

The INTERCESSOR

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

intercessor.org

Volume 34, Number 3 2018

God Determines, Not Permits

By Norman Grubb

As we look around—in our world and in our personal lives—we are constantly faced with need, tragedy, and problems. In the following article, taken from his book Who Am I?, Norman goes to the heart of the issue—Where is God amidst all this misery? “Not just looking on and to be called on to intervene. No, God is the Real One right in the situation, and it is only His distorted clothing....” And is the means by which He “awakens us to get into faith action.”

We are daringly saying that wherever there is a need, small or great, wherever there is a disturbed or tragic situation, God is not just looking on and to be called upon to intervene. No, God is the Real One right in the situation, and it is only His distorted clothing; and we preserve the clothing by believing it to be the real.

Now in utmost simplicity, without changing an outward thing, let us transfer our believings. That’s all. Let us deliberately affirm, against all appearance, that this is not the difficulty it appears to be. Instead of looking at the situation, let us look through—to God, again not afar off, but the very situation being He in disguise. He with supply, He with solution, He with change, where we only see the opposite.

Then let us take it further. Let us

specifically believe that He is coming through and will manifest Himself. Let it be specific so that it is an inner word of faith; and the best way such an inner word takes outer form is by praise. All we have now done is to transfer our believing from the negative to Him the Positive, and it is our believing which lets Him

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through. Our believing doesn’t do a thing in itself. God is the doer. God is the one who deliberately put us in this problem situation and thus awakens us to get into faith action. And the faith action is my responsibility as a son of God, invested with authority to be the one by whose word of faith He reveals Himself in some concrete form. He is already there. The supply is there for He is the supply, where our human eyes see only the need. We merely, by our word of faith, affirm His

fulfilling presence. Just as at the beginning the Word said, “Let there be light, and there was light.”

Now let us backtrack and go into this in more detail, just because it is so revolutionary and universal in its application.

First, there is our necessary basis of seeing God in everything and everybody. The universe is God manifesting Himself, Spirit slowed down to the point of visibility. We either “see through” to that wonderful fact, or we don’t. If we don’t,

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The INTERCESSOR

The newsmagazine of
Zerubbabel, Inc.

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1895–1993

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there is not much point in following through along the lines in which Jesus evidently “saw through” to His Father, the hidden presence in the apparent conditions of material need, disease, or death. But, if we do, then that which needs strong confirmation, if we are to be strong in faith under any conditions, is the certainty that God doesn’t sit by and “permit” various adverse or tragic situations; but He actually “determines them.”

There are a series of very plain evidences of this in Bible incidents, and I don’t think they can be bettered, though so well known. The most obvious and complete is that Jesus, when approaching His death, did not look at it as a machi-

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nation of the devil, except in the sense that the devil was God’s agent. He admitted that this was “the prince of this world coming” to assault Him, but He added “he hath nothing in Me”: in other words, Satan could not touch Him in His real inner self on the level of His inner beliefs, and could only attack his outer body. Then He said later, when they came to arrest Him, “The cup which my Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?” That was final. This was not the devil, but His own Father responsible for this. That is perfect. Then Peter confirms it so completely in his Pentecost talk, the first official pronouncement at the birth of the church. “You crucified Him with your wicked hands, but you were doing what

was God’s determined counsel and foreknowledge.” No mere permissiveness about that. And in the first recorded prayer of the early church, they said, “Of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done.” Surely conclusive!

The other famous saying was when, after Joseph had been sold as a slave by his brothers, and imprisoned through Potiphar’s wife, and had fourteen years of bondage and confinement, but was then elevated by Pharaoh to be his chief minister, and was thus able to rescue his brethren from famine, he said, “You thought evil unto me, but God meant it for good... God did send me before you to preserve life.” Conclusive again. And add to that, many passing statements such as that the Assyrians were “the rod of Mine anger”; and Nebuchadnezzar, come to destroy Jerusalem, was “Nebuchadnezzar My servant.” And the various swarms of locusts, caterpillars and others which reduced Israel to famine, were, the Lord said through Joel, “My great army which I sent among you.” And the Lord sent a lying spirit to deceive Ahab. And it was God who stirred up Satan to assault Job, not Satan who persuaded God.

