder: the sin that dwells in me! Paul says that twice (Rom.

7:17, 20). This is a radical revelation, because all my trouble and the whole world's trouble is the deception that we are the operators of our lives. We are not! We are the containers, the manifesters, the vessels of wrath or mercy (Rom. 9:22-23).

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A vast weight, which burdens every believer in his false self-condemnation, lifts off us when this un-

derstanding comes. In our former delusion we would say: "I'm the culprit. I'm the trouble. I'm ashamed of myself. I should be better." No. That is a lie and a delusion; it never was I. The whole intent of the cries of "I, I, I" in Romans 7:14-25 is that I don't like myself. I hate what I'm doing, when actually I am a God-made, beautiful self (Gen. 1:26-28). At last I see it; and I had to be brought to my limit to be able to see it.

There is a Deliverance

All the world's people, including us the born-again, have always taken it for granted in their delusion that they were self-operating and therefore self-responsible persons, who could and would improve themselves. And at last I find that there never was such a person! Now I see I was always a slave of Satan-Sin—"sold under sin"—and it is he who is to blame. In my unsaved days I went along with Satan's sin activities. In my saved days I have hated my slavery, been ashamed of it and wrestled vainly against it.

Sin is this "other law in my members, warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin in my members" (Rom. 7:23). Now I have it clear that it is not I, but this evil power controlling me. Paul cries out for us all, as he had cried out for himself, "Am I tied and bound to this death in my body, or is there a deliverance?" (Rom. 7:24). At last I have come to my limit. In my hatred of this intruder of my body, I find that I am not to blame, but sin. Is there a deliverance from sin for me?

Now I can see what Paul had already revealed in its completeness in

Romans 6:1-13 and which had become his own liberation. Yes, thank God, there is deliverance for me now by the personal application in my desperate need of what I had accepted in my head and reckoned on as told to do (Rom. 6:11). But while I remained ignorant of there never having been such a thing as human self-effort or human independence, I had not realized that all my own efforts to live a victorious life were really Satan expressing himself as me. And I had not realized that until I had made such a failure of attempts to live it. Only then was I ready to see that the only way to live the life is if Christ lives my life as me, in place of that self-effort which was really Satan—"good" or bad.

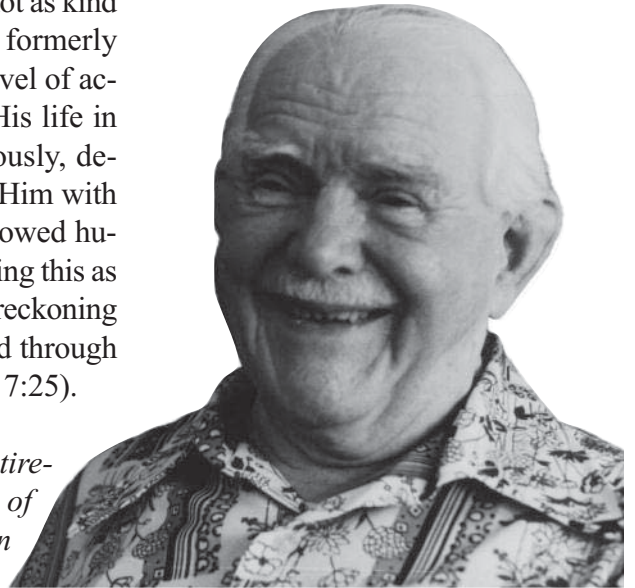
Paul had explained the key to total liberation (Rom. 1-13), and we had reckoned on it as fact as best we knew how. It was this: my death in Christ's death to indwelling sin power, and my life in freedom from that power in His resurrection. But now I also have the human self in true focus as only the

container and expresser, but never the originator. So I could see that the death and resurrection union with Christ which I had reckoned on as fact means not Him and me in action in place of Satan and me; but rather, Him as me, (with me the human expresser) in place of Satan as me (with me the human expresser).

The big difference and final liberation comes when, after my exposure by the Law, I have myself in my true eternal relationship to Him: not as kind of co-living with Him (or formerly Satan) as two on the same level of action, but as only He living His life in me, as me. I now spontaneously, delightedly and easily express Him with all the vigor of my God-endowed humanity. That is different! Seeing this as my total life, I move in from reckoning to realizing. Yes, I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord (Rom. 7:25).

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

This issue of *The Intercessor* begins the first of a three-part series focusing on the three-fold scriptural foundation of our Total Truth:

Romans 7:19-20: *"For the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish. But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish, I am no*

longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me."

Galatians 2:20: *"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."*

Galatians 4:19: *"I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you...."*

The features in this issue, selected from Norman Grubb's writings, in-

vestigate the painful dilemma of most Christians—our inability to live a right life even after our salvation. The lead article, taken from Norman's booklet *Paul's Key to the Liberated Life: Romans 6-8*, contains an understanding of Romans 7 (so widely misunderstood) that not only explains the cause of our inconsistencies and failures but also "gives the desperate believer the one key that turns the lock into the whole freedom he seeks... the full and final meaning of life."

In "Romans Tells Us How," Norman unfolds God's loving three-stage

revelation of Himself to a lost mankind—from the Gospel’s outer exposure of our sinfulness and revelation of a historical Savior (Romans 1-5), to the necessity of an inward deliverance from sin/Satan hidden behind the lie of an independent self (Romans 6-8), to the final revelation of God’s plan for us—joined in a spirit-union with Christ, and co-participants in the process of bringing other Christians into full maturity.

Two articles dealing with Romans 6 and 7 focus on the workings of the law and the exposure of the lie of independent self. “Free from Law, License?” takes us through the illustrations in Romans 6 of our true human makeup as vessels joined to one or the other of two deities: slaves of one master, wife of one husband. Especially rich is Norman’s inspired

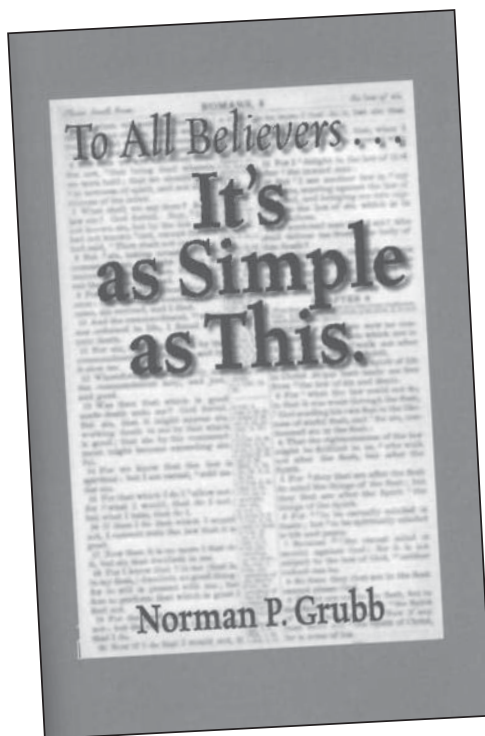
understanding of Paul’s identification with us in our Romans 7 helplessness, leading to the final exposure of the lie of independent self: “It is not I, but sin”—revealing, through the negative, our true personhood as a spirit-operated vessel. And “The Marriage of Law and Grace” gives excellent practical examples of our daily temptations to slip back into the struggle and condemnation of Romans 7—and how to return under grace once again.

“Where Things Went Wrong and Why” penetrates into the spiritual consequences of choice—Lucifer’s choice to reject his role as God’s vessel and the first humans’ choice between two trees in the Garden of Eden. “No Such Thing as an Independent Self” also begins with Lucifer—here called “God’s convenient agent”—by whom the human family

would “learn to its depths the opposite nature, not ours but the nature of the ‘god of this world.’”

“The Total Remedy” reveals the deepest significance of Christ’s death and resurrection. Norman beautifully portrays not only how Christ purchased our redemption from our sins through His shed blood, but the mystery of how His body death, burial, and resurrection (and we in Him) freed us from sin/Satan by an exchange of indwelling spirits—Satan/sin out at death, Christ/righteousness in at the resurrection producing “a full salvation—from effects and cause, from products and producer.”

Next issue will move on to the second phase of our Total Truth with a full exploration of the replaced life—“no longer I, but Christ” living His life in permanent union in me as me.

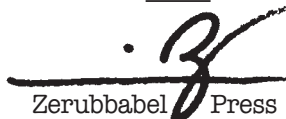


Norman Grubb's
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ROMANS TELLS US HOW

by Norman Grubb

In this excerpt from The Liberating Secret, Norman presents God's loving three-fold approach to fully redeem and liberate lost mankind to the purpose for which we were created.

These three stages are nowhere more clearly explained and presented to us than in the great Roman letter, and it is there that we will now examine them more closely, always bearing in mind their ultimate goal: that man was originally created and now re-created in Christ to find his place in God and He in us.

The first stage may be called the outward approach. Man has become an extrovert, or at least he seeks to live like one. To look too far within might be disturbing. He tries to live on the surface; work, pleasure, practical interests, social and religious activities, the world's merry-go-round. So it is from the outside that God approaches him. He can understand a God in heaven; he can see a Saviour in history; he can recognize the sins he himself has committed. On this level, then, the gospel is preached to him.

Look at the first five chapters of Romans, where more plainly than anywhere else in Scripture, the way of salvation is presented. First, "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" (1:18). Then the sins of man are exposed in loathsome detail, and attributed to a worship of the creature rather than the Creator (1:21-32). The coming "day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" is proclaimed, where doers of evil and workers of good will be judged without respect of persons, and rewards and punishments meted out (2:5-11). No pronouncements could be in plainer language: a child can understand them. The name of the Judge is then given (2:16), and the verdict of guilty on all the world unmistakably foretold, for the simple reason that all have sinned, and "there is none righteous, no, not one" (3:19-23).

What an inescapable presentation of facts, which by these statements of Scripture and the word of the preacher have opened millions of blinded eyes! The gospel of free grace is then presented in the same

practical, objective and reasonable form. Despite these hard facts of sheer justice, there is a way by which the guilty are pronounced righteous. God found Himself a worthy substitute, and "set Him forth" for all to see at an exact place and on a fixed date: Christ Jesus, was the "propitiation through faith in His blood" (3:24, 25); and faith means not works of self-effort, but simple "believing on Him that justifieth the ungodly" (3:27, 28): to that man, woman or child who so believes, "his faith is counted for righteousness" (4:3-5).

