

The INTERCESSOR

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

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Man's Unlearned Lesson

By Norman Grubb

Although Christians are familiar with the biblical account of the fall of man and the Gospel of redemption, few have seen beyond the symbols to the principles of the spiritual kingdom. This excerpt from Norman Grubb's God Unlimited highlights God's "lessons" to reveal who we are, how we function, and His totality.

There is a double fall recorded in the Bible—of Lucifer and of Adam. What this fall meant was the decisive choice of a created spirit to reject its predestined freedom in the service of God, and to take the road of the unexplored alternative, the possibility of going the opposite way, into the bondage of self-sufficiency, becoming the spirit of self-love in place of containing the Spirit of self-giving. The very name Lucifer, Light-bearer, implies that this exalted being, probably the highest of all created beings according to the descriptions in Isaiah 14:12-15 and Ezekiel 28:11-17, was only to be the manifestor of the Eternal Light, not the light in himself, which no creature can be. He took that "qualitative leap" which broke open the kingdom of hell, of which he became the originator, its god, the father of lies, the primal sinner, the sin-spirit. He set himself to replace God by becoming a god in reverse, and thus "fell" irrevocably,

unredeemably from the kingdom of God's heaven, having fixed himself in the total opposite.

The fall of Adam, which has involved us all, was of the same quality, but not the same quantity. There are some significant facts about the account of the fall. Why was Adam set in the garden between two unique trees, both said to be in the midst of the garden, therefore close to each other, both marked out by what is said of them and the names given them as no normal trees? Plainly they were symbolic, for the fruit of no tree gives eternal life or eternal death. Eternal life, we have seen, is a Person, the Spirit of life, and eternal death the same, the spirit of error. These trees represented the two Gods, the Triune God and the god of this world, just as the fruit of a tree still symbolizes Christ our life in the Lord's supper.

Our Primary Function

What original command, the only command, was given Adam? To eat, for eating is receiving, the basic function of the human self. It is most striking that here at the creation of man this was the only command given him, for it is still the only command—"Receive ye the Holy Ghost." "To as many as received Him..." But there was also a prohibition, "Don't eat of the wrong tree." Re-

markable that nothing was said to Adam about eating of the right tree, and there was never one indication that he paid any attention to that tree or shewed any interest in it. Why? Because, as intelligent and free people, we must understand who we are and why we are and how we function. These incidents in the Garden of Eden were education, not probation as we are usually told they were. Man must understand himself, then he can act intelligently; which, in its minute way, is the purpose of my writing: to help mixed-up Christians sort things out, starting with themselves. So, in effect, God said to Adam, "Just

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eat, just learn that is the primary function of a human being—receptivity.”

But there was another subtle piece of education wrapped up in this, subtle because man must learn it by himself, and not have it outwardly spoon-fed to him. “Don’t eat of the wrong tree” would mean that, as a free being, he could go the wrong way; and supposing he was tempted to do so, then what? There lay the hidden lesson. Humans are containers, to be possessed by

Humans are containers, to be possessed by another Spirit in the human spirit. They are slaves to be bossed (Rom. 6:16). They do not boss themselves. If therefore Adam feels the pull to go in the wrong direction, it is not in him to resist or refuse. But he and Eve did feel that pull. So then what? There was the tree of life, all the positive power in it to do the right and resist the wrong, for that tree was Christ.

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basically helpless, and that his deliverance could not be in his own resistance, but only in the counteraction of the Spirit of Truth within him, if he took of Him. He never did. He never even glimpsed the basic lesson man has to learn, and so he was shanghaied straight into the trap. He remained a recipient, for man always is that, but he received the wrong spirit through the wrong tree—“the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience,” the spirit of self-sufficiency, the spirit of self-love, the spirit of error.

Man's Helplessness

That is why man has to take the long, long trail back to the discovery of his helplessness, a trail that only ends when we reach Romans chapter seven, a trail which has many a booby trap in it, many a tree-root to trip the unwary; and it is a trail nearly always trodden after the new birth, not before, because we have become so completely at home in the illusion of our self-sufficient selves that we do not lightly learn the lesson that the father of our race failed to learn. But we must learn it, because we say again, if God is going to live His life intelligently in intelligent and willing humans, they must learn and accept the truth about themselves as well as about Himself; and that is also precisely why we are busying ourselves about talking these things over in such detail.

Even the facts of the Fall and our consequent condition are rarely known. Few seem to have grasped that man is not just an independent self doing as he pleases and doing it in his own strength. He never has been this. He has always been indwelt by a god. He

has always had an inner union—to whom? “Greater is He that is in you (the believer) than he that is in the world.” Who is this second “he” in the world, if not the Satanic spirit? And he is actually named a few verses later (1 John 4:6): “Hereby know we the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.” We have already quoted the great passage descriptive of the condition of fallen humanity—Ephesians 2:1-3—which includes that statement, “the spirit that now worketh *in* the children of disobedience”; or the other, “*in* whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds....”

Sin is a Person

The fact that is hidden from many is that sin is essentially a person, just as holiness is a Person. Holiness is the “Spirit of holiness” (Rom. 1:4), the Holy Spirit. We have pointed out all along that since the human is the container of the Divine Person, all goodness, love, righteousness, wisdom, power, holiness and the rest are, not we, but HE in us, “Jesus Christ who has been made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption.” But the opposite is equally and logically true. Sin is not a thing, but an indwelling person, the spirit of fear, the spirit of bondage, the evil spirit, the spirit of the world, the spirit of anti-Christ. Sins are that spirit expressing himself through the human faculties and appetites, just as holiness and love are the Other Spirit expressing Himself through the same channels. Thus a pregnant word is spoken of the first sin recorded after the Fall—the sin of Cain, when John says that he “was of that wicked one and slew his brother.” Pre-

cisely, it was not primarily Cain that was the murderer, but he whom Jesus called “a murderer from the beginning”—through Cain.

This is important because our very premise is wrong if we think that our first father could have resisted temptation. If he could, we can. But can we? Is not that our problem and failure, until we learn that the way to meet temptation is by recognizing the One in us, and not by struggling against it ourselves? We start mixed-up, if we start by thinking

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that the Garden of Eden was a scene of probation to try men out. God is no such experimenter, dangling men on a string to see how they will react. God knoweth our frame that we are but dust, and He only puts us through absolutely necessary grades of education that we may learn, even as the Son Himself had to “learn obedience (recognition of His Father in action in Him) through the things which he suffered (temptations)”; and thus we can become eternally free, healthy, happy cooperators with God, knowing exactly who He is and who we

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!

are, and loving the relationship.

One other fact should be noted. I said that Adam's fall was qualitatively the same as Lucifer's, but not quantitatively. Lucifer's fall was total. He chose in himself to be a god of another quality, and thus set himself as a rival and alternative to God. His sin and fall were absolute and irrevocable. He became god in reverse. Adam's fall was of the same quality, but not quantity. He fell through the temptation of another, through deceit, lies, misrepresentation. He was responsible and therefore guilty, for he chose to follow instead of seeking the way of escape right there available to him, and therefore his fall had the same quality of disobedience and rebellion; but it was not in quantity complete and absolute in the sense of an open-faced rejection of God. His interest was rather the attractions of the flesh than revolt against God. If he could have kept both God and sin, he would have done so. His outlook was not totally reversed. He had not irrevocably chosen evil to be his good. He was more a kidnapped slave than a willing son of the devil; indeed Scripture speaks of us as children, not sons, of the evil one, and a child is defined as "differing nothing from a servant." Adam, therefore, knew good and evil, whereas Satan knows only evil as his good. Adam had the moral sense, the conscience, the "law written in the heart," an impress of the image of God in him not obliterated as in Satan, and God could and did meet and talk with him immediately after his fall. Adam was redeemable. But more of that and its consequences later.

The Purpose of Redemption

Now we can see God's problem, if

we may use such human language, and the only possible purpose of redemption. How will He regain for Himself His stolen property—us humans who have become containers and manifestors of that usurping god, the spirit of self-love, in place of Himself, the Spirit of self-giving, whom we had been created to receive in the Tree of life? So often the gospel is preached and the offer of salvation made on a much more superficial level. The idea

Substitutionary sacrifice is the only way of "deliverance from the wrath to come," and that sacrifice was the offering of God's own lamb, His Son, whom He "sent to be the propitiation for our sins"; it was actually God Himself "in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." Such a fact, though attested to by all the centuries of Bible revelation, will forever be an absurdity to natural philosophy.

is given that we are out of step with God through sin, but that a restoration has been made by the atoning death of Christ, which has removed the guilt and eternal consequences of our sins, and restored to us sonship and fellowship with God. Now let us carry on living with the help of God. But, we are then told, we shall not live as we ought to, nor find heart satisfaction unless we own Him as Lord as well as Saviour: Saviour He must be or we are damned:

Lord He should be or our lives will be fruitless. To have Him as Saviour is mandatory: to have Him as Lord is optional. What nonsense! Redemption is only redemption when God regains (buys back) for Himself His dwelling place, our human personalities which were created for no other purpose than to contain Him. Therefore unless redemption immediately makes that a fact, and a saved sinner is from that instant the dwelling place of the Living God, there is no salvation.

Through ignorance a redeemed person may not realize what has happened to him and may blunder about as a consequence, but it has happened all the same; and so often the responsibility for our blundering, soulish, flesh-manifesting though redeemed lives, lies at the door of a gospel only half-preached, or believers only half-instructed. And does that not really mean that the preachers themselves are only half-enlightened, because we surely give out what we have within? There is much talk these days of depth-psychology. We surely need evangelical depth-theology. Do we not need to reorientate our gospel message, and tell right out to the non-Christians that we are not bringing them some panacea for happier living or future security? We are bringing them a total revolution, a life which is nothing less than God Himself living in them through the radical replacement effected by Christ crucified and risen, with all the radical consequences which will follow from a Christ-centred in place of self-centred life. And it is by no means merely the non-Christians who need to become Christians. The much harder job is to make the Christians Christians!

God's full salvation! To use human language again, He had two problems to solve; one was His, the other ours. God's problem was broken law. Broken law has inevitable consequences. Law is the term we use to define the way a thing works. It works this way, not that. Break the law and you suffer the consequences. The law of our lungs is that they must have air. Refuse them air and we suffocate. The fundamental law of the universe is love, for God is love. Everything which is not God's self-giving love is broken law; therefore our whole natural life without Christ living in us is broken law, for He only is self-giving love; everything else is self-loving love. The consequence of this broken law is repeatedly made plain in the Bible in terms like everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord: outer darkness: weeping and gnashing of teeth: indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish: where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched: the lake which burneth with fire forever and ever. How can even God deliver us from such consequences?