This gives me boldness and authority to say what would seem to the outward eye to be clearly contrary to the character of God as love, that whatever befalls me, or whatever apparent horrors are happening in the world, God sent those, God determined that—not just permitted them. And I think we see the explanation clearly enough when we have got it clear that outer sufferings are not the real suffering, but inner sorrow is—in other

words, the way we take a thing.

We saw in the account of the Fall that suffering was to be humanity's greatest blessing. Even before there was a human race, we are told in Hebrews 2:10 that the only way the Father could have a matured, perfected family of sons could be by His own Son, their Creator, becoming perfected as Leader-Saviour and Elder Brother by sufferings. Why? Because only by opposites can a thing be known in its reality: only by a full experience of the wrong way can we be established in the right.

So sufferings cry out to us that something is dreadfully wrong with our condition, and compel us to find our release from them, and from their inner sorrow which is their effect on us. In our blindness, which attributes the suffering to the outward conditions which appear to make us suffer, we seek to escape by altering outward conditions. But at last, by His merciful pressures on us by suffering, the Father compels us to face up to the truth: that our true sufferings are within and not without. They are because we are inwardly committing the fundamental sin of "the evil heart of unbelief." We know in our inner beings whose offspring we are, but we refuse to bend our stiff necks and inwardly acknowledge that our true suffering is our rebellious, resenting, resisting inner attitude. We refuse to acknowledge Him in our true suffering situations, and accept Him in His love, in place of questioning how He can be responsible for what is happening to us. And we escape it still further by looking at the sufferings of others and asking how God can be responsible for that, not yet knowing in ourselves that all sufferings are purposed as redemptive in the individual lives of each sufferer; and the only

true sufferer is the perpetrator, unless it brings him also to repentance.

But thank God we can come to this final point of reversing our antagonism, only because He first revealed Himself to us in outward form by His forgiving and restoring love in His Son, who has suffered with and for us. When at last we do that, and transfer our believings from our outward suffering conditions and our consequent resistance to them and our defiance of Himself in them, and believe in Him and His word of grace with no strings or questionings attached, then we have found the key and turned it in the lock: our real suffering was our inner unbelief.

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We now see through to Him alone who purposed these outer sufferings to establish us—the only way to do so. We now recognize by faith that it is He coming through in some perfect manifestation of Himself in love and power. The sufferings are only the outer shadow cast by our unbelief. Then we praise and rejoice, the joy of birth swallows up the pangs of travail; and we begin to practise the fundamental principle of no longer seeing anything as evil to us, or a problem, or a frustration. We don't "see" those things. There are no prison bars left, for there is no outer prison to this eye of faith which sees only the Father in perfection in all

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!

things. For whatever the outer situation, in our inner selves we can always believe and praise that this is God's perfection for ourselves; and then our outer prison conditions are found to be open doors to share the same secret with the many others around us in their desperate sorrows, because they have got these outer sufferings and outer bondages questions as confused as we had. We are free—free to love—and he that loves has God dwelling in him and His love perfected in him. The whole question of suffering, its meaning and values, is largely the theme of Peter's first letter.

So now we have the grounds for the change from the negative to the positive believing which has to take place in every incident small or large. It is as revolutionary as we have eyes to see it. Everything in our lives is as we see it in the outer form—every material thing, every person, every happening. We are believing what our eyes see. That is the only way we know how to live as common sense people, and we call that reality. But what if it isn't? If it is only an outer material form, just as my body is my outer form; and reality is spirit, God manifested through forms?