The primitive forest-dweller, the woman in purdah, the little child: or alternatively, the sophisticated town-dweller, hedonist, intellectual, religious, can all understand such facts, if they will. To them all is Christ "evidently set forth crucified." It is the outward approach. It does not deal with any such matters as our dwelling in God and He in us: it does not draw attention to the ramifications of the self-life, or raise questions of soul and spirit. In those first five chapters of Romans, up to 5:11, no reference is made to an inner relationship to God, except the one statement that "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost."

But what a change of emphasis in Romans 6! What does Paul mean when he suddenly alters the emphasis from Christ's dying to my having died? (6:2) This takes us at once from the objective to the subjective, from the outward to the inward, from the historical to the mystical and spiritual. Anyone can understand the historic fact of the Saviour dying for us, but who can understand the statement that we are dead? Quite obviously, physically speaking, we are not dead! And still less buried, as 6:4 says! Now we are passing on to where man really lives—within himself.

We have seen how the natural man will escape the discomfort of looking within himself, if he can; he will live in an external world so far as he can, and God meets him where he lives, with facts and in language he can understand. But, when he has come to Christ, and the Son has been revealed in him as his Saviour, it will not be long before he finds out that the real problems of life are within. At his rebirth, it was his past sins that concerned him; but now he discovers that it is not

the sins, but the sinner that must be dealt with. "Shall we continue in sin?" asks the Apostle. He now wants to follow Christ, but what is he to do with all that rises up within to prevent him?

There are the lusts of the flesh—sex, greed, sloth. There are the sins of the soul and spirit—pride, resentment, anger, self-pity, jealousy. There are the attractions of the world, the distractions of home and business, the deadness in prayer and Bible study, the powerlessness in witness. He has to face the fact that the joy of sins forgiven, the gift of eternal life, the knowledge of Jesus as Saviour and Friend does not give him the inner release and victory he needs. Often he seems to be still in slavery to sin and self; he struggles, he resolves, he prays; but one besetting sin or another keeps holding the mastery over him.

Paul gives the answer, as no other writer in the New Testament. He was the Spirit's chosen instrument of the full revelation in Christ. As he said himself, he did not receive it of man, neither was he taught it, "but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." He leads us now into the second stage of this revelation, the central and vital stage, to which the first was a gateway, and from which the third is a normal and necessary continuation.

He now begins to open up an inner relationship with God. Up to this point, as an extravert, man could only regard himself as quite a separate being from God, even as he is also from his neighbour. I am here, and you are there, and God is way up above somewhere. That is why the Romans 1-5 approach of God to man is only on the external. A true separation came between God and man through the fall, and continues for ever in "eternal exclusion from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His might" for those who continue in disobedience. So used has man become to this reality in his fallen condition that he usually carries it over to his saved condition, and continues with the grave-clothes of a sense of separation on him.

For the saved man this is an illusion, though real enough while still believed in. Thus, though he does know Christ in his heart, he normally regards Him as apart from himself, often outside himself, and sometimes so separate that there appears a great distance between them. Sometimes this specially appears to be so in prayer, or in time of crisis and bewilderment. Very often from our pulpits no nearer presentation of Christ is given to the believer than that He is a Friend close at hand, and so forth. The veil of a false separation is left over the eyes. Here, of course, as we have been showing in these pages, lies the great error. It leaves man to

do the very thing he was never created nor redeemed to do, to carry on as best he can by self-effort, helped, he hopes, by the presence and blessing of God.

For most of us this deeper revelation of union has to come as a second experience. We can seldom see our outward sins and inner selves in one single exposure. The plainest proof of this is that the profound exposition of Romans 6-8 is given us separately and subsequently to chs. 1-5. It is not that there are two separate salvations, as it were. There is only one Saviour, one glorious process of restoration through His death, resurrection and ascension, one Holy Spirit. The twofoldness is not on His side. But for most of us there has to be a twofold appropriation of the two great deliverances that stream from the one Calvary, the deliverance from sin and wrath (1-5), the deliverance from sin and independent self (6-8). They could conceivably be experienced together, for both are there for the taking, but an appropriation which produces a real experience of both at the same time, and not merely a mental apprehension, is rare. In that sense there is a "second blessing," an entire sanctification subsequent to justification, an inner union according to Gal. 2:20.

For most of us this deeper revelation of union has to come as a second experience. We can seldom see our outward sins and inner selves in one single exposure.

So we are now passing to the heart of the purpose of God in Christ, the purpose we have seen in earlier pages stretching from the

first days of the first creation of heavenly beings up till now, the purpose of union as in the Trinity itself (John 17:21), the joining of Spirit with spirit, now possible for fallen man only through the reconciliation of the cross. Romans 6-8 will tell us all we need to know about it. There are no more important chapters in the Bible for the believer who seeks the solid foundation of the fullness of life in Christ.

A connecting link between the external teaching of Romans 1-5:11 and the internal teaching of 6-8 is in the intervening 5:12-21. Here is a first inkling that we must look deeper for the cause of our troubles and for their remedy. We derived something from Adam—sin and death—there is a hereditary link between us. So now we derive something from the first-born of this new creation, if we belong to Him, a hereditary link of righteousness and life. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

In God's sight we were all in the loins of the first Adam, and therefore participated in the process of his fall—in sin, separation from God, and death (Heb. 7:9, 10). In God's sight all who are joined by faith to the last Adam are equally in His loins, and so participate in the process of His redemption—in death to sin, in resurrection to newness of life in the Spirit.

Where Things Went WRONG, and Why

by Norman Grubb

Personality is freedom, and if persons are the expression of The Person, it must be freedom through freedom. How can there be such a delicate relationship that humans are real humans, all retaining their individuality, all conscious of themselves in their choices and actions, and yet the Deity Himself is imaged through each? How can that be?

What is Freedom?

First, we must have the meaning of “freedom” in focus. We humans have played fast and loose with the word, as with many others which press us too hard. We tend to regard the word as meaning a dispensation to be and do anything. Not so. Freedom is a meaningless concept unless it is freedom to choose. If there was only one thing in the world, there would be no choice, and therefore no freedom. There would not be such a word. But freedom has as its firm base the responsibility of making intelligent choices, and right ones. Then, when we have made our choices, freedom has its limitless expression within the bounds of that choice.

So freedom is limitless potential, expressed within limited choice. Marriage would be a human illustration. A supposedly intelligent choice is made, and then all freedom in family living is expressed within

the limits of that choice. A young man chooses a profession, and then within its boundaries puts all he has into the development of his calling.

The startling proof of this being the meaning of freedom is that it is stated to be true of God. We say He is unlimited. The Bible says He is limited. Paul speaks of God that cannot lie. The writer to the Hebrews says it is impossible for God to lie. Not that He does not lie or should not, or did not, but He cannot. Therefore there is something God cannot do. What does that mean? The lie is one form of self-centredness. It is preserving one’s own interests at the expense of another. Therefore, it is saying God cannot be a self-seeker, self-lover, self-magnifier.

Why, if God is freedom? Because freedom means right choice and all activities as an expression of that choice; and it is here saying that from eternity that “choice” has been God’s eternal nature. He “cannot” be a self-seeker. He can only be a self-giver. Everything He has ever thought or done is in some form of self-giving. There is nothing else in His nature for all eternity.

“The eternal will to all goodness,” William Law calls Him, and His real life is not being Himself, but living the life of His creation. This is love and this is the Trinity—the invisible Father who took form in

the Son, from whom the Spirit proceeds in reproduction and creation; and it is for this reason that everything has a trinitarian form. It is the Father—Son—Spirit in manifestation; space—length, breadth, height; time—past, present, future; matter—energy, motion, phenomena; action—thought, word, deed; man—spirit, soul, body; any living thing such as a tree—essence, form, reproduction. More than that, everything has God’s character of self-giving love, though of course, in an involuntary way; everything has its true life, not in being itself, but in becoming others or something to others: the tree becomes the chair and table: bread and meat become our body: water is our life. Everything is a servant, by giving up its independent life to become somebody else’s life; and this is God.

What are We?

So now back to us humans. We will ask again and answer again: If God is the one life of the universe, if He, the Trinity-in-unity, is self-giving love, if all the universe is really He manifesting Himself in various forms and on various levels, what are we humans?

The answer is clear. God, the Living Person, in the free expression of His self-giving love, cannot manifest His invisible self in freedom except through free

selves. A person can only express personality through persons, like through like, consciousness through consciousness, intelligence through intelligence. Therefore, The Person must have persons for His free manifestation. Therefore, we are persons.

Immediately there arises the dilemma of all history. If God must have free persons by whom to express Himself in freedom, freedom implies conscious choice, and then free self-expression within the limits of that choice. Freedom is limitless potentiality within the limits of a decisive choice; and we must be sure it is the right choice. Here we come back on our human level to the same basic choice as we see in the God who is nothing but love and cannot lie. We cannot say that God, the Eternal One, ever made a choice in time, as we do; but we say that God, the Three-in-one, always was love. But for us there is the choice. Having their being in God, created persons could have consciously chosen to affirm that relationship and thus be natural free expressions of the self-giving God. But equally in freedom of choice, created persons can choose to be themselves as if independent of God and live for time and eternity in the illusion, yet dreadful reality for them, of being independent self-loving selves.

While all creation is God revealing Himself on various levels of self-giving love, each according to its divine capacity, we humans as free persons are the summit of His creation. By us, The Person by the persons, He can be fully Himself in unlimited self-giving love, we in our freedom united to Him in His freedom, every limitless human faculty freely expressing Him. He loves and we love, He thinks and we think, He wills and we will, He acts and we act, we humans being in essence God walking about, God talking, God acting, God loving, in John's words, "as He is,

so are we in this world". Are we that? Obviously, derisively, tragically not.

Misused Freedom

Then what has happened? It is not hard to see. Indeed, the Bible makes it quite plain. Freedom can be misused. It can make the wrong choice, which God, the Original Self, never made. What is spoken of as the origin of evil is not difficult to trace.