The whole Bible revelation from the earliest chapters of Genesis to the end of Revelation gives one plain answer. Substitutionary sacrifice is the only way of "deliverance from the wrath to come," and that sacrifice was the offering of God's own lamb, His Son, whom He "sent to be the propitiation for our sins"; it was actually God Himself "in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." Such a fact, though attested to by all the centuries of Bible revelation, will forever be an absurdity to natural philosophy. Justification by the blood of Christ—human

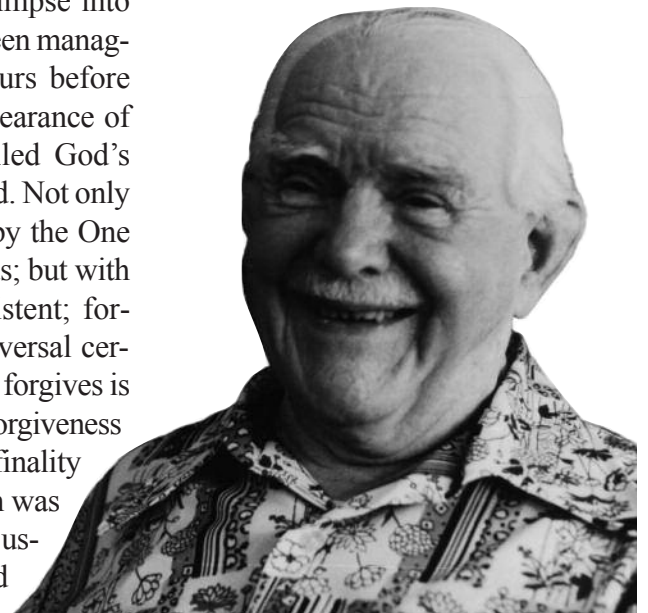
reason can never take that and never has, nor the other truths concerning Christ coming in the flesh, His incarnation, physical resurrection and return in person; human reason is the vehicle, albeit the highest, of human self-sufficiency; and blinded self never can and never will see God by its own resources. God's truth can only come by God's revelation, not of this world, and is only available to faith; and faith means nothing less than the bowing down and falling prone of proud reason, and the committal of ourselves with all the passion of our being to Someone and Something He did for us which we can never and shall never prove, but do believe. It is the absurdity of faith—to the Greeks in their human wisdom foolishness, and the Greeks live on by their thousands today, often in the garb of Christian preachers and seminaries—but to us who believe "Christ, the wisdom of God and the power of God."

By this one tremendous act in history, planned and prepared even before sin and the human race were in existence (which gives us a glimpse into the certainty that God has been managing His own affairs and ours before ever the devil gave the appearance of taking over), what we called God's problem was totally resolved. Not only had the penalty been paid by the One who was made a curse for us; but with that, the guilt was non-existent; forgiveness had become a universal certainty, because the One who forgives is the One who had made the forgiveness possible in His blood; and finality is reached in the term which was such a favourite of Paul's—justification, the condemned

criminal leaving the court without a stain on his character, as if he had never committed the crimes. So it is with us who are in Christ by faith—"accepted in the Beloved," "made the righteousness of God in Him." Perfect and forever wonderful.

Removing Sin's Source

But that has not resolved what we call the second problem—man's problem. Justification removes the consequences of man's sins, but not the source of them. The root must be dealt with, not merely the fruit. If the ultimate problem and cause of all the devastation is the indwelling spirit of error, salvation can only be complete if he is cast out forever, and the union of this false spirit with the human spirit destroyed. If the sole purpose of redemption is that we humans should be God's dwelling place, then it is obvious that a salvation which only removes the guilt and penalty of man's rebellion, but not the rebel king on his usurped throne, has come short of its purpose. God cannot seat Himself on a throne already



occupied, nor can He permit a rival claimant within. The New Testament writers, therefore, take us on from the circumference to the centre of Christ's redeeming work, and open to us the inner core of its total accomplishment. It might almost be called the hidden truth; not that it is hidden in the Scriptures; it is presented as plainly and factually as the truth of justification, and is really only a logical extension of it; but it is hidden in the sense that thousands treasure the outer shell of salvation; far fewer crack the shell and feed on the kernel.

The Second Aspect of Redemption

We are entitled to recognize this as a distinct second aspect of the one work of redemption, because Paul presents it as such. Romans 1-5 and 6-8 are the classic passages on the two. In this second one, we are pointed away from a Saviour dying alone on Calvary for our sins, to ourselves who died with Him. We have to look at Christ crucified then from two different points of view. In the first, we see Him dying there alone on our behalf. He trod that winepress alone. He was uniquely our substitute. We gaze on Him there as the Israelites on the brazen serpent, an illustration He Himself used to Nicodemus concerning His coming death. The most sacred word in the Scripture which presents this truth to us is His blood—"the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." It is a sure sign that a humble believer has divine illumination concerning his sin and Christ's redemption, when that blood is most precious to him and he anticipates worshipping forever at the feet of "the Lamb as it had been slain

in the midst of the throne"; and it is equally a danger signal when any who profess to believe, belittle the blood. The blood is the life, as Moses revealed, and His blood was the life of God drained out to its last drop for the whole world.

But then we have a change of emphasis. We no longer look at Christ crucified, and concentrating our attention solely on Him dying for us, see just who He is and what He did for us, and

We no longer look at Christ crucified, and concentrating our attention solely on Him dying for us, see just who He is and what He did for us, and see Him as a lonely figure hanging there. Our attention is now turned to the fact that He did it for *us*. We see Him now as our representative. If He was there for us, then *we* were there also.

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see Him as a lonely figure hanging there. Our attention is now turned to the fact that He did it for *us*. We see Him now as our representative. If He was there for us, then *we* were there also. We do not see Him alone now, we rather see ourselves whom He represented. It might be called the reverse side of the one coin. The interest is now centred, not on what He went through to pay the penalty for our sins, but on what effect such a death and resurrec-

tion has on us in our present personal lives, in the light of the fact that we went through it with Him. Obviously this is a more difficult mental concept, and that is part of the reason why it is so sidestepped in our thinking, grasping and teaching. Any child can understand the historical fact of the Saviour dying two thousand years ago for us; but it is more difficult to understand a living relationship whereby I myself, a living twentieth century person, actually participated in a scene of 2000 years ago, with certain revolutionary effects on my daily life. But understanding is only one key to a double-locked door. Faith is the other key, and faith is not mental acceptance by human reason, it is passionate inwardness by which our whole being embraces and attaches itself to a Person who just is not to natural reasoning. When that stride of faith has been really taken over the gulf that forever separates natural reason from supernatural revelation, then an inward Christ is met with inwardly ("the Son revealed in me" as Paul wrote of his conversion), and then it is no longer difficult to speak the language or understand the truths of this reverse side of the cross when they are presented to us—we are with Him there.

What then were the consequences of this fact that when He died and rose, it was actually we, the whole world of believers, who died and rose with Him? The fact that He was called by Paul the last Adam is a striking indication. Adam is the progenitor, the forefather of the race. The whole coming race was in his loins as a seed. Therefore what he was, we are. He having received the wrong spirit into him, we are born with that same false indwelling person. As David

said, “in sin did my mother conceive me,” remembering that sin is basically the spirit of sin, the god of sin. The last Adam, therefore, is God’s replacement for the first; indeed in God’s perspective and foreordination a negative is always only a type or foreshadowing of its positive, which accounts for Paul saying that Adam was a figure of Him that was to come; and that again is a significant hint to us of what our attitude should be when we pray for needs to be supplied or situations changed. The last Adam is also the progenitor of the last race, to be God’s eternal dwelling-place and means of manifestation. God’s grace is that He does not create some new race as presumably He could; but He recreates the new out of the old; for love must save, even as we must be co-saviours when Love lives in us. To do this, the last Adam must be born a man among men, and as the God-man in whom Satan had no place, try though he may, go through a death and resurrection. The death would sever the old and false union, the resurrection would be the new union.

I know no three Scriptures which state this more succinctly than 2 Cor. 5:21, Rom. 6:10, 1 Pet. 3:18. The first opens the depth of the Saviour’s identification with us. God made Him to be sin for us. To bear our sins was to suffer in our stead. To be made sin was to be in God’s sight a world indwelt by the spirit of sin. That is the depth to which He went. This in itself was necessary if the next statement was to become fact: “in that He died, He died unto sin once.” He had died for sins; now it says He died unto sin. When a person dies, body is separated from spirit. When Jesus died, having been made sin (hav-

ing the spirit of sin), His holy dead body was eternally separated from that sin-spirit; but it was not just Jesus lying there a dead body; it was we. We, all believing people, that moment were cut off from the indwelling usurper. When He arose from the dead, the third statement says He was “quickened by the Spirit,” the Holy Spirit of God. Here was the firstborn from the dead of the new humanity with the Spirit of God, His own Spirit united to Him as representing us. We believers were all there

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also. In Him the old union was forever broken, the new union forever replaced it. God had come into His own.

Here was full salvation, commemorated whenever we partake of the symbols of the body and blood of Christ: the blood by which we are justified and continually cleansed, which was a Christ regarded as dying by Himself for us: the body by which the old union is severed and the new created. Paul, significantly enough, says of those twofold symbols that we are “one bread and one body,” for we were identified with Him as His body in His

death and resurrection; but he does not say we were one blood, for that was uniquely He Himself.

How Do We Know?

Now comes the question of experiencing what we may admit to be the truth. How many times I meet this heart cry, “But how make this real to myself? I know it in theory, I believe it mentally, but....” We have to get right down to the fundamental human issue. How do we experience what is beyond experience? How do we know what is beyond knowledge? How do we believe the impossible, unbelievable, absurd? Let us make no mistake about it. Here is where the battle is joined. God’s word proclaims an unbridgeable breach in human existence. Man denies this. Man claims that every apparent breach can be bridged on a human level. That claim has been the occupation of philosophy from its beginnings with the Greeks, and the occupation of liberal theology, and the aim of ethics, and the objective of every religion except Christianity, and of a lot of Christianity also. The reason is plain. Admit the breach, and you destroy the autonomy of the self. But self-sufficiency, and a philosophy which will sustain it, is the be-all and end-all of a self-orientated humanity. Therefore sin must be explained away as ignorance or instinct, man’s innate goodness must be postulated, and man’s way to God smoothed through a supposed faith in our innate rootage in Him, or in His supposed character of indiscriminating love; or in the acceptability of our repentances, contrition, religious observances and so forth. Anything that preserves the integrity of the self and provides some

mediation with the Eternal of which human reason and dignity can approve.

But sin, creating an unbridgeable gulf between ourselves and God! What is that? Human reason can neither stomach nor explain that. And a movement over from the Other Side, of the Eternal into time, of the Invisible and Unknowable into a human body, of the Absolute into a relative existence, of the Creator among the created! Such is the outside limit of absurdity! So we come right up against it. Is faith easy? Yes, when you have got accustomed to it—at least easier. No, when the first trembling steps are being taken. Faith means something far more than repeating a creed. It means something that has penetrated us on the inside. It is not just truth in general. It is *my* truth. Not just the gospel, but *my* gospel. In other words something has stirred within which has been dawning light to us, not of ourselves. It has come from the Other Side. The Bible word is conviction—of the Spirit. Some word from God has reached us which we just *know* to be true.