Now if I begin to be absurd enough to practice the habit of seeing everything and everybody and every happening in

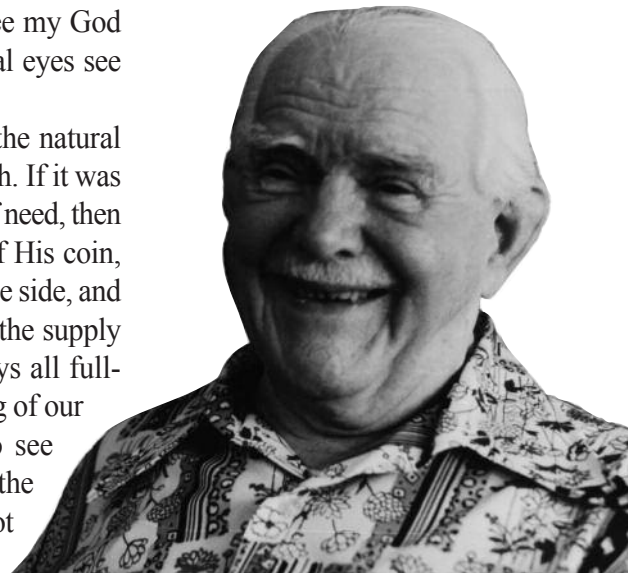
that dimension, how do I act? First, I act perfectly normal in relation to everything and everybody. I get on with living. But then all sorts of things happen that I would like to see different—again both things and people. Well, some changes and supplies are within my reach, I can handle them. Very well I do. But some are not. Now I am reaching nearer the bone. It is here that I am getting my practice in acting as a son of God, a spirit-person, not a matter-person. I look right through that situation, practical need, or whatever, and I say, "That is only appearance. That is real on the matter world level, but I'm not really living there." In my real self, my inner spirit joined to God's Spirit, that need is not real to me. It is not there to me. I only see my God of all supply where my natural eyes see only the lack.

That is how we "die" to the natural outlook. We are seeing through. If it was God who put us in this place of need, then that is only the reverse side of His coin, and we don't live on the reverse side, and don't see it. The other side is the supply already there, for He is always all fullness. So now by the "renewing of our minds," we are beginning to see clearly. He meant us to have the problem to have practice in not seeing the problem but only

Himself at the inner centre. So we now transfer our believing from natural seeing to seeing in the Spirit. We are now believing Him, and the problem (to us unreal) only His outer clothing. ■

—Who Am I?

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 was the author of many books and pamphlets, a number of which are available through the Zerubbabel Book Ministry. Norman P. Grubb entered the Kingdom at 98 years of age.



Questions & Answers

We want to hear from you.

If you have a question you would like us to answer please send it to
info@zerubbabel.org or to
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Editor's Note

There is so much to learn from the story of Joseph in the Old Testament. Most readers are well acquainted with Joseph but may not have given thought to the incredible example he provides us of a person discovering their union with the Holy Spirit, as well as a model of the Spirit of obedience living within. This issue of *The Intercessor* will explore the numerous lessons to be learned from the life of Joseph. From discovering “no independent self,” faith and obedience, and Godly forgiveness, to recognizing God’s determined plan in ALL things—you are sure to take away much wisdom from the following pages.

Our lead article, an excerpt from Norman Grubb’s book, *Who Am I?*, is titled “God Determines, Not Permits.” Norman lays out a multitude of scripture references that point to the conclusion that God does not merely permit ANYTHING—including suffering. But, rather, He determines ALL of it. Our job, as believers, is to transfer our believing from seeing the outer manifestation of the problem, to seeing that God lies behind it—“seeing through” to God in all things. A revolutionary conclusion that Joseph came to in reference to what his brothers did to him—“You meant evil unto me, but God meant it for good (Gen. 50:20).”

Follow up with a fascinating study by Jon Langley in “God’s Providential Plan—Through Joseph.” Jon really hits the nail on the head, stating that the true meaning behind the story of Joseph is to show the Spirit of God operating through him. Taking us through

the story piece by piece, Jon puts us in Joseph’s shoes, as we are clearly shown the true character of Joseph and God operating through him at every step in his journey. It is a shining example of Spirit union and what God can do through a Spirit-led vessel.

This issue’s “Bible Bedrock” takes Joseph’s famous quote from Genesis 50 and delves deep: “Ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good (Gen. 50:20).” Norman piles on scripture from the Old Testament to show us biblical proof that ALL things (not just what appears to be “good”) come from God—the supreme All-in-All. Everything comes from God, and everything from God is good, but may not always seem so to our human eyes. It takes faith to see-through and see God in all things. Here, Norman gives us the Biblical foundation for this faith.