We have said that a conscious self is only such by reason of the capacity to choose; and every self being an outbirth

Lucifer, therefore, broke open a dimension of the self-life which should never have been exposed, which never was known in God, a dimension where the self expresses itself in self-love.

of the original Self is compounded of love. Every self is love and loves itself. Confronted by the conscious choice of an either-or, it can either love itself by living for itself (in apparent illusory independence in its freedom); or it can love itself by giving itself to union with the divine Spirit of self-giving love. The Bible tells us what happened. It records the existence of created beings, sometimes called spirits, sometimes angels. Through the misrepresentation of angels in paintings and images, we have a distorted idea of them as half-human with wings, but in fact the Bible calls them spirits; and if God is spirit,

and we in our inner center are spirits, then we can recognize others of another dimension who are also spirits.

We are told that their leader, Lucifer, which means light-bearer (which he was destined to be, but not light in himself), did this very thing we are talking about. He chose, not to be the bearer of God the Light, but to be his own light; in other words to find the answer to life in self-reliance, self-seeking, self-magnification, self-satisfaction.

He, therefore, broke open a dimension of the self-life which should never have been exposed, which never was known in God, a dimension where the self expresses itself in self-love, and all that self-centredness produces becomes its way of life—covetousness, lust, vanity, pride, hatred, jealousy, lying and the rest. The Bible speaks of him as a god, for a god is an originator, an author, and this one was the author of this kingdom of lawlessness, which the Bible calls sin. The law of the universe, which is the way the universe works, is God as self-giving love; therefore, lawlessness is every form of self-seeking love.

Here was the origin of a realm of total separation from God, being the opposite to Him, and, therefore, darkness, confusion, disharmony, the slavery of self-gratification, and ultimately for those who voluntarily continue that way what the Bible calls "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power," which in common language we call hell.

Hell on this basis is as rational and necessary as heaven. Yet it can still be said to be "in God": for all self-hood is an extension of His self-hood, and in that sense, as Paul says, "all have their being in God." But this is a perversion, a misuse of what created selves are destined to be, in union with Him. By refusing that union

and its implications, they are still living by God's life in them but it has become negative in its effects in them, producing wrath and condemnation and the death which is separation from Him, and His light in them has become darkness.

Evil is a misuse of self. It is an inevitable potential in a free self, and to that extent is implicit in the existence of selves. A rough illustration is the sun and light. The sun is burning and consuming. If we are in a wrong relationship to it, we are consumed ("God is a consuming fire"). In a right relationship to it, however, we see that the fiery sun goes through a constant process of inner "death and resurrection," by the fusion of its hydrogen atoms, which in becoming helium release the energy which reaches us as beautiful, blessing, gentle, life-giving light, and we live in that light. Yet no fire, no light.

In the same way, a self is a burning fire, whether in God or man. The fire is the source of his energies. In God, His fiery self "dies" to its own independent self-existence, and lives anew in the begetting of His Son and the creation of His universe, and in the Son, the fire is only known as blessed light. We also, as selves out from His self, are consuming fires.

If, in our freedom, we choose just to burn as ourselves and for ourselves, we have diverted the self to a use which never should have been in existence, and which is hell: but if, with our being in God, and now through the redemption in Christ, we choose that He should be His self-giving self in us, then we become light and love in Him.

The Ultimate Choice

Here is the origin of evil, and from this we learn how evil captured our human race; and the record most surely

tallies with the facts of our experience. Here are Adam and Eve, the first of our race, capable of intelligent choice, yet not yet knowing the distinction between good and evil. What they do know is that they have a Heavenly Father who has abounded in His love to them in all the good gifts of nature around them in the garden. But He has also conveyed to their consciousness that there is one direction in which they must not go, for if they are to be adult humans, exercising their freedom fixedly in its right dimension, they must discover themselves to be free selves, and made a conscious

**Evil is a misuse of self.
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choice. So they are confronted with a tree of which they must not eat. Implicit in that is an ultimate No to self-pleasing and a Yes to self-giving in God. Here was the crux of the matter. Here was the ultimate choice.

The time came when this god of self-centredness, whom we now call the devil or Satan, presented them with all that could attract them to eat of the forbidden fruit. Humans are meant to be attracted, life is response to stimuli; that is normal, not wrong. But they knew that to yield would be the way of self-pleasing and not their Father's way. By themselves, if they act in independence, they cannot resist, for independent self is self-love and will always go for what it really wants. It is made that way. But deeper than desire is

the capacity for choice, the exercise of freedom. It was possible for those two to call on their Father, tell Him of their compulsive desire and that they could not resist it: but to tell Him also that they wanted to do His will, not theirs, and would He rescue them somehow. The means of rescue was there all the time—the tree of life.

All through Christian history the eating of the fruit of the tree has been the symbol of the fact that humanity was created to contain deity, and thus for the union of the human spirit with the divine spirit, for every time we partake of the bread and wine in the Lord's supper, we eat of the fruit of the tree to represent partaking of Christ. If the cry of the heart had been right, the remedy would have been quickly revealed, resulting in the redirection of the drive of the self-desire. The eating of the fruit of the tree of life would have united the spirit of man with the self-giving Spirit of God, and the light would have swallowed the darkness; for the tree of life, we are told, symbolized the gift of eternal life, and eternal life is Christ. By the same token, the eating of the wrong tree symbolized the union of the human spirit with the god of self-centredness: and it is not difficult to recognize the truth of this Genesis record through all our human history.

That we are a "fallen race" needs no proof when we define the essence of the fall as self-centredness; nor is it difficult to detect the demonic elements in our human behaviour, the one to the other, "man's inhumanity to man" engraved on all the blood-stained records of history, which are only the public records of the private life of all of us.

No Such Thing as an Independent Self

by Norman Grubb

We see this great fundamental truth that there is no such thing as an independent self, for there is only One Self in the Universe; for Lucifer, now called Satan, was self-deceived into *imagining* he was independent. In actual fact, he forever remains God's convenient agent, fixed in his negativity. Cast out of heaven, God uses him in His vitally necessary preparation of what He had planned from before the world's foundation—to have a vast company of sons, created persons like Himself, by whom He would manage and develop by inheritance the universe, together with His Son (Heb. 1:2; Rom. 8:14).

These sons must come to their consciousness of being persons by being confronted with these same necessary opposites. So, while given all God's riches of goodness in the Garden, there was one tree they must not touch or they would die to their created privileges as His sons. God intended and purposed, by the fact of the presence of this cast-out devil in the form of a wily serpent, to entice these first two, Adam and Eve, to choose Satan's self-for-self way and take what Eve was deceived into thinking would be beneficial to herself, though against the word of her Creator. By this means, the human family would learn to its depths the opposite nature, not ours, but the nature of the “god of this

world.” This happened to them by receiving and eating of that false fruit, just as it was said that to partake of the other tree, the Tree of Life, and eat its fruit would mean receiving eternal life (Gen. 3:22), showing that fruit to be symbolic of receiving Christ, our eternal life. Eating the false fruit meant receiving this opposite form of life which is really death, the nature of self-for-self.

Satan's Deceit

Paul describes in Ephesians 2:1-3 how that becomes a fact of us fallen humans, expressing, not a nature of our own (of which there is no such thing) but the nature of our false father, expressing his lusts. And Jesus turned the spotlight on that fact when He told the self-righteous Pharisees (of whom we all were in our Satan-indwelt days), “Ye are of your father the devil and the lusts of your father ye will do” (John 8:44). Thus, Jesus exposed once for all that we humans by our faculties and appetites never have had a nature of our own, but either “*take* their nature from God and are His children,” or “*take* their nature from the devil and are his children...” (1 John 3:10, Amp.). Therefore we were expressing *Satan's* lust nature in all its forms (the works of the flesh), which were *not ours but his*. In our fallen days we readily cooperated (“the lusts of your

father ye *will* do”). He, Satan, was the sinner, but *we were wholly accessory to the fact* and were headed for a like destiny.

But here we see the subtle deceit of the devil, which is our vital spot in our coming to a final understanding of who we *really* are. Satan deceived us into *thinking* that we are independent selves, even as he deceivedly thinks he himself is. Revelation 12:9 is a key Scripture on this, showing that Satan's chief operation is “deceiving the whole world”—making us think we are who we are not. We think we are committing those sins, being possessed by those lusts and negative responses, and we are deceived. They are his *expressed by us*. He imparts that deceit into us as if it is us, but it is he masquerading as us.

And God's sole purpose is to expose this lie of independent self. Because we are God's sons and His means of expressing Himself in the universe, we have to learn and drink to its bitter depths that great lie of the independent self—that lie of the Author of Lies with which *he himself* is self-deceived. The fact is we can always transmit what we are or think we are, and so Satan did that transmitting to us, his fellow creatures, and we all normally think we just run ourselves, do our own things (Is. 53:6), make up our own minds and “naturally” operate as

self-relying. *The Lie!* We have to learn and experience it as *The Lie*, so that once really seen as *The Lie* and the remedy in Christ, we shan't be fooled again. We may slip by temptation, but we know our slip and how to return. We thus become not only saved, but *safe* sons. Once bit, twice shy!

The Fallacy of Having Two Natures

In our first “little children” stage (1 John 2:12, 13), we only have our eyes opened by the law and Spirit to our outer sinfulness, made plain by our committed sins. Therefore, our only understanding of Christ's atoning sacrifice is of Him being “evidently set forth crucified among you” (Gal. 3:1; Rom. 3:25), and being seen by us sinners as a person separate from us, dying on the cross. His death was evidenced by the shedding of the blood, going to hell for us (Acts 2:23-24, 27) and being “raised from the dead by the glory of the Father” (Rom. 6:4). As we receive Him and confess Him by faith (John 1:12; Rom. 10:9), the Spirit bears witness to us (Rom. 8:16) that we are “justified by faith,” and thus have peace with God.

But much more important than this, God immediately begins to bring into being His eternal purpose by and as us by the Spirit beginning to express His other-love nature in our form. In our ignorance and our deceived ideas that we have a nature of our own, we think it is we loving Him, which is an impossibility because we humans only have a love *faculty*. The other-love nature is that of the Spirit-Deity now indwelling us and manifesting His nature through our faculty. What we think of in Romans 5:5 as our new birth experience

is us loving Him. When our eyes are open to that Scripture, we see it is His Spirit-given love by which we are loving Him. He has begun to be Himself in our form, “The love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given to us.” We are “new creations” (2 Cor. 5:16, 17), and by His operating nature in and as us, we no longer live self-for-self, but self-for-Him. By His Spirit we see *all* men, *even Jesus Himself*, as *spirit* (not flesh) people and, indeed, all things are seen in a new light as material manifestations of the Invisible One (2 Cor. 5:15-17).