A Personal Example

In my own case, it was when, as a lad of eighteen, my football ambitions were shattered by an accident, and in hospital just one thought crossed my mind. Is there nothing but selfishness in the world? For I am totally selfish: my father, my mother, my home, the world is for me! I could not then have said that was the Spirit of God. But I knew it was truth. I would not even have recognized it as a flash from the Other Side. But it was. It was the *preparatio evangelica* for me. It conditioned me to recognize myself, not just

as one that thought and did things of which I was ashamed, but as a sinner before the Ultimate, before God. That again was revelation: the sudden recognition that God is holy, I unholy, and therefore eternally unfit to dwell with Him. And finally the flash of thought into my mind that Jesus Christ, God's Son, really did shed His blood for me, and therefore there was not wrath, but acceptance for me. Could I prove one of those things? Not one. Could I be sure that it was God who said them to

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me, introduced them into my thinking? No. Teaching had something to do with it. I had been taught through the years the Bible and the gospel. But external teaching does not save. It may be fuel for the lamp of the Spirit, that is all. How does God speak then, and how do we believe? I don't know, because it all comes from the Other Side.

That precisely is faith. The nearest we can say is that through the human faculties of mind and heart there come to all (I believe) hidden communica-

tions of the Spirit, disturbances of the status quo, of our rationalizations, our funk holes in which we try to hide our sinfulness from ourselves and from Him, our false pursuit of satisfaction in things of time and sense, our build-up of a human ethic, religion, philosophy or idealism which crumbles when matched with the actual realities of our self-centred lives, or our pretended and endeavoured forms of communion with God. As we respond to these pricks, which was the name given to the goadings of the Spirit in the apostle Paul, further revelations of inner truth come to us, revelations to us if to no one else, revelations which have their ultimate source and guarantee in the Scriptures: "if they speak not according to this word, there is no light in them."

Settled In Us

But the moment comes when we settle it, or rather God settles it in us. We can prove nothing. The wise of this world may be able to shoot holes in our logic or reasons. We readily grant that the One in whom we now have put our faith is unknowable to the world, invisible, and we can never say we know or see Him except by faith. Historic facts are available, but again we admit that history is unprovable. We have only the word of the historians or eyewitnesses. We have no ultimate grounds upon which to base our belief in the reliability and infallibility of the Bible; indeed plenty can be brought against it. We further admit that certain facts concerning the life and death of Christ are altogether beyond human probabilities—His deity, His incarnation, His physical resurrection, His ascension. Pile question mark upon question mark, we

admit all. But faith has nothing to do with these. Faith is itself from the Other Side, and is as inexplicable and absurd as that in which it believes. Faith has nothing to say for itself beyond the bare statement that from certain inward convictions which are convictions to it, it stakes its all on God as truth in His revelation through the Bible and supremely the Christ of the Bible. For myself I have stated the two main convictions which constrained me forty-seven years ago to gamble my life on God: first, what was the obvious, that I was a 100 per cent self-centred person; and sec-

ond, that God was the wholly opposite, 100 per cent self-giving, so that He actually gave Himself in the Person of His Son to change me into His likeness. That final fact convinced me. I said I could follow to eternity a God who is forever the Servant of His own creation, even to the point of giving His own life for His enemies; and I could wish for nothing higher than that such a Person could and should live that same quality of life through selfish me. And so say I today.

—God Unlimited

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 Zerubabel 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

Norman Grubb observed that often “the Gospel of Salvation is magnificently presented, seekers are led to Christ; but the totality of the Gospel, the Gospel in its ultimate category is by no means so clearly presented, nor maybe even understood by teacher as well as taught.” In this issue, we have brought together articles and features to probe the miracle and mystery of Salvation—the first stage of what Norman calls “the totality of the Gospel.”

We begin with a piercing revelation of the purpose of the temptation of man—not a “test” of man’s faithfulness, but the initiation of God’s unfolding of “Man’s Unlearned Lesson,” the necessary discovery of who we really are and how we function in His Kingdom. Similarly, “The Origin of Evil,” starts at Creation to reveal the importance of choice—with its awesome conse-

quences—for man to rightly function in true freedom.

Though most Christians are acquainted with the facts of Redemption, “The Groundwork of Our Salvation,” excerpted from Norman Grubb’s *The Deep Things of God*, explores its overarching implications for us today. In the same vein, “The First Stage—the Precious Blood” unfolds the unfathomable love and wisdom of God as He Himself, incarnated as the Son, became the only possible means of our redemption—and paid for it with His own blood.

Tucked away in *The Liberating Secret* is perhaps Norman Grubb’s most succinct presentation of what he calls the “first stage,” or God’s “outward approach” to restore man back to Himself. Re-titled “The Barebones Gospel,” this brief offering gives the basic biblical facts, understandable to the mind and conscience of any man, woman, or child, by which we must be saved.

Any discussion of the Gospel is incomplete without examining the “one and only key” to personally appropriate

biblical truth: faith. “From Natural to Spiritual Faith,” excerpted from Norman Grubb’s *The Law of Faith*, describes how the process of faith, our means of functioning in the natural world, is exercised in the supernatural realm.

Lastly, personal experience is the evidence of the miracle of Salvation. In this issue we include “My Coming to Christ,” Norman’s Grubb’s compelling narrative of the events leading to his personal “spiritual Waterloo” and the firstfruits of his subsequent lifelong spiritual adventure. Similarly, Page Prewitt’s “How I Came to Christ,” reveals the simplicity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ—that Pearl of Great Price.

We trust that this issue will prove an adventure in exploring the Gospel of Salvation—the unfolding of God’s revelation to us “that man was originally created and now re-created in Christ to find his place in God and He in us.”

THE FIRST STAGE OF RESTORATION: *The Precious Blood*

by Norman Grubb

This excerpt from “Yes, I Am,” explores how the historic, biblical facts of God’s plan of salvation are not just past history, but “totally applicable to our own inner selves.”

We will now see the way by which this combination of the law given by Moses and the grace and truth by Jesus Christ is not only the Total Truth, but the Total Truth to me in my *personal experience*—see how it is the only answer with a totally workable application to every situation, whether mine or other folks’—which makes it possible for me to say to myself, “Yes, *this is it*,” and then declare it to the whole world within my reach.

If this takes further digging into details (with Paul as our guide) to find out the total solution, we will be like a German pastor wrote:

God needs *men*, not creatures
Full of noisy, catchy phrases.
Dogs he asks for, who their noses
Deeply thrust into—Today,
And there scent Eternity.
Should it lie too deeply buried,
Then go on, and fiercely burrow,
Excavate until—Tomorrow.

Some of us have been doing this for years. I could not stop. I must be satisfied. I must have the complete answer. It must be wholly workable in all of life. And we boldly say we have come up with the answer: not our own, but revealed in the Scriptures and confirmed by the Holy Spirit in personal inner revelation.

The law given by God to Moses in its outer written forms, underlining the outer standards of conduct such as the sins of stealing, lying, adultery, murder, mali-

cious destruction of another’s character, is obviously intended to produce outer responses. So it does, and for the simple reason that in our blindness we cannot penetrate into sin at its source, but can only recognize its outer products of committed sins. So the first purpose of the Ten Commandments is to pinpoint our guilt before God and produce in us a realization of His wrath, judgment, and our coming condemnation. This it effectively does by awakening in us “the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom.” Most of us were stirred from slumber by some person or event alerting us to the reality of our condition as lost, guilty, and hopeless sinners—unless there be some means of pardon. At such a time we neither considered nor were concerned about our inner sinful condition, but saw only our sins and their fearful aftermath. Verily, for this was the law established—that by it “all the world may become guilty before God.”

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

Full Deliverance

But bodily death is but an outer detail. The real meaning of death is not *body* but *spirit* destiny: Where do I, an immortal spirit, go? If lost, I shall be among “the spirits in prison”; if saved, among “the spirits of just men made perfect,” Scripture reveals. So Peter pro-

claimed in his Pentecost speech (using David's prophecy in Psalm 16) that the Savior went to hell where we were destined to go. But hell could not hold Him, for Satan had no hold on Him, and so His "soul was not left in hell." But He could not rescue Himself, for He was there representing us in our lost sinnerhood. He was "raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father."

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

Safe: The One and Only Key

These truths, thank God, are common knowledge to most of those who read this. But it is good to reiterate them, because they are always so precious.

Upon a life I did not live,
Upon a death I did not die –
Another's life, Another's death –
I stake my whole eternity.

However, we cannot enter into the final, total effects of the death and resurrection of our Christ until we see and share in its two processes, not just one. The first of these is the shedding of His precious blood; the second is the death of His physical body—which we shall look into later. Only by *these two* can this outer law of Moses become what it really is—the inner law of our spontaneous living.

But the key to entering in is *faith*. It is at our new birth that faith first makes its appearance in its true meaning in our lives; but we are, or at least I am, continually deepening my understanding and application of this fundamental principle of living. For *all life is lived by faith* and by no other way. That is why the Bible gives one whole chapter solely to its application—Hebrews 11. So we cannot spend too much time in re-examining it. Did not Jesus say plainly, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes"?

And was He not always underlining *faith, faith, faith*? "Where is your faith?" "Your faith has saved you." "I have not seen so great a faith, no, not in Israel."

But we must see first that faith is the only means by which we operate in *all* life—not merely the spiritual, but also the material. Every action taken by man, from the action of the lungs in breathing to the sending of a spaceship to the moon, is nothing but faith in action.

First, something attracts our attention and is desirable. We then also see it is available. Faith is the inner action of our human spirits by which we inwardly decide that we will appropriate or experience this thing. We then speak a "word of faith": "I'll go there," "I'll do that," "I'll take that," "I'll make that." Inner faith then moves into outer action. We go there. We do that. We take that. We make that. Thus faith becomes substance.

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

Faith is replaced by the fact, or rather, *becomes* fact: "I'll go to that home" becomes "I'm in that home." "I'll take that thing" becomes "I have that thing." What was first *desirable* to me, and then *available* to me, now by faith becomes *actual* and *reliable* to me. I experience it. Nothing in heaven or earth can be experienced or become knowingly reliable to me except by the inner and outer action of faith, which turns possibilities into actuality. That is also why all life is really adventure, for *nothing is provable to me until I experience it*. Reason can take me to the outer edge of reality, but I must then leap and take *by faith*. I cannot prove that a chair will hold me and not collapse under me until I sit in it! So we are all "faith gamblers."

Our everyday human experience of faith is what gives us our inner certainties (which we need, for we are

inner people). We call this “inner know-how.” The know-how then becomes such inner substance to you and me that, when learning a trade, for instance, we boldly adopt its name and call ourselves by it. We learn carpentry and call ourselves a carpenter. We learn medicine and call ourselves a doctor. In actual fact we are cheating! For what we take, in fact takes us, whether it is food or chair or profession! The knowledge of medicine or carpentry or cooking or teaching “takes us” as we move in by faith to acquire, it, and it becomes our know-how. We then apply our know-how, and call ourselves by its name—doctor, carpenter, cook, teacher.

So we see how fundamentally significant faith is to all life. Life operates only by faith. If this be true in the material realm, then how fundamental faith must also be in the spiritual.