However, now begins our real problem. Sins are put out of sight *for-*

Sins, the product, are no longer our problem. The sinner-producer is—which appears to be our sinful self.

ever, but what about the self that appears to keep sinning? Sins, the product, are no longer our problem. The sinner-producer is—which *appears to be* our sinful self. We who are desperate for the fullness of God in our lives start a second and deeper misery. The misery of the convicted sinner is his sins. The deeper misery of the born-again saint is his apparently inconsistent self! A radical discrepancy increasingly distresses him. He thankfully recognizes goodness (righteousness) proceeding from him in new love, joy, peace and self-control, etc., and he is quick to say they are not from him but are the fruit of the Spirit now being manifested in his newborn life (Gal. 5:22, 23). Good things proceed

from him which are the fruit of the good Spirit, but then bad things are also evident which must mean he has some bad nature expressing them. So then he says that he is twofold. That is where the fallacy, which has so taken over the evangelical church, is believed and accepted by the believer. If the good is from the Spirit, where does the bad come from? The answer supposedly is a bad nature still in me. But *there* is the fallacy and deceit.

No Independent Human Nature

We humans never had a nature of our own but were created to contain and manifest God in His divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4). Temporarily, unless we choose to remain so, we manifest, through the Fall, our badness which we falsely attribute to our human selves. But our question should be, if we don't attribute our goodness to ourselves but to the Spirit of Righteousness, why then don't we attribute our badness to the spirit of badness? Why put our human selves in? We have been bemused and muddle-headed. So here is our agony, and we see the perfect purpose of God.

Unless we see and experience the sin of sins, the lie of the independent self, and have come to a disillusionment and hatred of it (*as Paul in Rom. 7:14-24: “O wretched man that I am...”*) as deep and thorough as our disgust and hatred of our old life of sins, we might revert to it again. Once we know the total truth of ourselves, we shall not revert to the falsity of independent self any more than a saved sinner reverts to his sinful condition (1 John 3:9). (We can be caught up again in a particular sin, but never again into *occupation* by

that sin nature of Satan—the difference between *sins* and *sin*. We must get this clear.)

Therefore, it has been of necessity that we humans, if we are for eternity to be spontaneous expressers of the God of self-giving love in His nature, must first have tasted to its roots the deceiving nature of the god of self-getting love, that god of deceived independent self (Is. 53:6 “...every man turned to his own way...”) and, at all cost, have sought deliverance from it—that “hunger and thirst after righteousness” of Matthew 5:6. Even the perfect human, Jesus, the Son of God, called the “Second Man” as the ideal of humanity, was confronted for forty days with the spirit of error, being “driven” to that confrontation by the Spirit of Truth just entered Him (Mark 1:12). And it took Him that long time, of such intensity that He didn’t even miss food (only “afterward was He an hungered”—Mat. 4:2) to be confronted and finished with these temptations to be self-sufficient and self-acting. Even He had to “taste” that deceitfulness of sin, which we humans swallowed.

Deliverance from Sin/Satan

So we pass through the gateway of Romans 6 via Romans 7 into Romans 8! Romans 6 was the application of Paul’s second radical revelation about Christ on Calvary (Gal. 1:11-12), and the meaning of the two levels of remembrance at the Lord’s Supper—the wine symbolizing the blood shed for sinners, the broken bread symbolizing the body dead and risen for the saints. Paul ran from Damascus because, under fierce pressure, he didn’t know how to stand as a Christ-in-him for de-

liverance, and his friends had to help him out by a rope-basket. He was “driven” into Arabia for three years as a result. There Paul saw and learned identification with Christ in its full meaning only given us by him in 2 Corinthians 5:14, 21. If He hung there on the cross as us, His body represented our bodies. But what do our bodies express? The nature of its indwelling spirit, which was sin. So Paul actually said that God made His sinless Son “sin for us.” By His shed blood He “bore our sins,” which were not His, and atoned for them in His blood. But now Paul was saying He actually was

But, as Paul said, if Christ died as us, expressing the spirit of sin in His body, then when He died, out went that sin-spirit from His body, for a dead body has no spirit.

made sin in that holy nature representing ours, because our bodies express that sin nature and are thus “sin.” No wonder He cried out, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”

But, as Paul said, if Christ died as us, expressing the spirit of sin in His body, then when He died, *out* went that sin-spirit *from* His body, for a dead body has no spirit. And so too, therefore, out went that sin-spirit from *our* bodies. And *into* the dead body in the tomb came His own Spirit, and thus also into our bodies. So Paul could say in Romans 6:10, “...in that He died, He died unto sin once,” and so our bodies were annulled as occupants of sin (Rom. 6:6), and we reckon our-

selves “dead indeed unto sin.”

If Romans 6 is the presentation for us all of the fact of our deliverance, by Christ’s body-death, from the sin principle indwelling us, and we who believe are to state that to be so of ourselves, then we faithfully do so. But we say within ourselves, “I say that, but it isn’t working well in me!” “Reckon” means I count it as so and say so, but that is different from realizing. There is a difference between me saying I *reckon* I have a book in my hands and saying I *have* a book in my hands! “Reckon” means that I’m not really sure. So honest Paul, and honest us with Paul, come to the desperate cry of Romans 7: “I say I’m dead to sin, but it isn’t working! Wretched man that I am. What’s wrong?” Calvary fact is no good to me unless it becomes Calvary experience, and in Romans 7, it doesn’t. That’s why Romans 7 is written in the present tense (Rom. 7:7-24), although Paul had just said it was a *past fact* for him (Rom. 7:4-6). Because all of us go through Romans 6 via Romans 7 to get to Romans 8, and only those who have come through can honestly give the glory statements of Romans 8:1-2, Paul must *not* say it for us, so he identifies himself with us in our stumbling, searching, faltering walk until we ourselves can say those “1 and 2” verses with him.

At last, by this second travail of the believer, the light is lit, and very simply. “Why do I keep doing things I have been doing, and not doing what I want to do?” cries Paul in agreeing with the tenth commandment not to covet, setting himself not to do it, and then finding “sin wrought in me all

FREE FROM THE LAW! LICENSE?

by Norman Grubb

In Romans 6 Paul inserts a mystifying little statement: “Sin shall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the law, but under grace” (Rom. 6:14). Then the disturbing question: “Shall we [continue in] sin because we are not under the law but under grace?” (vs. 15). Why does he say that?

Paul is going to have further insights to share with us about our final liberation from the law, and our death to it. But before he does this, he wants to make the position finally and completely plain that if we are “dead to sin” under grace, then nothing can get us back to belonging to sin and Satan. As John puts it: “We cannot sin, because we are born of God”—slip into occasional sins maybe, but never again be possessed by the sin spirit and continually express his self-centered nature.

Hence the question: Does freedom from the law, does the magnitude of grace, give me a license to commit sin? No, that *cannot be*; and to present this fact as a kind of Magna Carta of our new freedom, Paul demonstrates it with an illustration familiar to the Romans (vss. 16-23).

“Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are, . . . whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (6:16). Paul makes it plain that we humans do not have a freedom of our own—

that we have no self-operating human nature. We are always servants (“slaves,” in the Greek) to one deity or the other. And the deities are here named by their character and lifestyle: sin . . . or righteousness. Yes, *here alone* is our freedom: “Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are?” *That* is our charter of freedom within slavery: our freedom to belong to *one master only*. And as believers, we have *already* changed our slavery—from sin to righteousness, from Satan to Christ (vss. 17-18)! A slave does not change his owner every hour of the day, or even every month!

Total Exchange

That is the law of slavery, and of freedom within that slavery. Humans may not always seem so consistently under one or the other owner—we may slip and slither in our outer behavior—but at our spirit-center we’re always in one of those two slaveries and freedoms (vss. 20-22), fixed and not interchangeable (except by God’s grace!) This, then, is how

ללא חוק!
רישיון?

Hebrew translation

total our transference is from the first Adam’s family to the last Adam’s, by the radicalness of Christ’s once-for-all death to sin and aliveness to God.

This slave-illustration strongly confirms us in knowing in which family and whose service we are—and that our salvation is for keeps, despite any deviations. It equally confirms us into not being hastily judgmental of others in their apparent deviations. See through to the center, where spirit is joined to Spirit! Always contribute faith, not negative downgrading judgment, to any deviators.

Our freedom, Paul says, is total freedom from any other claimant. We can never serve two masters, even if we delude ourselves into thinking we can. We were free from God’s way of self-giving living while we “enjoyed” the freedom of self-loving living as slaves to sin. But now, through our obedience in believing the gospel truth brought to us (6:17), our service to sin has been severed and replaced by our service to righteousness—which is being servants of God (6:18,22). We have *exchanged* freedoms and cannot return, and are in the enjoyment of our new slavery!

Then Paul asks, Did you really

enjoy that former freedom with its “Dead Sea fruits” of conscious guilt, and the hard labors involved in sinful living? (vs. 21). We had to work for a despot in our inwardly chaotic state of fallen selfhood, and our wages were eternal death! What a freedom!—and how rightly we are now ashamed of it! But our *new* freedom, a free gift, spontaneously produces not works, but the rich fruits of holy living; and the end, everlasting life. Owner “sin” pays wages in eternal death; owner “grace” gives the free gift of eternal life. So here is the royal and wonderful answer to the fear of license some may have because of their new freedom from the law. Is there not danger that, if we’re free to do what we like, we’ll then choose to indulge ourselves in all kinds of sinning?

Our Owner is Our Keeper

But the miraculous difference in this new freedom lies in the law of the Spirit replacing the old law. When this truth really dawns, we see it is *not* that it’s easier to sin and harder to live rightly...but the other way round! It is easy to walk God’s way and hard to go back to the devil’s ways! It is absurd even to think of being the devil’s dupes again! What a boldness it gives us when we know that we are totally controlled by the One who owns us, and that we have nothing to do with keeping ourselves. Our Owner is also our Keeper.