Now is the first time we affirm that we are believing in One who was not only crucified—a fact verifiable in history—but who is living, risen from the dead—foolishness to the world, and impossible of material verification! That is why it is the greatest moment in our human history... when we, made desperate by our need, are moved by faith into a deliberate relationship with the universal kingdom of Spirit—and with the King of that kingdom.

That is why we can never be sustained or “held” by outer religious teaching, or even the Jesus of history—anything which is merely at *outer* contact level. We crave certainty! That is why Jesus told Nicodemus that it was no good, his coming to Him just as a teacher. If he was to see the kingdom of God, he must be born of the Spirit and thus have the Spirit’s *inner*-knowing and *inner*-seeing. Paul said that if we are in Christ we are a new creature; therefore we know no man “after the flesh,” not even Christ: “Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him [that way] no more.”

The Same Safe Process

Here in the things of the Spirit we use the same faith

process as in our daily life. Something is available to me from God’s Word... something is desirable to me because I see that it will meet my need. But this, of course, is not something tangible or visible which I can take hold of by reaching out my hands to receive it. This is something of the invisible world, something of the Spirit I’ve reached out for. So how do I now operate my faith? By the same process as in other matters—the *spoken word of faith*. I just inwardly say (and maybe verbally too), “I take this,” or “I believe that.” For now the substance must come from the Spirit—and as I affirm my taking or believing, the *Spirit* now is what the food or chair was to me in the visible. *He* gives the substance. He does that in my inner spirit-consciousness. He inwardly makes me *know* that I have what I’m seeking. The inner knowing is the inner spirit substance. So I operate by faith in the kingdom of Spirit precisely as I do in the kingdom of the flesh, and now faith is replaced in my inner consciousness by “spirit substance”—God-given assurance.

What makes the new birth, which leads us into the substance of the new creation, the greatest event of our human history? Simply because *for the first time* we have been impelled to use our faith-faculty on a spiritual rather than a material level.

At the time of conversion we have become so convinced of our lost condition, through the impact of the outer law, that we are willing to take a revolutionary faith-action. We become aware through the written word—the one material link in the process—of the offer of forgiveness, a removal of all that guilt which propels us to a destiny in hell. And much more, we hear of acceptance by a loving, uncondemning Father who offers the gift of eternal life, purchased by the historic event of His Son’s public death on our behalf. And that death, we discover, resulted in a further event which is “beyond human history,” His bodily resurrection—attested to by numerous of His disciples; and His unconditional offer to be our Savior requires only that we believe and receive Him as alive from the dead! But that receiving means transferring our faith to the reality of a Person whom we can neither feel, see, nor touch, and who in His resurrection is an *absurdity* to material-world thinking. This is why it becomes a crisis moment. It is the absurdity of faith! Now is the first time we affirm that we are believing in One who was not only cruci-

fied—a fact verifiable in history—but who is living, risen from the dead—foolishness to the world, and impossible of material verification! That is why it is the greatest moment in our human history...when we, made desperate by our need, are moved by faith into a deliberate relationship with the universal kingdom of Spirit—and with the King of that kingdom.

Spirit-knowing

How does that faith become fact? By an inner spirit-knowing. None on earth can say *how* we know...or if we really *do* know! But *we know* that we know. Into us has come an inner awareness, what Paul calls “the Spirit bearing witness with our spirit,” that we *are* a child of God. And nothing can shake us.

Our inner eyes have been opened, as Jesus told Nicodemus they would be, to “see the kingdom of God.” And if it is only those born of the Spirit who can see that kingdom, it can be no visible, earthly realm. It is the glorious kingdom of *reality*, for reality is spirit as God is Spirit, and we simply “know” that we are now members of the eternal reality—that realm where Father, Son and Spirit dwell, and we with Them, and where God has all resources, all wisdom, all power, and we with Him. Men now know that this outer universe is only energy or spirit slowed down to visible forms. So we have come home, and are now eternal participators in the resources behind the universe. Never again do we mistake or confuse the trivialities of the “bits and pieces” of material things as being the real and reliable, or irreplaceable. We look, as Paul did, “not at the things which are seen, but the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

This is now more precious to us than gold that perishes. It is the inner realization, beyond human or rational description, which takes its first living form in the consciousness of the fact that Jesus really *did* love me and shed His blood to take away my sin; that He *is* now my Savior, God now my Father, heaven my home; that eternal life *is* my personal possession. With that blind man put on the spot by the angry Pharisees we say: “One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.” Spirit-reality is never provable to material sense, including our own soul-senses, so we always appear to

walk, as Kierkegaard said, “on sixty-thousand fathoms of water.” It is always the “adventure of faith,” and we walk by faith, not by sight; but inner consciousness is the real stuff of life, and *by that we know*—with the outer Scriptures as our bastion of defense and confirmation. But we live because we *know* we know.

Evidence

This spirit-knowing of the new creation has *two confirming evidences*. One is given the Bible name of “peace.” “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.” It is precious indeed, but in its essence it still has a selfish element of satisfying me: I am so glad that I now have peace with God and there is nothing between us. Peace is the first baby-step of assurance given us by God, because as babes we are in a condition in which we have never yet desired anything except for ourselves, so can only be reached by an answer that will satisfy *us*. God’s love always reaches out to meet my need at its own level.

But the *true* new-creation reality is neatly packaged inside this gift of peace; for we might not take it were it publicly revealed at the outset. It is the fact of “other-love”: that our new relationship is to the living Trinity—Father, Son and Spirit—which is a *Lover-Trinity*. And here is where we are taken unawares. We who have been compulsively *self*-lovers now find we can’t help loving the Son who died for us, and the Father who sent Him, and the Spirit who sheds this God-love abroad in our hearts; and this being other-love, we equally can’t stop wanting to share with others this ultimate reality which is now ours. We become other-lovers. Of course, we do not at first realize that this is not *we* loving (for the human self cannot love in this manner) but that *He* is loving by us. But we do learn that later.

This love is the *one outer evidence* to others that something new has happened to us, because our new out-going love (as well as our peace) obviously affects our daily lives. In that sense, the inner Spirit-awareness which cannot be proved in rational terms is incontestably demonstrated in our lives. Jesus is “seen” in us by others. The True Light has inwardly shone—of which material sunlight is only a rough outer symbol. This new Light becomes to us inner inspiration and ecstasy.

—Yes, I Am

From Desperation to Restoration

by Norman Grubb

The effect of the inner and outer law on us is twofold. On our response hangs our eternal destiny. We can either respond by hypocrisy or honesty. As a fact, we all start by being hypocrites. That is, we pretend to ourselves and others that we keep the law reasonably well, enough to salve our consciences. We have enough religion or a philosophy of some kind to cover our tracks, for a self must always have a foothold for its selfhood—a righteousness (rightness) of some sort. What we really do is to try to keep the eleventh commandment, to hide the truth from ourselves as from others—“Thou shalt not be found out!”

Honesty is when by some means or other (God has a thousand original ways), we are brought up sharp enough in our lives, suddenly or gradually, to be faced with the plain recognition that we are not what we should be. We are law breakers. The moment of truth is when in our freedom we admit that fact. That is honesty, and that is also a total self-humiliation. The supposed foundations to our selfhood have given way. That is why there is a cost in it. The false front of our self-justifying religion or philosophy collapses.

But this admission of merely being a law-breaker in the sense of not living up to the standards of God’s law is not sufficient by itself. The point is that it is the law of *God*, and, therefore, the law on which our being is founded, so that we are at variance with the Source, the Originator, the Upholder of our being. There-

fore, we are at variance with life itself. We are wrong, we are lost, we are in the dimension of what Jesus called “outer darkness.”

Now when that is an admitted reality to me, I am conditioned for the truth. I have a need and I must have it met. I can no longer consciously continue at variance with the God of my being and under His justifiable condemnation, with its necessary ultimate ending in “everlasting destruction from the presence of the

Honesty is when by some means or other (God has a thousand original ways), we are brought up sharp enough in our lives, suddenly or gradually, to be faced with the plain recognition that we are not what we should be.

Lord.” What then shall I do to make amends? But that is exactly what I cannot do as a self-confessed law-breaker with the usual consequences of law-breaking.

This is the moment, the first moment when He who is love, the ground of my being, can get over to me what love is and what He is, and what I am to be. Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, is the answer. What He did for me and as me was what I could not do for myself. This is the eternal love. Now in my total need I am conditioned simply to see with thank-

fulness that what I could not do to remove guilt, condemnation, ever-lasting separation, He did for me; and they are no more. Seeing is recognizing and receiving and release.

In my freedom of choice, which hardly was conscious choice, when my need was so desperate and the supply so complete, I suddenly realize that God is now my God and Father, and Jesus Christ my Savior and Lord; and not only have I a conscious peace and release, but I have a love for Him. What I probably do not realize is that this is the beginning of my living the eternal quality of life for which I was originally created. The restoration to God of His stolen property has taken place. A revolutionary change has taken place. For the first time in my human history, I love someone else more than myself. A new love, greater than my love for myself, has taken possession of me: love for God and Jesus.

I do not yet realize that this is not my human affections. I probably think this is my love for Him, but what has really happened is that in receiving Christ I have received into myself the One who is love, and what I regard as my love for Him is really the first expression of God’s self-giving love in me, loving another more than myself: “The love of God (not love for God) shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.” This new love, greater than love for myself, has taken possession of me, causing me to start being an other-lover: for I very soon find that if I have love for Jesus, I also have love for all

men, for He and His world are identified. I find in myself, not only the love for Him, but also the desire that my friends, my neighbors, and all men should share the secret of life that I have found and that they equally need, and that I should take my share in the ministry to mankind in all ways available to me.

This is eternal life which is eternal self-giving love begun in me. I have

“come home,” and begun to be the light and the love I was destined to be. What we call Christianity, therefore, is not belief in a doctrine, not membership in a church, not allegiance to a Bible or a Jesus of history, but a new love; for again we say, we live where we love, and this new love is for the first time in my human history the love of someone more than myself: and this is and means a new

quality of life of which the potential and implications are way out of sight beyond space and time, just as an Amazon river starts by a trickle at its source, or a prairie fire begins with a spark.

—*The Spontaneous You*

The Barebones Gospel

The book of Romans describes three stages by which God unveils His total purpose for man, “created and now re-created in Christ to find his place in God and He in us.” In the following excerpt, Norman describes the first stage of this revelation—the Gospel so basic that even a child can understand.

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 loath-some 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.”

—*The Liberating Secret*

The Origin of Evil

by Norman Grubb

God is who He is because He is fixed, and fixed as love; plainly every person who is to find himself and be a person equally becomes fixed. We often hear it said that the origin of evil is an unfathomable mystery, but, unless I am mistaken, I have not found it so. It seems plain enough. First, we understand evil to be the term we use as the opposite of good. But, good is the term we use of God who is love, for all that love does is good. Thus Jesus, when called Good Master by the rich young ruler, said, "Why callest thou Me good? There is none good but God!" So then, if good is the term used of the Living God who is the other-love, evil must be the term used of anyone who, as a person, is the opposite of God, and evil because he is self-love. Evil, therefore, is a person who, as a free person, has made the opposite choice to God and is fixed in it—a mis-used self rather than a right-used self.

This is why in Isaiah, God says, "I am the Lord...I create evil." The moment God creates persons like Himself, and, in no other way can He have sons to develop His universe, they can only be developing persons by their freedom of choice; and fundamental choice is, shall I be an expression of God in His self-giving love, or shall I, in my freedom, separate myself as a person (though, of course, eternally having my being in God) and function as a self-loving self? To be such, the opposite to the Self-giving One, would be what we call evil. Evil, therefore, is a necessary alternative in freedom. To be free involves the pos-

sibility of being evil. That is why it says that God creates evil. If He creates persons, He must create them free or they are not persons. If they are free, they can choose to become the opposite to Him in His fixed choice, and that is evil. Therefore, in giving freedom, God gives evil as a possible alternative.

And that, I think, is the eternal wonder of God's love in redemption, and the final revelation of the ultimate of love. In

To be free involves the possibility of being evil. That is why it says that God creates evil. If He creates persons, He must create them free or they are not persons. If they are free, they can choose to become the opposite to Him in His fixed choice, and that is evil.

creating free persons, He created the possibility of the evil choice, yet He is not responsible if that choice was made. He could, therefore, have said, "Well, they made the choice for which I am not responsible. Leave them to it, and let Us make another race of persons," which is what He told Moses at the incident of the golden calf to stir in Moses the love-response he must have to handle Israel at this crisis. Exodus 32:9-14, and 32:32. But love belongs to need. Love is the debtor and need always love's creditor, for need, as Paul said, has an inescapable claim on love, which exists to meet it. So

God as love has to go that second mile. Responsible for freedom, but not responsible for that wrong choice made in freedom, He says, "I will take the whole upon Myself, both the freedom for which I am responsible, and its wrong use, for which I am not responsible; and I will take that ultimate curse of that wrong choice upon, Myself, and remove it in the blood of My Son"—the Lamb ordained to death before the foundation of the world.

So we know where evil began. It was the first free person, not of this human race, but of the angelic order, who could only be established in his unique appointment as "the anointed cherub that covereth" (Ezekiel 28:14) by becoming fixed by choice as Lucifer, which means bearer of God's light. But, instead, he spoke his free word of faith which fixed him in self-interest, self-seeking, self-exaltation (Isaiah 14:13-14). Evil, therefore, had its public origin in a person who became fixed in self-centredness, the opposite to God. This was "sin" which John explained as "transgression of the law," law being the way a thing works; and the way the universe works is by Him who is love. So sin is a person who is self-loving love, just as righteousness is the Person who is self-giving love. Both are persons, for the universe is the Person, and we, as persons, His sons in the Son, Head and Body. It is in our separation from Him that we have come to speak of aspects of Him as things, as abstractions, such as goodness, love, power, peace, joy, etc., or alternatively of evil, sin, hate,

envy, etc., whereas they are the Person who is these things. God is the Person. Evil is a created person who chose to be the opposite to God, and is called the god of this world because he brought into manifestation the opposite form of personhood. Sin is the root and sins are the product.

But what we are to note as we continue to trace humanity's history is that this evil one, called Lucifer, and Satan, is still and forever a rebel son, recorded in Job as among the sons of God presenting themselves to Him. He is still God's servant, though in rebellion, and still does God's will, and has his being in God, as all the universe had. This is important because owing to the illusory sense of separation from God which the Fall has given us, we find it difficult to recognize that Satan is not some separated person who goes about and does as he wills, and we have to, in a way, call on God to go and find and handle him. No, he is God's negative agent and we shall see how wonderfully he is God's convenient agent, and we learn to see through Satan to the One in full control of him, if we are to get all the distortions of life into focus. But again we shall look into this in more practical detail later on.

We Only Know Right Through Wrong

Now we come down to ourselves. We have seen God's purpose—to "bring many sons unto glory," glory being to total fulfilment, a vast family of sons brought to their highest conceivable destiny as co-sons and co-heirs of the universe with His own Son. He had this in hand before the creation, "according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world," and this meant

one thing—that the sons must be mature, capable sons, not a crowd of irresponsible little children, but knowing who they are as persons, knowing how to function as sons, and thus knowing their destiny and able to fulfil it. That means training and development from little children to sons, and thus to sons who can represent their Father and take over His business for Him. And this is the history of the human family.

There is one facet of mature experience which is often missed, yet it lies at the roots of capability on any level and none can be sure of himself and his pro-

Evil is a created person who chose to be the opposite to God, and is called the god of this world because he brought into manifestation the opposite form of personhood. Sin is the root and sins are the product.

ficiency in any profession without it. A thing is only a thing because it has its opposite. It has a right and a wrong, and the one has overcome the other. Sweet has overcome or swallowed up bitter, smooth rough, soft hard. Life swallows up death, said Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:4; and it gets its strength from having an opposite which it has swallowed up. You cannot say a certain yes in a decision, until you have first canvassed the alternatives and said an equally certain no to each of them. The strength of the yes is in swallowing up the noes! Not in having no noes, not in ignoring their existence, but in facing them and replacing them by the final yes. Then only is the yes a strong

and certain one.

Proficiency is not in ignoring the wrong way of doing a thing, still less in denying that there is a wrong way; but proficiency is in having known the wrong way and tried it out and learning once for all that it doesn't work that way. Then the yes has its strength in swallowing up its no. A carpenter, to be proficient, must first have learned that you don't use your chisel this way, or make your measurements that way, but then these are the right ways. No housewife can be confident in her kitchen until she first knows you don't cook that meat at this heat, or mix those ingredients in those proportions, then she is spontaneously at ease in her good cooking. And so through every conceivable activity of life. You must know the wrong way and have proved it wrong, before you are secure and confident in the right. The one must "swallow" the other up.

And here we have God's perfect wisdom in the birth of the human race, and in having a convenient opposite, the wrong one, the evil one, through whom He would bring his vast family of sons to maturity. This was His first way of making the devil His convenient agent. To have sons, they must find themselves in their freedom. They must discover that to be a person is to be conscious that there are alternatives and make their free choice; and ultimately their right choice through having first made the wrong one, and tasted the consequences. And the wonder of our perfect God is that He knew this was the way His predestined family of efficient sons must take, from wrong first and then to right; and He knew the suffering that entailed for them, with its possibility of a lost eternity. So he took it upon Himself to go that same

way to its total final end, and in the person of His own Son, Himself in His Son form, to participate in the sufferings in their fullest measure. So Peter said we are redeemed “with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world”: and the writer to the Hebrews takes it even further by saying that this involvement to the full in the sufferings of humanity was the only way the perfect Father, to be perfect, could go so that “it became Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, to make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” Tremendous!

So we find our first parents in the garden, and placed between two trees, one to give life and the other death. Why did not the Father just put them there conveniently with only one tree? It wasn’t very kind of Him to put the two! We might just have eaten of the tree of life—and then been what? A crowd of helpless babies who knew nothing and could do nothing! No, the first parents of these destined sons must first discover themselves, learn their potentialities, misuse themselves—and then they are ready to be reliable ones.

And at that tree of death the deceptive voice of that “old serpent, the devil” came to them, and what it did for them was to awaken them to discover what it is to be a self. Enormous awakening with its vast potentialities. Thank you, devil. Through those tempting suggestions to have what *she* would like, Eve found she was a person! She had appetites in wanting to eat that fruit, with all that goes with them in making us vibrant humans. She had the awakening adventure of new discovery through sight when she saw the

fruit was “pleasant to the eyes,” all the limitless avenues of exploration in the visual arts and sciences. And the awakened mind, the topmost of all, by which she would know the truth of things and at the end of the long trail would “know even as we are known.”

Eve, as representing us all, could only find and know herself by being solicited to be herself for her own self-ends. But more than that. She took that dangerous step which cut her off from being what we were created to be, sons in spirit-union with the Creator Son and the Father, and thus sons of self-giving love. Instead, in chosen separation from God,

We became misused selves. We had to discover and experience what it is to be a wrong self before we are conditioned to be a right self. We have to learn misuse before we can settle into right use.

she, her husband and we all, became self-loving children of the god of self-centredness.

We became misused selves. We had to discover and experience what it is to be a wrong self before we are conditioned to be a right self. We have to learn misuse before we can settle into right use. One Person became a real human and did not go that way, and that was God’s Son “manifest in the flesh.” But He, to be a person, had to be confronted with the devil and come under the temptation of the “evil” way of self-interest. By that means He found His human self as a self, with all its normal capacities and reactions.

Therefore we must say that Adam and Eve could have made the necessary discoveries concerning themselves by temptation without responding to it. They could have replaced the attraction of the wrong fruit by taking of the right one, as Jesus did by answering the devil with the word of God; but as they did fall, we need waste no time in theorizing!

So we partook of the tree which brought the human self into manifestation in the form it was never meant to be—the self-loving self, the evil self. Indwelt by the serpent-spirit of error, it appears as a rival and attempted conqueror of the human self in its true eternal form—indwelt by Christ as the self-giving self. It has reversed the true order in which the self-loving form is swallowed up and ultimately unknown to the self-giving form it becomes in Christ, and progressively in us as we find ourselves in Him.

This tree of death has divided between good and evil and put evil in the ascendancy; but in so doing it has given us to drink of the full draught of its bitterness to fit us to reach out to the water of life. The tree of life, of which we are now able to partake, since that cherubim’s sword of judgement which kept us from it, was plunged in His side instead of ours, puts evil back into good. It restores us from the curse of the divided two-power outlook to the single eye, by the glorious discovery of how God uses the evils of this world to His and our good ends. But that we explain more fully later.

We have become children of the devil, who, we say again, is quite simply the created being who brought into manifestation the potential there must be in freedom, of being the opposite to God;

and if God is self-giving love and love is good, then Lucifer, Satan, is that opposite self-loving love, the evil which, if it had not been exposed, lies hidden eternally, “swallowed up” in the good. And we have eaten by choice of that divided tree, and participated in this exposed opposite. But by doing so, we have gone along a necessary road by which a person must know and reject misuse before being established in the right use. And here is the meaning of the Fall, and its value.

What is God’s Wrath?

But it is important to realize that there is a fundamental difference between the fall of Lucifer and the fall of Adam and Eve, our fall. Lucifer had made his ultimate choice from his centre, his spirit, where he totally rejected God and replaced Him with himself. He chose to be his own god. But Eve was tricked by the serpent (1 Timothy 2:14). She did not intend to reject her Creator, but just to bypass Him with an act of self-indulgence, hoping He would not notice! Her sin was of the flesh, not spirit; and Adam merely followed Eve for the same reason. So, thank God, the human family are prodigal sons, and have never lost the inner consciousness of having missed the way, and knowing by the inner law of their being what they ought to be. Slaves of the devil, branches of the false vine, children of the devil, caught up in the devil’s destiny, but not yet sons of the devil who by free choice become devils like their father.