How bold it was of Paul—and what a word of revelation—to affirm these two absolute freedoms: If we are slaves of Satan and sin, we are so freed from Christ and righteousness that we cannot change from one to the other. A

slave can’t free himself. Emancipation can only be accomplished by one who pays the price—by one who buys us back from our captor. So now, freed from that sin-slavery which totally controlled us, we are so totally free as slaves to Christ that sin and Satan cannot get us back again. What confidence that gives us in our own new freedom and the like freedom of our brethren. Paul is going to lead us in chapters 7 and 8 of Romans into the full focus of this truth, so that we shall know with a fixed inner certainty that we humans have no nature of our own by which we might direct our own lives. Rather, we *are* directed... and we *are* kept...how-

How wonderful it is!—in our new slavery to Christ we are joyfully free to be producers of the fruit of the Spirit, and cannot come again under the control of our old sin-owner.

ever much, under temptation, we may temporarily wriggle or squirm against our new “bondage” which is our freedom.

So having got that clear once for all—that we are total slaves, eternally fixed to our new owner—Paul can now turn his attention to the one remaining problem which can block our entry into the full freedom that is ours in Christ (and indeed does so until fully and finally cleared away): the control of the law on our deluded independent selves, and the means of freedom from it.

How wonderful it is!—in our new slavery to Christ we are joyfully free to be producers of the fruit of the Spirit, and cannot come again under the control of our old sin-owner. In our new slavery we say from the heart

what it says in that old Church of England prayer: “... in whose service is perfect freedom.” That is the *fact*, but how about our realization of it?

Let us face it: Though Paul has declared to us the totality of our new freedom as slaves to our new Owner, we often don’t seem to have found this fixed level of new freedom working out in our lives, but are caught up again under that old sin-boss. Where does the answer lie? It is in our relationship to the law. We go back to this word of Paul’s: “You are not under the law.” But in fact we *are* under it and know a lot about the heavy bondage of the law on us with its “you ought” and

“you ought not”! Then what does Paul mean when he says that we have full freedom from the law? We must look thoroughly into this and find the solution. For if Paul is saying, “Sin shall not have dominion over you, because you are not under the law but under grace,” that evidently means sin *will* have dominion over us as long as the law *does* continue its hold over us. But how to be not only “dead to sin” (6:2) but “dead to the law” (7:4)? And how can that give us our liberty?

Paul explains it like this in Romans 7:1-6. In a marriage, law binds you to your mate. Now we humans started life mated to Satan, expressing his sin nature and producing his children, “the motions of sin in the flesh.” But as we have already said, we came

into the world *blinded* to the reality of our marriage and to the control of our sin-husband, and to the fact that it was his children which we were producing. We were duped into regarding ourselves as free persons living our own lives. If we had a relationship to sin, it was more as it having some “influence” on us, but by no means having control over us as husband over wife. We recognized Satan neither as husband nor slave-owner over us.

Law’s Two-fold Purpose

Therefore in our unsaved days, when blind to our true relationship to Satan, God in mercy sent us the law through Moses

Therefore the marvel of God’s grace, says Paul, is that at the moment our old marriage was broken by the death of Christ our representative, immediately in His resurrection He became our new Husband in place of Satan.

with its written list of “Thou shalt” and “Thou shalt not” to shoot holes through our false independence and self-righteousness. We admitted the authority of God’s law of right living, for we were still His offspring created in His image. But how husband sin laughed at us: “Fulfill God’s law based on being a self-giving self, when you’re mated to me, the enemy god of self-loving self? Ridiculous!” He was right. We couldn’t and didn’t want to fulfill God’s law. So God’s hidden purpose of grace in sending us the law was first fulfilled not in us humans *keeping* the law (which we couldn’t) but in our consistently *breaking* the law, and thus being exposed by the law as guilty law-

breakers, as sinners.

So by the law we were ultimately driven to take that first great outward step of “coming honest” and acknowledging our guilt, repenting, and being delivered from the curse and condemnation of the law of God’s own Son, “set forth” as the propitiation for our sins.

But then comes the further step. The total work of the law is not just to expose the fact of sins committed and the consequent judgment. It is that “by the law is the knowledge of sin”—not *sins*, but the *sin principle* which was dwelling in us when the father and originator of sin dwelt in us.

Paul, through analogy, ex-

plains how we are at first married to and totally controlled by our Satan-husband, but then by one stroke the marriage is broken up—Christ’s death as our representative cutting us off from the marriage to Satan! Having died with Christ, we are now dead to our old husband. That means that the law can no longer point its finger at us as unable to keep its commands—unable because our husband (who expressed himself by us) would never let us—for death has put an end to that marriage; so the law has no further condemning claim in that respect. “Wherefore, my brethren, you became dead to the law by the body of Christ, that you should be married to another” (7:4).

A Change of Husbands

He then uses the marriage illustration, just as he had used the owner-slave illustration, to bring home the same truth to us: that we humans are always under a deity management. So there’s no such thing as we humans remaining unmarried, just the same as we couldn’t remain free from slavery. Therefore the marvel of God’s grace, says Paul, is that at the moment our old marriage was broken by the death of Christ our representative, immediately in His resurrection He became our new Husband in place of Satan. There’s no such thing as a time period in which we are a kind of widow! We have immediately changed husbands and entered into our new marriage contract, in which “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made us free from the law of sin and death” (8:2).

When I inwardly know this and have got the facts in clear focus, I find that my new Husband has me, to my delight, in His total ownership; and I have nothing to do in our family life beyond producing the fruits of our marriage, the fruit of the Spirit. Then the law has disappeared from me, because my new Husband, who is the resurrected Christ, fulfills it by our union life. I thus have become dead to the law in its outer form—the form in which God first sent it, so as to expose me to the reality of my old Satan-husband.

What perfect joy for us who have come this whole way by grace into our new union and know, in its full reality, our marriage to our new Husband! But actually, the point of what Paul is now writing about, and bringing to its climax in Romans 7, is that

we've not yet properly understood our relationship to our two husbands. Being all tangled up, our concepts need to be untangled. The tangle is caused by the false idea of myself as an independent person, about which I've been deceived from the Fall.

Not knowing that as a sinner I lived under the total management of my old husband and solely expressed him and reproduced his children, but wrongly thinking I then had an independent life of my own, I started out living my new life thinking that now also, as a redeemed human, I have an ability of my own and so can fulfill the law. And so my former husband catches me unaware. When I think I ought to be "doing my own thing" for God (for now, being redeemed, I delight in the law of God) Satan cunningly re-exerts his control over me and causes me to fulfill his flesh will. How can this be? Because "doing my own thing" is Satan's principle, the very cause of his and Adam's fall. It is the sin principle.

Here then is the value of the continuing law to my life. I needed to have one final radical exposure of the "nonsense" of my supposed independence. By this, at last, I can see I have never been independent: because the self-relying self was the sin-spirit in me. Until, however, I consciously know and enter into the reality of not only my cutoff from my old husband, but also my marriage to my new Husband, I will still be in an illusory condition of independence, and so actually under the remote control of my old husband. There is no in-between status. So the law completes its work by revealing the illusion of my inde-

pendence, and grace reveals the reality of my new marriage. Once I move into that, the law ceases to exist as having an outer claim on me, since it is now being *inwardly* fulfilled in me. This is why Paul puts such strong emphasis upon the completion of God's purposes through the law for my freedom, exposing sin as well as sins, and the lie about a time of independence intervening between the old ownership and the new, the old husband and the new.

How wonderful to know that I am now married to Christ! To know that "I am my Beloved's, and His desire is toward me" (S. of S. 7:10)

Until, however, I consciously know and enter into the reality of not only my cutoff from my old husband, but also my marriage to my new Husband, I will still be in an illusory condition of independence, and so actually under the remote control of my old husband.

Romans Seven Puts Me Straight

Paul then continues to open the truth of the value of the law to us by illustrating it from his own experience, in Romans 7:7-25. It centers around the subtlety of the Ten Commandments, and particularly the one commandment which penetrates through outer acts to inner motive: "Thou shalt not covet." He explains how he was once quite unconscious of any tendency to covet—which he calls "being alive without the law." But later, on some occasion, this tenth commandment hit him. After a first reaction of "Not me—I'm not covetous," he was devastated to find in his heart every form of covetousness—"all manner of concupiscence," he calls it—and

this bowled him over. It flooded him like a tidal wave. And so, he states, "sin revived, and I died" to any idea of self-ability to keep God's law. This experience was what God used to open his eyes to the fallacy of self-reliant selfhood and to lead him both into the experience and glorious understanding of "union truth": union with Satan replaced by union with Christ.

So Paul continues his teachings in Romans 7. Let us dig right in and examine in depth what the effects of the law are on us and learn about our final total deliverance from it—which occurs when we've reached the awakened and concerned stage, as Paul

did over his temptation to covet.

First, we can clearly identify Paul's "man" as ourselves in our new creation, because "delighting in the law of God after the inward man" (7:22) obviously implies it is someone who has the new-heart outlook of a redeemed son of God.

So here we are, inwardly delighting in God's law, and yet frustrated and defeated; challenged by the law, yet laughed at by sin, making it plain that it has us in its control. Here we are, as Paul said, not doing what we should do, and often doing what we hate to do.

But now, through this frustrated condition, maybe sometimes lasting for years, we come

to one clear recognition—facts force it upon us: our obvious inability to keep the law. We recognize also that the blame is not on us. We want to do the right thing but haven't the power: "To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not" (7:18)—so at last we can trace the trouble down to the culprit. What a vital revelation! It is not I, it is *sin* that dwells in me, *masquerading as self-effort*.

At last, light has begun to break in on us. Twice over (see verses 17 and 20) Paul exclaims, "That's it, *that's* it; it is not I, it is *sin* dwelling in me." It is not the redeemed Paul who is the culprit. It is indwelling sin. He sees it plainly to be not himself but something quite apart from himself. "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me." The culprit is self-relying self! The "sinner" is a separate power who claims to have him as his captive. "I am carnal, sold under sin" (7:14). The commandment came, Paul explains, and when he rose up to do it, sin played a deceitful trick on him: "I've got you. You can't do it. I'm your master and you're my slave, for your very self-reliance is my bondmark in you!"