For this same reason the Father revisits them in their disobedience; I always like that beautiful statement: “They heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day”; and because they were God-conscious, they

“hid themselves.” But it is our guilt that projects wrath on God, as if that was His chief characteristic, and which still so distorts our concepts of God as if He is a monster. Still our unenlightened eyes, including, I am ashamed to say, many liberal theologians, regard the Old Testament as the record of an avenging God, instead of the same unchanging God of grace shining through from the Garden of Eden, to the call of Abraham, and through Moses and the revelation of the Tabernacle of continuing grace, to the full sunlight of His grace in our Lord Jesus Christ.

But the wrath of God is only manifest in those who have the wrong relationship to Him. It is not Him as He is, who is all love. But it is what He must appear to be to those who run counter to the law of His being. The wrath operates in them, not in Him. If I have a right relationship to an electric switch and turn it on as I should do, I get a pleasant light. If I defy any warnings and stick my finger in the apparatus, I get a nasty shock. The shock is what I feel within myself through my unlawful contact. So it was not God who hid from the disobedient couple, it was they who hid from Him. They projected on Him a rejection which was really in themselves. And this is the wrath of God. All He said was, “Where are you, Adam? Come out from your hiding, I haven’t changed.” And when they came, He talked with them, not in judgement and wrath, but in mercy. All He told them was that they would experience the inevitable effects of the discords self-loving self always brings on itself. Sorrow was what they would have, sorrow in the man’s life, sorrow in the woman’s life. Sorrow is an inner reaction, for we are inner people. It is our

inner response to suffering. Because we have fallen into our false material concepts of life in its outer forms, and have brought about total disruption in our outer living by our grab-and-hold and dog-eat-dog activities, life is a continual suffering: wars, diseases, poverty, anxiety, wrongdoings, and we regard it as if those sufferings are our problems, and why does God “allow” them? But we are on the wrong foot. Sorrow is our problem, for sorrow is our inner reaction to suffering, and we are inner people. Change our sorrow into inner joy, and outer sufferings are turned to praise.

So it was the Father’s special mercy, not wrathful judgement, when He told them three times over that they would have sorrow. Why? Because sorrow would mean dissatisfaction with their earthly conditions, and desire for a better way. Thank God for sorrow. Thank God the world is restless, fermenting, dissatisfied, rebellious at its present conditions. That is its hope. That’s the best thing the Father could predict for His fallen children: and thank God, behind the sorrow and at its roots lies guilt for not being what we know we should be. But that was not all.

From that first moment of the Fall and its consequences, there was the pronouncement of deliverance; and the deliverance is in the seed of the woman which would bruise the head of the serpent. God said to the serpent, “I will put enmity between thy seed and her seed.” What is the serpent’s seed? The take-over of the human family created in the image of God by a false father who would express his nature of self-centredness in them. Thus they would be the seed of the serpent. But they are still the seed of the woman, created in God’s image, and into

the woman's seed would come The One capable of destroying the works of the devil, and turning the devil's captives into His captives. And what is more, though He would come to do this in due time in human history, in God's timeless sight He was already, in the remarkable phrase in Revelation 13:8, "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Therefore, He was already the true Adam, the last Adam, progenitor of the new race, and could be found in spirit, as the mercy seat for sinners, from that first day of the Fall. He was so found by Abel and by the countless thousands who, like the seven thousand in the days of Ahab's apostasy God was pleased to tell Elijah, had not bowed the knee to Baal. Abraham rejoiced to see His day: Moses counted the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: Israel in the wilderness drank of that spiritual rock that followed them and that rock was Christ. So mercy flowed out from the Garden and has never ceased flowing.

So this first stage, downward, not upward, was the necessary preparation for that vast family of sons of God. By this they could learn once for all, and reject once for all, not to be fooled again, the wrong way before the right, the misuse of the glory of being created self before its right use. And it is as if God said to Satan, "You have deliberately turned your back on Me and founded this false kingdom of the negative, the power of darkness. So now I will use you to my great ends. Through you I will bring to maturity my vast family of sons to rules this universe. When they have well learned the lie from you, they will be safe followers of the truth, and not be fooled by you again. They may visit you at times, while within your reach on earth,

but they will never live with you again. Thank you, devil."

The Total Remedy

We already know clearly enough the only way we could be rescued. We have the false god in us. 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 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 of it to represent it. This is one of those "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 renewing 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 be-

hind 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.

—Who Am I?

How I Came to Christ

The following excerpt from Page Prewitt's booklet "Alphabet Soup," describes how she learned the simple Gospel, accepted Jesus Christ, and began her journey to find in Him the Total Truth to life.

From my early childhood, I had a desire to know God and a desire to be a right person. I knew I didn't know God, and I wanted so to know Him and to go to Heaven. I knew I wasn't "right" and wanted so badly to be right. My mother would say to me: "Little girl, you had better change your ways." I wanted to change my ways—but *how*?

I finally concluded that probably only priests, missionaries, ministers and nuns (and possibly my saintly grandmother) did right, knew God and were going to Heaven. There didn't seem to be much hope for my becoming a nun, but I thought that maybe one day when I was old, I would be like my grandmother—wear my hair in a bun and sit pleasantly doing needlework.

One time as a teenager, spending the night with a friend, she asked me, "Page, are you saved?" Too embarrassed to ask what she meant, I vaguely nodded assent. *Whatever* did being "saved" mean?

When I was seventeen years old, living in Coral Gables, Florida, I found out. I was invited to a Youth for Christ meeting and heard Ephesians 2:8-9 quoted: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

There was that word again—"saved"!

The result of hearing that was that I soon received Jesus Christ as my personal Savior and was "born again." I was saved!!

But until I found that being saved meant more than just "going to Heaven" and that who I had become when I was born again was *Jesus Christ in my form*, my salvation did little for me but assure me of Heaven.

—Page Prewitt

Page's booklet "Alphabet Soup," tells "the rest of the story"—how her inability to live this new Christian life drove her deeper into the mystery of the Gospel—to experience for herself Christ's total sufficiency.

"THE GROUNDWORK OF OUR SALVATION"

BY NORMAN GRUBB

He who, as Love, was Creator of all must now, as Love, be Re-Creator of lost mankind, and must bring him back by regeneration and re-education to the only relationship in which humanity can be true humanity.

Let us watch carefully how God has done this, so that ignorance of the ways of God may not rob us of our inheritance. First, it is God Himself who has done it, God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, "God our Saviour," as Paul loved to call Him; God alone, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence. Not one grain of our re-creation in Christ is attributable to man, any more than our creation was. Man must learn, and re-learn, his eternal condition—the nothing over against the All. And what a relief! Not my past righteousness (non-existent), not my present works (wood, hay and stubble unless His works in me), not my future suitability (equally non-existent) All is His. His past planning, His completed redemption, His endless mercy and love.

First, God's righteousness must be satisfied. None but a righteous God could be God, nothing but righteousness could be the foundation of His throne. The broken law upon which His creation is based must have its penalties, if it is a law. If His eternal nature is to reward the good, He must also inevitably punish the evil. In no other way could He be righteous. No mere forgiveness, then, could be a just forgiveness, unless it was grounded on full satisfaction for the wrongdoing. What a Redeemer we have, who provided a salvation with no loopholes in it! Man's reasoning might and often does suggest some easier way, which is always, when traced to its roots, a subtle refusal to face the stark reality of lawlessness in a law-based universe. Abel knew it, when he first approached God with a blood sacrifice, the life of another symbolically shed for him. Cain, in the blindness of religious self-righteousness, offered his own good works, so much more pleasant and self-gratifying.

But which touched reality? Which had the witness from God? The

tragic end tells us, when Cain hated Abel for his glowing testimony to acceptance with God. And why did he hate him? John tells us (1 John 3:12) because Abel struck at the roots of self-righteousness and exposed it as sin, which could only be expiated by God's appointed sacrifice, to which God bears faithful witness in the believer.

Here is salvation in its first stage, God's great salvation. The Judge became the condemned criminal. God the Son disguised His deity in human flesh, and "tasted death for every man." The Author and Sustainer of life yielded up His own life to receive in Himself the wages of the world's sin. As Mrs. Cousins put it in her great hymn:

Jehovah lifted up His rod
O Christ, it fell on Thee!
Thou wast sore stricken of Thy God;

There's not one stroke for me.
Thy tears, Thy blood, beneath it flowed;

Thy bruising healeth me.

Jehovah bade His sword awake,
O Christ, it woke 'gainst Thee!
Thy blood the flaming blade must slake;

Thy heart its sheath must be—

All for my sake, my peace to
make;

Now sleeps that sword for me.

Through all eternity we shall never know what those hours meant when God was separated from God, the Son crying out to the Father, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” But its glorious consequences we do know—that, having been “delivered for our offences,” He “was raised again for our justification.” The resurrection was God’s witness that He had accepted the sacrifice. This was more than forgiveness. This was as if we had never sinned. God could now be just in justifying the believer in Jesus. We can leave the court without a stain on our character. Upon Another’s life, Another’s death, we can stake our whole eternity. The penalty of an eternal hell, the guilt, the stain, the rebellion, the broken law, the separation, all as if they had never been, for “Jesus paid it all.”

The Precious Blood

This primary and fundamental aspect of the atonement is always represented in Scripture by the word “blood.” “The precious blood of Christ.” It is the first and necessary Godward side of the process of redemption. It was the solution, first, as we have said, of God’s problem. How could He be just and the justifier of the unjust? *His* wrath must first be propitiated: *His* holiness vindicated: the punishment of *His* broken law inflicted. Nothing in the Bible stands out more prominently than the sacrifice God appointed and declared to be the satisfaction of all those claims. It was His own outpoured life. God as Spirit cannot be seen of men. God the Word and

the Son, as the express image of the Father, could take human form, so “the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.” We may know for certain that it cost the Father all and more than the Son to send Him to be the propitiation for our sins. The sacrifice was settled in heaven before the sin that necessitated it had appeared in history. The shedding of blood, representing the outpoured life of the victim, as Moses declared in Leviticus 17, runs like a reddened strand throughout all Bible history—from Abel to Israel, where the life of the nation centred around the sprinkling of the blood on the annual day of atonement: on through the prophets to the last of them, the Baptist, who pointed to the Lamb of destiny and called Him God’s Lamb “that taketh away the sin of the world”: on through the great moment of the sacrifice itself hidden from all eyes in the three hours of darkness, proclaimed by the Saviour Himself to be His blood of the new covenant to be remembered at His table: expounded in fulness of revelation and understanding by the apostles: seen as presented and accepted by God Himself in the heavens in the letter to the Hebrews, giving us our title to boldness of access to the holiest of all: and consummated in the final vision of eternity, with the throne occupied by “the Lamb as it had been slain.”

No wonder the blood is holy and precious to all believers. No wonder it is the point of attack and derision by those who hate to own themselves as sinners. It represents the uniqueness of that holy sacrifice, the blood He shed alone, the winepress He trod alone. It is

His atoning work which none other shares. The cross, the manward aspect of Calvary’s redeeming work, we share: the blood, the Godward aspect, is the sacred offering of the Son to the Father. And because He accepts it, we can do so. We need not question that sacrifice, nor its efficacy. He appointed it. He accepted it. He invites, He argues, He commands us to do the same. No sinner pleases the heart of God by remaining a penitent. No, if repentance is sincere, let us not add sin to sin by failing to believe in the blood. If good enough for Him, it is good enough for us. Nothing pleases the Father more than the faith of a sinner in the efficacy of the precious blood.

The Gift of Repentance

This groundwork of our salvation is received only by revelation. “Hereby know we the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God.” This, wrote John, is the revelation of revelations. Who could conceive of it, who could believe it? The proud human heart never can and never will, for it leaves man with no shred of self-justification. God alone could do for us what we could never do for ourselves, and God took flesh to do it. No one really believes this, although we may say we do, until the Spirit of God reveals it to us; and the Spirit can only reveal it, when He has first given us a glimpse of what we really are in the sight of God; and that also is by revelation. Means He uses—the Bible, preaching, personal witness, the lives of living Christians, sometimes disappointments, loss or sorrow; but the light has to shine, and we respond to it; and that very response is a conviction of the Spirit which

we cannot escape. We at last realize what we are and admit it. That is what the Bible calls the gift of repentance, the change of mind concerning ourselves, such a change affecting conduct and producing what the Bible calls “works meet for repentance.”

This gift of repentance is really the reverse side of that one fundamental response God quickens in us—faith. It is the quickening or re-directing of the one automatic faculty with which the creation is endowed, as well as being the most elementary and utterly simple—the faculty of reception. We have sought to make it clear from the beginning that the Creator-creature relationship is in the nature of things of one kind only, that of giving and receiving. The Creator gives all by giving Himself, the creature receives all; and the faculty of receiving is so simple, obvious, natural, automatic, that it can hardly be called an action at all. It is the first activity of a newborn babe, receiving air, receiving nourishment. It is the continued activity which sustains all life. And that is faith. The repentance side of faith is in essence the breaking down and giving up of a false faith which we have received from Adam, a faith in our own self-righteousness, our own religion, our own philosophy; the receiving of a false self-reliance as a basis of living; thus it is the negative side of faith, the saying no to an illusory faith.

Positive faith, which Paul speaks of as “the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8), is now the further glorious revelation by the Spirit of the shed blood of Christ as the propitiation for the sins of the world, attested to by the

Scriptures, and the consequent simple reception of Jesus as crucified and living Saviour, and our acceptance with God through Him. The receptive faculty which has spued out what it used to drink in, its own righteousness, now with simple delight receives in its place and drinks in the living waters of salvation through Christ. What is called faith can hardly be called a work, because it is so automatic that we humans hardly realize we are exercising it. In the normal activities of life we do not think of ourselves as exercising faith when we receive something; we are more occupied with the object we are receiving; and if we want it, we just take it; the act of taking is so simple and obvious it hardly counts in our consciousness. Whether it be air or food or sitting on a chair or receiving a present, if we want a thing and it is available to us, the taking of it is automatic: and that is faith. So also in the realities of the Spirit. They are gifts indeed, because they are beyond the reach of fallen reason, beyond the sight of blinded eyes. They are direct revelations from another world, mediated to us through the Word made flesh and the Word written; but as they penetrate our consciousness by the power of the Spirit, negative and positive faith go into automatic action, rejecting the former false assumptions, and accepting their glorious replacement—the righteousness of Christ by faith, acceptance in the Beloved, adoption into the family of God. We are “born from above.”

In thus seeking to outline the primary operations of the Spirit, and man’s response, I have deliberately aimed at keeping clearly before us the fundamental fact that God acts

for ever according to His eternal nature, and man according to his, and that this must be invariable in both. God for ever gives, man for ever receives. In the glory of His grace, that is what God never ceased to do: “He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again.” Therefore salvation, just as much as creation, is every iota a gift. And man, of whom it is said concerning his creation, What hast thou that thou hast not received?, can never experience the abc of his re-creation in Christ until he is brought back to the act of simple reception. As Jesus said, “Except ye become converted and become as little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.” Every iota of works, of self-effort, has to disappear. Faith, so far from being works, is really only the flash of recognition of what is: in this case, already redeemed, if we only knew it. I hope I have made this clear, because it is the first infant experience of the lost secret of humanity, a secret we shall never outgrow and never replace, for it is humanity’s sole basic capacity.

What Really Happens at Regeneration?

And now, what really happens at the new birth? It is most important to understand. Remember again that the creature has no other end to his existence than to be a manifestor of the Creator—God in man, and God through man; and that therefore a human being is not a true human until he is a temple of the Holy Spirit. Nothing can function except by the laws of its being; a car won’t go unless its machinery works aright; and a man can never be a man unless he is a God-indwelt, God-controlled man, because men are not made to “work” any other

way. That is why life is a jigsaw puzzle until the Masterhand pieces it together; that is why “there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked,” because the wicked are all of us who still have a dethroned God and an enthroned self at our centre, and “the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest.” Nor can there be any possible purpose in a redemption for man, unless it is to restore his humanity to the only condition in which it slips into gear. Remember God CANNOT create a creature except, in its measure, to contain and shew Him forth: “God is seen God in the star, in the stone, in the flesh, in the soul and the clod.” Of the lower forms of creation, animate and inanimate, who are without choice in the matter, it is written, “The whole earth is full of His glory.” Man, however, in the height of his privilege, made in the similitude of God, with faculties like His though not with the incommunicable attributes of His Godhead, has had the awful responsibility of intelligent choice. Created free to choose his glorious destiny of being the conscious container and transmitter of God, he could and did refuse, and thus became the child of the devil, the original rebel. There can, then, be only one possible purpose in God’s grace in salvation—to restore man to his sole and original destiny—“Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

We stress this again because the only infallible, inexorable consequence of a sinner receiving salvation is not always made plain by Gospel preachers. It is often easy to get the impression that it is certainly necessary to have our sins forgiven, to be delivered from the wrath to come, to receive an as-

sured entrance into heaven; but to submit to the total control of Christ is something which may and should follow, but does not necessarily do so; and even that it is possible to enjoy the former without the latter. Nothing could be more false or absurd. There is no salvation conceivable, possible or actual, other than God’s way in infinite grace of destroying the false form of life in which man lives, and replacing it by the true. The false form of life is that which has self in the centre, which is the sin in which my mother conceived me, which is the false god. The true form of life is that which has God at its centre—Christ living in me.

It is for that reason Paul used the striking expression in Gal. 1:17 to describe his conversion—“when it pleased God...to reveal His Son in me.” The startling fact is that on the road to Damascus it was the exalted Christ who spoke to him from heaven; yet he writes years afterwards that the outcome of God’s dealings with him those three eventful days was not an external revelation of an ascended Christ, but an internal revelation of the Indwelling Son. The eternal life which had begun in Paul was not some “thing” received in a detached sense as a gift from the heavenly Father; but the start of an eternal union. One more human soul, a deluded, blinded captive of the great egoist, Satan, impregnated from birth with his evil spirit of egoism, had now been led captive by Him who “leads captivity captive”; which meant that with Paul’s deliverance from that Satanic spirit of egoism at the cross, another Ego, the Great I Am, Jesus the Son of God, had begun to live His life within the little, emptied ego of Paul.

In other words, and let us get this clear, the atoning work of Christ, which makes it possible for a lost sinner to stand in the sight of God as one who had never sinned, is only the gateway to life, not the life itself. The life itself is, and can never be anything but, Jesus Himself, “that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us,” coming into the cleansed vessel, occupying His holy temple, being the life of the branch now attached to the Vine, the life of the member of the body now attached to the Head.

The Inner Witness

Do we see the point? Salvation is only salvation when it is God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—returning to live in the personality created for Him, but exiled from Him through the fall. This is the inner reality of such parables as the prodigal returning to his Father. Therefore salvation is only salvation to any individual believer when the Spirit has given the inner witness of the presence of the Indwelling Christ. It is certainly true that a new born babe in Christ might not be able to interpret his new living experience in these exact terms; but it must be true that he has not merely an external faith in a Christ crucified 2000 years ago, but also, as the inevitable result of the heavenly gift of repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, the inner revelation of “Christ in me,” my Saviour, my Lord, evidenced by an inner witness that is both incomprehensible to the world, and indescribable. That is the sole and only purpose of the atonement, and the inevitable effect of true repentance and faith, which neither man nor devil can prevent.

My Coming to Christ

by Norman Grubb

In his own words, Norman Grubb describes the God-ordered events during his final year in public school that brought him face to face with his personal failings, need of the Savior and His life-changing new birth.

As I lay in the hospital after the operation, just one thought suddenly crossed my mind, Is life wholly selfish? It seemed to be a sudden eye-opener to me of my own self-centredness. Everything was for me. My mother was for me, and my father was for me, the whole world was for me. Was there no better meaning to life than that? It was one of those inner words from the Spirit.

Those Easter holidays were my spiritual Waterloo. I had begun to question the reality of God and Christ. I was reading such books as John Stuart Mill's Utilitarianism. I had not lost my boyhood faith nor jettisoned it. But I was questioning. If I was selfish, was not God also? Did it not say, "For Thy pleasure we are and were created"? and of Jesus that "For the joy set before Him, He endured the cross"? What difference between their self-interest and mine? Yet at the same time as I had my youthful intellectual questioning, I was battling with and had the guilt of my secret moral defeats.

Caught

There was a friend in Bournemouth—my father had by now moved to a church in Poole, near Bournemouth—who was a retired Royal Artillery major, an original, interesting fellow, named Major

Gartside-Tippinge. He had a lovely home and grass tennis-court. He was also a very keen Christian and especially keen on getting boys to Christ. His wife was a sister of D. E. Hoste, the General Director of the China Inland Mission. He used to invite my brother Harold and me over to tennis, and then, if he could, catch us after in his drawing-room for a talk about our need of salvation, which we called having a "pi jaw." On one such visit, my brother escaped somehow, but I was caught in the drawing-room. All I remember Tippinge asking me was the pertinent question, Did I belong to Christ?

He had caught me, or rather the Spirit of God through him. If he had asked did I belong to the church of which I was a member, that would have been easy. Wasn't I the son of a parson, baptized and confirmed in the Church of England? But when he asked me if I had a personal relationship to Christ, I was caught. How could I say I had a personal relationship with a Person whose existence I was doubting? I was embarrassed. With my public school code of hiding our feelings on such subjects as religion, I could lie my way out, say I did, and escape. I did not realize then that our eternal destiny hangs on our honesty; and as Jesus said, in John 3, when light comes to us we either hate it or respond to it, and are either saved or lost accordingly. Somehow I did manage to admit that I could not say He was personal to me. Tippinge got me on my knees, made me pray something,

and I got up as I got down, and escaped.

But on my way home on the top of a tramcar, the implication of what I had said got its teeth into me. I knew the gospel, and that, if I could not say Christ was my personal Saviour, I was going to hell. And I knew too, through the guilt of my sins, that I deserved to go there. At last this was real to me; so as soon as I reached my small bedroom at the top of the house, I got on my knees and for the first time in my life meant it when I asked, according to the Lord's prayer, for my sins to be forgiven.