At that time it would have appeared to Paul, and certainly to multitudes of us, that we are in a condition of permanent warfare. It looks as if we have two natures—my redeemed self that wants to do good, and indwelling sin which defies and defeats me—dog eating dog. And thousands of God's people think that's all it can be: a life of struggle, striving, and much failure...with self-condemnation.

And that, of course, is the big lie. But the vital point is that I can't see it as a lie until I first

have finally, once for all, got out of my system this delusion that I myself can do good or evil. It is because of this delusion that I either accept guilty failure or put on false self-righteousness. Paul, in that still mistaken idea about himself, had said (7:21), "When I would do good..."—but the catch is, a human can't do good. That can only be done by Christ in us. And when Paul goes on to say "...evil is present with me," he equally can't do evil, for that is Satan in us. But he didn't then know that. Satan alone is the doer of evil; God alone is the doer of good.

The Crucial Revelation

But now came the breakthrough of this whole revelation to him—that the human is never anything but the vessel, container, branch, etc., of the indwelling deity. Now he sees it! "The law has nothing to say to *me*. It is not I who am covetous; those sinful urges come from an altogether *different* source—not I, but indwelling sin."

The law has really been my friend...hanging over me and putting its pressure on me until at last I see my delusion about self-effort living. Until I see that *self-effort is Satan's principle* the power of indwelling sin has me in its control.

So here is the revelation of total importance—or shall we say, the negative side of the total positive revelation. We can compare it to our prior experience in our unsaved days: I could not settle into the positive recognition of Christ as my substitute and sinner-bearer until I first knew, in a total negative way, that I was a lost sinner, with my righteousness as filthy rags...and nothing I could

do about it. Only then could I say, "Oh, I see! *He* took my place."

So now, in this central battle raging around my redeemed self, how can I live my life as a consistent Christian and meet the challenge of the law and its "you oughts"? I cannot see the positive revelation of Christ living His life in me, replacing the false indweller, until I have first seen the total negative revelation of it—that the command has nothing to do with my "human" me except as my being a vessel or container, but has all to do with this false indweller who is still claiming to live in me and express himself through me. I learn that he grabbed me as I was trying to keep the commandments (an expression of self-effort) and "deceived me and slew me." "I can now see why it says "deceived me"—because sin was making a whole, lying claim to indwell and control me, while all the time really *Christ* was in me...and I didn't know it. Until I did know it, and experience it, it meant nothing to me and left sin in deceitful control of me. That was how the law with its "you oughts" also kept its control over me and brought me under its condemnation...while I was under this lying illusion of self-responsibility and equally in the delusion that sin dwelt in me instead of it really being Christ living in me.

The Marriage of Law and Grace

by Norman Grubb

This is the point of Rom. 7—we are out of the realm of the law and lawlessness in Christ’s death and resurrection. That was the realm of God’s elementary dealings with humanity. That was the realm of divided knowledge of good and evil, therefore of law and lawlessness. We have been lifted by grace into the realm of good alone, where Jesus is all; and all things, even evil things, work together for good. In this realm there is no divided heart, partly loving good and partly evil, part law and part lawlessness; but, like the men of old, all come with a perfect heart to make Jesus King, all love Him with heart and mind and soul and strength, and it is the Living Law fulfilling His righteousness in us.

But, let us say again, it is much easier said than done to keep ourselves out of the struggles and failures of Rom. 7, and in the liberties and victories of Rom. 8. Law and sin function only in the realm of independent self; for independent self is original sin. But we have become so accustomed to independent self-activities through our years in that realm, that it is as easy as can be to slip back into it; and that is, into Rom. 7. Instead of abiding in Christ and just quietly walking in Him, we take upon ourselves the pressures of duty, the demands of family, business, social or church service—and we have slipped back under law. We react

to the minor irritabilities of life, the fears, the things that go wrong, the people that upset us; we know we should not be stirred up by them; we endeavour not to be; but we fail, and are heavy-hearted with condemnation: we have slipped back under law. And under law means under sin, for the “strength of sin is the law,” and the law is “weak through the flesh.”

In a combat between law and sin, sin wins every time; it has the mastery of us; for sin dwells in independent

In a combat between law and sin, sin wins every time; it has the mastery of us; for sin dwells in independent self, that is, in the flesh.

self, that is, in the flesh. This is always and immediately a fact in me, whenever I go back to my independent-self condition, forgetting my abiding place in Christ, and thus return, under the drive of the law. Sin, law’s opposite, rises through my flesh, and I am temporarily a slave again, “carnal, sold under sin.”

That is not my regular abiding place. No, indeed. We are “not in the flesh, but in the Spirit” (Rom. 8:9). We are not under law, but have the Law-giver and Keeper fulfilling His own

law of love in us. But, let us repeat: immersed, as we must be, in the affairs of a world under law, a world still in the elementary stage, we can so easily slip back into the domination of the law, through religious duties or service, through the affairs of home, society, business or nation, or through the common temptations of life; and when under law, we are in the flesh again, and back in Rom. 7, vainly struggling; for law only deals with men-in-themselves, seeking to function apart from Christ, and when we are that, even momentarily, there is the flesh, and there sin in the flesh.

Have we now got this clear? The old self crossed out in Christ. The new self redeemed in Him to be what it was created to be—a willing, loving, dependent manifestor of the Christ living within. But, not yet having attained the final goal of the union which will be ours, by grace, with the resurrection of the body, we are still mingled with a self-reliant world, and we are always liable in our new dependent selves to be diverted from Christ within to some form of self-reliance. In doing that, we enter again into the old conflict of the law with its demands on self, and sin-in-the-flesh with its opposition to the law; we are back in the struggling, striving and failing realm; for the new I, which delights in the law of God after the inward man, has to learn and

re-learn its utter helplessness, according to the law of its creation, apart from Christ in it, and therefore its total defeat the moment it moves out of the shelter of “Christ in me.” We have to learn, and learn deeply, that the new I, the “good” I, is as helpless as the old I, and is a slave to sin the moment it tries to manage its own affairs.

The law, then, fulfils two purposes. It reveals the presence of sin to the sinner, and pronounces his guilt (Rom. 3). It reveals the power of sin to the saint, and exposes his helplessness (Rom. 7). We can see, therefore, why, as the forerunner of Christ, it takes such an important place in Paul’s exposition of the gospel, with a necessary ministration to sinner and saint, and yet one which must be done away with to make room for “the glory that excelleth.” By it we receive a twofold ministry of condemnation, first as guilty sinners (Rom. 3:19), with the guilt removed in the blood of Christ; then as failing saints (Rom. 7:18) with the wretchedness removed by the new walk in the indwelling Spirit (Rom. 7:24; 8:2-4); so that we too can say with Paul, “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord,” for “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”

False Condemnation

It would be good, at this juncture, to underline the danger of constant condemnation through the law, of which warning is given in Rom. 8:1. It is probably the most prevalent cause of unhappiness and ineffectiveness among God’s people. If the thunders of the law have ceased to terrify us through the peace of justification, the pointing

finger of the law at our daily shortcomings is a constant discomfort. For we do “come short of the glory of God,” and do so daily. What are we to do about it? We can liken ourselves, our renewed selves in Christ, to a piece of elastic. We are hidden in Him, we abide in Him, but Satan and his unclean demons, using all methods of allurements and disturbance that this distorted world affords, find plenty of means of pulling at the elastic! We are “drawn away of our own desires and enticed,” and often the enticement

There is the big lie of the Accuser of the brethren. He will cast doubts on our crucified position in Christ, and try to tell us that our “old man” is still very much alive in us. That is a falsehood.

leads on to consent, and we have sinned (James 1:14, 15). Not the blatant sins of our past life, not certainly persistent sinning, for those who do that are not born of God (1 John 3:9); but wrong attitudes of heart and mind, the quick word, selfishness, impatience, sins of the eyes, sloth in witness, the finer points of failure in holiness, which we had never even noticed in our insensitive days; these we fall into and mourn our fall. And the moment we have been spotted by the flesh, if we don’t get clear at once, the law is in operation and we are condemned; for we have slipped back into that self-law-sin realm of Rom. 7.

Then how get out, and how learn

to get out quickly? First, there is the big lie of the Accuser of the brethren. He will cast doubts on our crucified position in Christ, and try to tell us that our “old man” is still very much alive in us. That is a falsehood. But many accept it, and drag their feet through life on the false assumption that they have a divided self, a divided heart, a divided nature. Their conception of Christian living is a continuous struggle, a losing battle between their old nature and their new: “the flesh lusteth against the spirit, the spirit against the flesh; these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”

But that does not mean two co-equal natures battling in the believer one against the other. We have only one nature at a time; we cannot have more, for our nature is our very selves. We *were* by nature the children of wrath, we *are* partakers of the divine nature. That is the death and resurrection in Christ. No half measures about that! The old nature is the old man which has been crucified with Christ. The new nature is the new man, which is we risen with Christ and Christ living in us. This verse of Gal. 5:17 on flesh and (the human redeemed) spirit is a concentration in a few words of the teaching of Rom. 7.

We live and walk in the Spirit, led by the Spirit (Gal. 5:25, 16, 18). We are not then walking in the flesh (independent self), which we have crucified (5:24). Because we are not walking in the flesh, the law has no claim on us, for it only presents its demands to independent self (5:18). Because the law has no hold on us, the lusts of the flesh (the motions of sin in the flesh) are not stim-

ulated by its challenge to impose their demands on us (flesh lusting against spirit), and to dominate our helpless self (ye cannot do the things that ye would). While we abide in Christ, we are dead in Him to law, and therefore dead to sin which is by the law.

But if we do not walk in the Spirit, then we return again under law, into the flesh and self-effort, and therefore under the dominion of sin in the flesh. That is not a question of an old and new nature, which was settled at the new birth. This "flesh and spirit" matter is a question of the daily walk, and the possibility of slipping back any time for a visit to the flesh and thus to sin, law and condemnation.

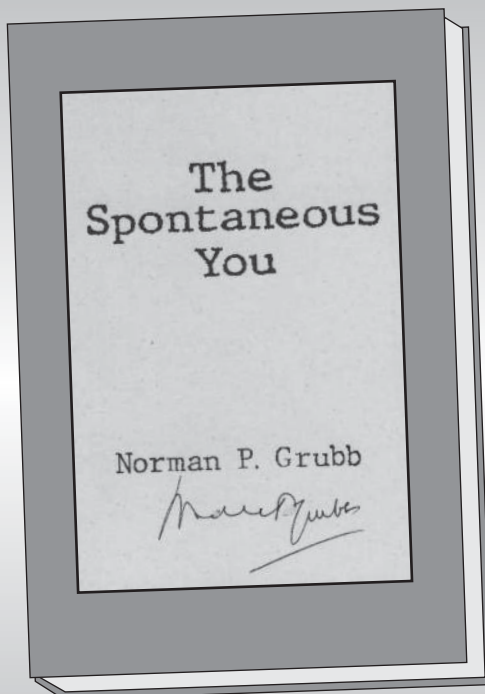
So we have to learn not to accept the big lie of our return to a permanent old condition, just because we are

caught out by the flesh on occasions: nor to live in the bondage of a false, but very commonly held conception of being two people at once, with a civil war within, a good and bad nature, and who will win? No. Let us confess with the same assured voice as Paul that "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath set me free from the law of sin and death."

But then equally we must not stay, even temporarily, under condemnation, when Satan has caught us out. It is the easiest thing to do, and our distressed feelings are really self-pity and pride. It is not so much that we have grieved *the Lord* that disturbs us, as that *we* have failed. The acceptance of condemnation is a form of self-righteousness. *God* has told us, when we sin, to get quickly to the light, recog-

nize and confess the sin, and then He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse our consciences from all sense of unrighteousness. "The cleansing fount I see, I see; I plunge, and oh, it cleanseth me." To remain in condemnation, therefore, is really disobedience and hurt self.

We can learn many lessons from simple believers who keep short accounts with God. They are tripped up, they humbly recognize it, they claim the cleansing blood, and go on their way rejoicing; and often they use their testimony to such daily simple experiences to be a blessing to others. The elastic of the new self has been stretched by temptation; let it snap back into place.



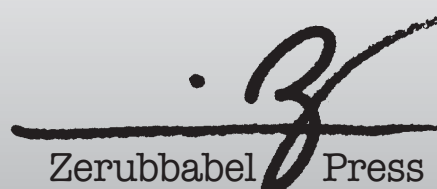
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A Look at a Book

BOOK REVIEW:

Paul's Key to the Liberated life: Romans Six to Eight

by Norman Grubb

Living a liberated life in Christ is the central theme of this booklet printed in 1988. Written for Christians, the booklet covers in detail what some have termed the most difficult Bible passages to understand.

Norman begins by reminding us that Christ's death on the Cross and His resurrection as our representative means that when He died, we all died, and as the Holy Spirit entered Jesus' body at His resurrection, we also receive the Holy Spirit at our new birth. Paul says we are now to "reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God." Norman then explores the implications of Paul's assertion that for this fact to be manifest in our daily lives, we must know that not only are we dead to sin, but also dead to the Law.

Norman goes on to expand on how the Law exposed the Satanic delusion, transmitted to man at the Fall, that we were independently capable of keeping God's Law. His main point is that we have no independent human self which keeps or doesn't keep the Law; we have always been a slave to the deity who owns us, and it is He who keeps the law in us. By believing that we have a human self which can operate and manage itself, we unknowingly give control to Satan, who continues to deceive us.

Norman gives different examples, explaining and expanding this one key point of Romans 6 and 7—the lie of an independent self. Using supporting passages from the New Testament, Norman unfolds “the lost secret”: we were never self-managing selves. We are containers, created to contain the Spirit of God. But at the Fall we became joined to the Satanic spirit of self-for-self. At our new birth the self-for-self nature is replaced by God's self-for-others nature. His light

We are containers, created to contain the Spirit of God. But at the Fall we became joined to the Satanic spirit of self-for-self. At our new birth the self-for-self nature is replaced by God's self-for-others nature.

should shine through us as believers, but because we are deceived into thinking that we are self-managing selves, Satan still controls us through our members (from the outside). We are caught—as Paul was caught—in Romans 7, unable to do the good that we want to do, but doing the very thing we hate.

Norman shows the solution by carefully examining how Paul retraces his steps from being a born-again believer to his present experience as dead to the Law and, thus, free in Christ (the Lawkeeper) to

live a totally liberated life. Norman compares in some detail his (and our own) experience to Paul's, illustrating step by step that they are the same, and that, like Paul, we can come to see that there is no wrong human self, only the wrong operator. Then he brings us to Romans 8: there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus and, as walking Christs, we are more than conquerors.

Although still tempted to believe the lie of independent self, we live daily by faith, affirming who we are—Christ in our form: “we are naturally Spirit-led in the affairs and decisions of our lives and take that for granted.” Amid tension and frustrations, we can see these negatives as coming from God to be used positively in our lives, conforming us to the image of Christ and training us for our destiny as co-sons and co-inheritors with Christ. We highly recommend this booklet for all who are ready to take the leap of faith into a liberated life in Christ.

For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate.

But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good. So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

—Romans 7:15-17

New American Standard Bible

Interpreting the Crisis

By Norman Grubb

Yet the blood of Christ shed for our sins would not be enough, if Christ crucified and risen was not the means of a total human revolution, the change of gods in the centre of our personality—from occupation by the spirit of error to occupation by the Spirit of truth (1 John 4:6). To have the consequences of a permanent condition of being law-breakers, a life in hell, removed by “the precious blood of Christ,” would not be enough if we humans remained possessed and continually motivated by this spirit of error. Only if there is a change of inner indwelling God, and thus change of motivation, can there be this full deliverance. And this Paul revealed to us as having been revealed to him, particularly in his Romans and Galatians letters. When Christ died, this was the human race on that cross,

for He was our representative. So in that identification He was in God’s sight “made sin.” Sin is character of the sin-spirit which produces the sins, and the human race has this spirit within it. Then in His death, it is said “He died unto sin,” for death separates body from spirit, and this separated all who believe from that false god. His burial (still representing all of us “buried with Him”) indicated that there was a dead body in the tomb with no spirit. The resurrection (still we risen with Him) was the entry and union of the Spirit of God with the dead body which represented the human race. And here was the change of gods, by the grace of God, completed for all of us who exercise our free capacity of choice in receiving, recognizing and affirming our union with Him.

The Total Remedy

by Norman Grubb

It came as a revelation to me when I saw what I knew well already of the redeemed—that the Holy Spirit lives in us; but then also I read in 1 John 4:4 that if the Holy Spirit is in the redeemed, there is also a spirit in the unredeemed. “Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.” And then when two verses later, John plainly names them: “Hereby know we the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.” So the spirit of error, the Satanic person, is in us before we are Christ’s. That was new light to me, and a new orientation.

Most of us think of ourselves as just our unredeemed selves until Christ comes in and takes over. We do not realize that we have working in us that “prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience” which Paul says is true of all of us (Ephesians 2:2). He has so concealed and disguised himself in us as unbelievers, though it says that it is the god of this world in us who has blinded our minds, that we just think we are our independent selves. But the truth is that all humanity are vessels. We are containers, and it depends which God is in the vessel.

In Romans it says we are either “vessels of wrath” or “vessels of mercy”: those who either contain the god through whom wrath is our portion, or those who contain the Saviour-God through whom mercy comes to us. This greatly simplifies salvation, for it is merely change of gods, not change of the vessels which contain Him. Or to

use that other great illustration, we are either branches of the false vine or of the true. “I am the true vine,” said Jesus, therefore there must be a false one.

Who then can make this exchange? Who delivers humanity from its slavery to its false usurper and replaces him by the True Owner? Obviously a slave can’t redeem a slave. There can be only one, and that the Owner and creator Himself. He only has the right to represent the human race and do something

Satan has so concealed and disguised himself in us as unbelievers, though it says that it is the god of this world in us who has blinded our minds, that we just think we are our independent selves.

which can include them all. That is why we safeguard the incarnation in our gospel. There is no point nor power in the death and resurrection of Jesus, unless He was God in the flesh, the author of the human race becoming a member “supernatural” events, which are not explicable in terms of human thought but issue from the spirit, not the matter, dimension. So it is no good trying to explain or explain away what issues from the realm of what we call the impossible, but we are to learn what is really the only actual. Human thinking is what has bound us to realms of time and space; for the true realm we must have “the re-

newing of our minds,” the “new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him.”

The way in which this change of gods has become a fact has of course held our fascinated and almost microscopic attention and investigation through the centuries. And no wonder. “Upon Another’s life, Another’s death I stake my whole eternity.” “God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” “I was determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.” We will put it in simplest terms to relate to what we have already said. Why Christ’s death? We humans have got so physically minded that death to us always means the physical.

But we who are believers know better. We know physical death is only the gateway to life after death. Where? Ah, that is the crux! The Bible makes plain that if we die a child of the devil, we continue on into the devil’s destiny which is described in the terms of its supreme loss as “everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power.”

Therefore death for Jesus did not just mean the physical dying. If as the One who never was made captive by the devil and thus not under death’s dominion, He accepted death on our behalf, then He would go after physical death where we would go, into what Paul called “the lower parts of the earth,” the realm of “the spirits in prison.” And that is where He did go. Maybe that is why

there was such reality in the cry, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” Supposing He didn’t rise? He had to go this way by nothing but faith, as the rest of us.

But He did rise. There was nothing that could hold Him, because, though our sinbearer, He was not Himself a sinner under the law of sin and death. Therefore, “quickened by the Spirit,” He could be “raised from the dead by the glory of the Father.” And what did He leave behind on our behalf? That is what is important to us. He left both the cause and effects of sin. The effects are our destiny in outer darkness, the consequence of the curse of the law, the guilt, the condemnation, the weeping and gnashing of teeth, the worm that dies not and the fire not quenched. All disappeared from sight forever because He took them on Himself on our behalf, and then left them behind on our behalf when He arose.

Therefore Paul said that in his resurrection we are justified; in other words, not merely forgiven, which might still leave a memory behind of the things for which we needed the forgiveness; but justified, meaning that we are as spotless, sinless, as the Saviour Himself; and all the past in memories of fact or dread of destiny are out of sight and out of mind forever. That is the overcoming in the blood of the Lamb. Nothing can be held against us. “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” “It is God that justifieth.” The shedding of the blood was the physical evidence of a life totally poured out to death, and therefore taking all with it that would come to us if we died.