Immediately there flashed into my mind what I had always been taught but it had meant nothing to me—that that was why Jesus died—to take away my sins. Then, with a strange new sense of joy and relief, I said, "If that is so, I don't have to go to hell, God is my Father, and heaven is my home." In succeeding years I may have dug deeper in order to understand in a more complete sense—at least for my own satisfaction—what those simply stated and believed facts really mean; but these were the simple gospel facts by which I, and millions of others, have "passed from death unto life," and "the Spirit had borne witness with my spirit" that I was a child of God.

The next thought that came into my mind, true again to our school traditions of downgrading emotion, was that this was just a momentary emotion, and tomorrow morning I would wake up thinking football, not Christ. But not so.

Turning Point

My first waking thoughts were this new joy, and have been so now these fifty-four years! And two facts stand out to me—first, I am glad there are bold men who go out of their way to seek you out and ask if you are Christ's; and secondly, that I had had the background years of church and Bible teaching, boring though it was to me, because it had stored my mind with the truths of the way of salvation, ready material for my heart's need when the moment came. And though this crisis moment stands out to me, and I suppose will do throughout eternity, I really know that it was the background life and love and example of my parents which had prepared the soil and sown the seed, so that I had never been without a sincere faith (even if temporarily shaken), said my prayers, read my Bible, and had moral restraints on me. So April 1914 was the turning-point of my life, and I was eighteen years of age.

I did not realize, as I do now, what had really happened to me, and what happens every time a person gets born from above. My hungry, ambitious, dissatisfied self had found a new centre—not itself. A love for Christ, and for the Father who had sent Him, had begun to supersede love for just myself. It was not really my love for Him, for I am only capable of self-love; it was, as Paul said, "the love of God" (not my love for God, but His own love) "shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us" (Rom. 5:5). In other words, an inner unity had taken place, my human spirit with His Spirit, branch to Vine as Jesus said. I had "come home." I had been one who had lost his way and had lived in the illusion (but real enough to us while

we believe it, for we are what we believe) of being a separate little human seeking my own ends and fighting my own, usually losing, battles of life.

By coming home, like the prodigal to the father, I had found my restoration to the One Spirit of the universe, the Eternal Father through His Son; and that restoration is a union, spirit with Spirit (1 Cor. 6:17), by which I am an expression of Him in my human form; and despite my multiple deviations in my free and temptable humanity, the new spontaneous motivation of my human self is loving Him more than I love myself; and in loving Him, loving all. My self-love, instead now of finding its expression in seeking my own self-ends, begins to find a new meaning in pleasing myself by pleasing Him and wanting others to know Him. In place of being basically a self-lover, I had begun to be a God-and other-lover; or

should I say, I had begun to be the kind of self-lover God Himself is, who loves Himself by loving His creation. His self-pleasing is His self-giving.

The first simple form that it took for me was a letter to my mother saying that Christ had become a personal Saviour to me—in other words, I now began to honour Christ more than magnify myself. The second was when I returned for my last term to Marlborough. I knew nothing about a "duty to witness" or any such legalistic imposition on my fresh experience; but at least to one intimate friend, Henry de Candole, head of the house (and later Bishop of Knaresborough), I confided what had happened. His comment was, "Well, if that is real Christianity, none of us have it!" (though I am glad that has not remained true of Henry through the years!).

—*Once Caught, No Escape*

Rees Howells on the New Birth

Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. —John 3:3

Some of the Saviour's most vital truths were spoken to individuals, such as Nicodemus and the woman at the well. Nicodemus represented the Jews of his day and his concern was to know why the Saviour had the power to do what no one else could do. The first thing the Lord said to him upset him. "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." You may believe many things about the Bible, but this is still true that you cannot see the kingdom of God unless you are born again. Measure yourself with this man, this ruler of the Jews. Keeping the law does not get you into the kingdom. There was probably a greater conflict in this than you ever thought. The Saviour came to open a new dispensation and what changes there would have to be from former times. He was doing a new thing altogether and doing away with the sacrifices on which their worship had been based for so many generations. Nicodemus represented the synagogue, and in this conversation the Saviour gave to him the main principle of his teaching: "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness even so must the Son of man be lifted up" (John 3:14). It was not *religion* that Nicodemus needed but *life*.

—*The Intercession of Rees Howells*

From Natural to Spiritual Faith

by Norman Grubb

God Himself entered the human arena by the one act of matchless grace in sending His beloved Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as a sacrifice for sin. And in doing this, He took every possible means that could be taken to quicken love and stimulate faith in Himself. In order to act, faith must first see. Very well then, God will meet faith on its own ground.

First, there remains in man, even at the fall, the moral sense, the conscience, the law written in the heart, the capacity of knowing right from wrong, of recognizing the highest, of thirsting after his lost perfection. These God then stimulates through history by revelations of truth, accompanied by mighty works of deliverance, by His dealings with His chosen people, all rays and foreshadowings of the true light which was to shine, all material for a truth-seeking faith.

Then comes the moment, in the fullness of time, when the true light shines out in the darkness, the Word is made flesh and dwells among us, full of grace and truth. His incomparable words, His deeds, His symbolic acts of giving the bread and wine, His victorious redeeming death, His carefully attested resurrection, His appearances, His visible ascension, the coming of the Spirit, the transformed followers, their written records, peak on peak, form the mighty mountain range of visual testimony.

And so God comes down to meet man's faith, with His Son, His Word, His Spirit. The gulf is bridged. Faith can operate in the realm of the Kingdom of Heaven as simply and naturally as in the

things of earth.

And now let us watch this process of faith as it passes from its exercise in the natural to the supernatural. What happens when the Spirit of God brings conviction of sin? It is obvious. He penetrates the thick walls of our self-righteousness. Every man by nature has built around him some working philosophy of life. He is as good as other folk. He does not do his neighbour any harm. He believes in a Creator who is love, so hell is unthinkable, and all will be right. Or else he has a frankly materialistic and hedonistic, or agnostic, or even atheistic, point of view. Anyhow, he has some basis to life, however flimsy, however unsatisfactory, or however self-satisfying. And to that basis his faith is attached. He is a believer all right—in his particular outlook: it may be a false faith, a perverted faith, but it is his faith.

Now, conviction of sin knocks that flimsy prop from under him. It no longer satisfies, it is no longer reliable. He sees through it: all his righteousnesses are as filthy rags: his sins are ever before him: he has hewn him cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water. Now his faith is at sea, tossed hither and thither, with nothing left for it to take hold of. Where can it ground its anchor?

The Spirit points to Jesus. The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. The Word speaks its message, "Look unto Me and be ye saved." "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out": "He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life." Here is faith's sure resting-place. Here is its

rock of ages—Jesus, the Son of God.

The decision is made, Christ for me: "Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy Cross I cling." Faith dares to take Him at His word: "The Lord is my shepherd": "My Beloved is Mine and I am His." Not a new faculty of faith, mind you, but a new content for faith. That's all. The very same faith which was once centred in the man's own righteousness is now torn from that false embrace to rest itself upon "that which is through faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." A natural faculty purified, redirected, possessed and controlled by the Spirit.

And let us note that the one per cent of human faith had to go out to meet the 99 per cent of God's grace. Without this, not all the conviction in the world, not all the sorrow for sin, the change of mind, the prayers and tears and resolutions, could bring the sinner to the enjoyment of that grace. The central faculty of faith had to be exercised, that faculty which is personality in action. The man who had chosen to believe in a false philosophy of life, who had acted out his faith by his self-pleasing, self-confident way of life, had now by an equally deliberate choice to reject that philosophy as a basis for his faith, and by that same faith to accept Jesus in all the fullness of His forgiveness, mercy and renewal. The faith could not save, only His abounding grace could do that; but the faith was the decisive action of a free person, seeing, believing, receiving, and opening his being to the control of Jesus Christ, his new-found Lord.

—*The Law of Faith*

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—Ephesians 2:8-9

(New American Standard)

Words to Live By...

The atoning work of Christ, which makes it possible for a lost sinner to stand in the sight of God as one who had never sinned, is only the gateway to life, not the life itself. The life itself is, and can never be anything but, Jesus Himself, "that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us," coming into the cleansed vessel, occupying His holy temple, being the life of the branch now attached to the Vine, the life of the member of the body now attached to the Head.

—Norman Grubb

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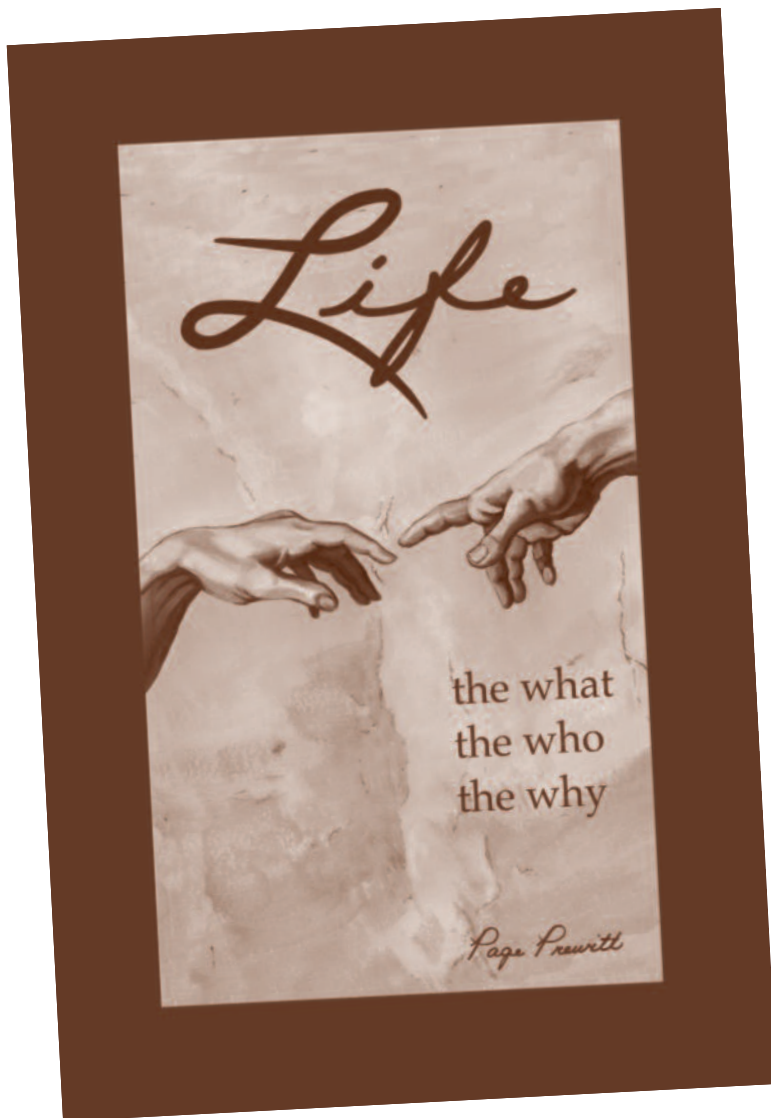
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