But that alone, tremendous as it is, would not solve our problem or give hu-

manity its release. The cause is our problem, the sin, not the sins. And we have seen sin to be the term used for the nature of the spirit of error who lived his sin-quality of life in his vessels and by the law of an indwelling spirit, he expresses himself through the human spirit which he indwells. Sins are the products, but the producer is the problem. And what salvation would it be for a human race indwelt by the spirit of sin and thus compulsively expressing his self-loving nature, to be released from the consequences of a sinful life, but not from the compulsive cause? We should just go on living as before.

What salvation would it be for a human race indwelt by the spirit of sin and thus compulsively expressing his self-loving nature, to be released from the consequences of a sinful life, but not from the compulsive cause?

Therefore the Bible presents us with Christ’s death in a twofold form—in His blood and in His body, of which we are continually reminded in the memorial Supper. And that is why in Paul’s 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 reference to the Supper he speaks of our communion in the blood and body of Christ. But then he says we are one with Him and His body, symbolized by the bread; but he does not say in the same sense that we are one with him in His blood. The reason is that a person’s blood is his very self. When that is shed, his life is gone. But a person’s body is more external, more we may

say his clothing. His blood, therefore was uniquely Him going that way of death for us, and in that respect we were not dying on that cross with Him. Rather we come to the foot of that cross and see the burdens of our sins rolled away into His tomb, as Bunyan so beautifully puts it.

But we are His body. “We being many are one bread, one body”; and in that aspect of Him on the cross, we are there with Him, crucified with Him, buried with Him, risen with Him. And what’s the import of that? Because the body is the container of the spirit, and we humans have become containers of that false spirit of error, whose nature is sin, therefore Paul says that Jesus did more on Calvary than “bear our sins in His own body on the tree”; he said, “God made Him to be sin for us.” And that meant that in God’s sight we were He, crucified with Him, and His body representing us had that spirit of sin in it. And then the glorious fact that when a body dies, it is separated from the spirit in it; and so when He died, Paul said He “died to sin” (quite different from dying for our sins). His body, representing us who were “buried with Him,” lay in the tomb with no spirit in it—a human race delivered from that old false indwelling spirit of error. And when He rose, it was by the entry of another Spirit, His Holy Spirit.

So when we are joined by faith to Him in His death and resurrection, we are no longer vessels containing the spirit of error, but vessels containing the Spirit of God! That is a full salvation—from effects and cause, from products and producer. That is why only the incarnate, crucified and risen Christ can be the world’s Saviour.

No Such Thing as an Independent Self

continued from page 15

manner of lusts.” Now here is the secret and the answer. It was sin that wrought these in me and caused me to do and have them. Yes, sin, but not I! That was the flash of Spirit-light. “Why,” Paul says, “I didn’t want to do those things, so it wasn’t I doing them!” Then who was it? Why, obviously that intruder who first got into me through the Fall and made me his dwelling place. It was not I, but “sin that dwelleth in me,” which he repeats twice for emphasis in Romans 7:17 and 20. It was sin, Satan in his nature, operating in me, but by his supreme deceit he has made me, from Adam onwards, think it was I doing it, as if I have an independent nature of my own. But I am only a vessel, branch, temple, slave, body-member. The doer is the one I contain!

And so Paul saw it. He had, as in Romans 6, seen in his Arabia visit this total meaning of Calvary—that Christ’s body represented ours and our body expresses the sin-spirit. So did His on the cross! But, as He died, out went that sin-spirit from His body as ours, and in His resurrection in came His Spirit of Truth in place of that false deceiving spirit cast out forever. So, Paul moves on with his exclamation of delighted thanks in Romans 7:25 to his total statement of who he now is with no further condemnation, but set free by the law (the fixed principle) of the Spirit of life by Christ in him, from that former law (fixed principle) of sin and death, that lie of independent, self-relying self. Now it is Christ dwelling in

him (Rom. 8:8, 9) where it had been sin dwelling in him.

The whole key to this lies in the understanding that we humans never had a self-operating, self-relying nature, but were solely created to express God in His nature. But we only became conscious, functioning humanity when we were voluntarily, though deceivedly, taken captive by that spirit of error, so that we each were Satan-I. Then, through our Last Adam and His Calvary death and resurrection, we change back to our True Owner-Creator and are Christ-I. Many believers know and claim the reality of Christ in you, as in Ephesians 3:17, but because we never knew the basic reality of formerly being Satan-sin dwelling in us, and mistakenly living in the deceit of a self-acting self, we have been falsely taught that we have a deposit of sin in our human selves (soul and body) and must therefore have some continual forms of warfare for the rest of our lives. Yet the glory of the revelation is that there never has been anything wrong with our human selves (spirit, soul and body) which God created as “very good.” All that happened to our selves was the misuse of self by the Satan-god, and now right use by our true Christ-Indweller. This means that we can boldly accept ourselves as always having been right selves, only formerly in wrong hands but now in right hands.

The flesh, Paul’s common term for our humanity, is right in its right ownership, as with Jesus (“God manifest in the flesh”). With us, it had become “sinful flesh,” but then in Christ the sin was condemned in the flesh (Rom. 8:3), and “they that are Christ’s have

crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts” (Gal. 5:24); and “the life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God” (Gal. 2:20). Flesh as humanity is, of course, always available to temptations by its appetites (Gal. 5:16-18), and can catch us out if we foolishly go back to struggle with self effort. But if we fully recognize the Spirit expressing Himself as us/by us, then that old pull of sin and the “you ought not” law on our deceived self has no further power (Gal. 5:18). Flesh is not in itself an evil thing any more than the eye is evil. It is the lusts which are evil, not the flesh or the eyes (1 John 2:16).

We need expanded understandings of the completeness of Christ being expressed by our humanity, with a growth as in 1 Peter 3:18, and an ever-expanding conformity to His likeness expressed in our humanity (2 Cor. 4:19 and Rom. 8:29). We thus have rescued and regained our human selves from any blame in themselves and those false condemnations we lived in while in a Romans 7 deceived consciousness of our guilt. We walk blameless and sanctified as Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 5:23. We regain our human selves, mortal in the physical and thus remaining in our world to be a light in it, but holy in our spirit-selves expressed in our souls and bodies (Heb. 10:14-22).

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Formerly Satan indwelt before the new birth...

"And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest."

—Eph. 2:1-2

(*New American Standard*)

Words to Live By...

"It seems that God's Spirit has to take every forward-moving soul through a drastic process of self-exposure. That undiscovered self-principle lurking in the depths, that root of sin, has to be looked in the face. Its presumptuous claim to be a sufficient source of wisdom and ability has to be exposed in its falsity. Its save-yourself attitude has to be recognized and rejected. And such knowledge can only come through failure, through humiliation, through despair. Then, and then only, is the soul ripe for that inner leap of faith: the dying of the old, the rising of the new, the full and final enthronement of its proper Lord."

—Norman Grubb

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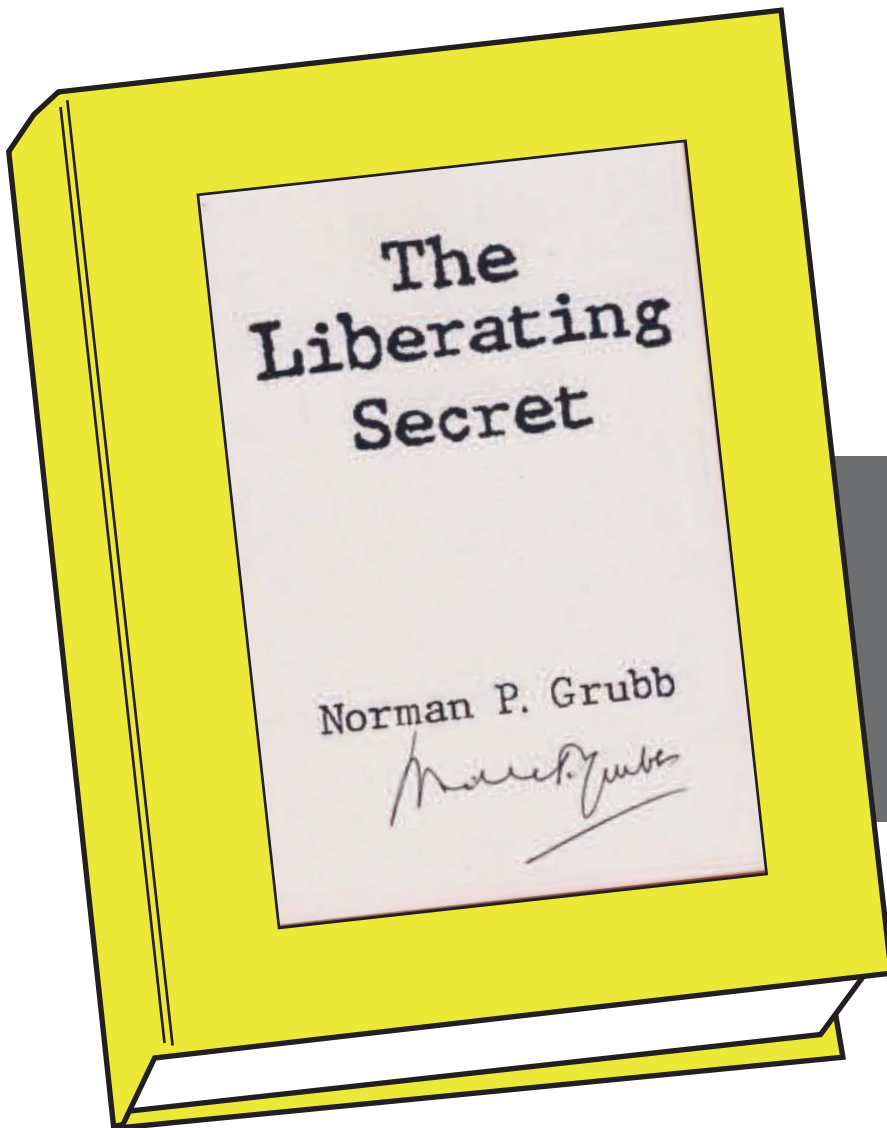
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