Next, we have Part Two of last issue’s article, “The Rest of the Story.” The final piece of the puzzle! In this excerpt from *The Spontaneous You*, Norman gets to the crux of the matter when he boldly declares that Christ does not merely “help” us live, and we in a partnership with Him, but it is “He replacing us.”

We are also thrilled to share with you a moving testimony, “Forgiven,” from Vicki Larkowski. With her refreshing honesty, Vicki is able to paint a compelling picture of her rebellion against God’s way, the lies that Satan used to lure her (and keep her) away, and the deliberate choices she made to finally say “no” to Satan and “yes” to God. Confession and repentance from her sin ultimately led her to beautiful Biblical forgiveness. The restoration and forgiveness she received from

those she had cut out of her life is likened to what the eleven brothers received from Joseph. When Joseph saw his brothers’ changed lives and sorrow over their previous actions, an emotional and forgiving Joseph eagerly took them back.

Another Part Two in this issue is that of “Faith Lessons,” taken from Norman’s “Men Who Learned It” chapter in *The Liberating Secret*. Our last issue highlighted Abraham, but continuing on, we are featuring none other than—you guessed it—Joseph! You’ll get a good look at a prime example of vesselhood and obedience. But, as we know, there was no “just Joseph” to be obedient. As Norman states, “Joseph was able to exercise obedience by the Spirit of obedience joined to him.”

Finally, we’ve included a couple of our popular regular features—a “CrossWord” puzzle and “Faith Illustrations.” You can test your scripture knowledge in our “Living By Faith” puzzle on what God’s word reveals about the wonders of faith. Also, “Faith Illustrations” is fabulous, as usual. Our talented artist on staff gifts us with hand drawings that bring the Joseph story to life. This edition takes us from Genesis 37-40, so look forward to a part-two in the upcoming issue.

We believe you’ll take away much wisdom from the pages in this issue of *The Intercessor*. Thank you for reading and supporting! ■

FREE At Last!

By Norman Grubb

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

So then, what about those continual pulls that we still have to that old opposite—those invasions of fear, hate, worry, lust, self-seeking and weaknesses? Now we are alive to Satan’s subtlest assaults on us. The subtle trick occurs when we feel those constant pulls on us and we go back to the old habit of thinking we ought not to respond to them. Bang! We have been caught out in the old habit of thinking we are independent, and thus need to respond to an “ought to” or an “ought not.” This is the subtle trick. Those pulls make us think we are independent human selves again, and the moment we think that, back comes the law saying, “No, you ought not to.” And we are caught right up into false condemnation. That “ought not” only reaches us because we have slipped back into thinking we should be watching ourselves, running our own lives and combating the wrong pulls. That is where Satan has his laugh on us. There we are, inwardly condemned as if we ought not to fear, hate, anger, lust, or to want or react to these negative desires. And there we are struggling and condemned, or maybe following through to some actual sin.

Why? Here comes Satan’s final subtle trick. *We are tricked*

into thinking that having those pulls is sin; whereas the real sin is the unbelief of thinking we are again independent selves who should not have these pulls. But independent self is really Satan-self again having his hold on us, and we then again “carnal, sold under sin.” That means we are back again under the law with

its “thou shalt not.” But we are bound and unable to keep that law because our false sense of independent self, to which the law addresses itself, is really Satan as us with his temporary control of us.

Paul puts the essence of Romans 6, 7 and 8 into three verses to the Galatians—Galatians 5:16-18. “Walk in the Spirit,” he writes, “and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.” We are Spirit people, but still in our flesh-humanity, and thus open to all Satan’s pulls on us in our soul-body emotions and appetites. So now what happens? We become conscious of flesh pulls, for, says Paul, “the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other.” These contrary pulls make us conscious of the antagonistic opposites, “the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.” We are Spirit people bearing Spirit fruit and loving to be so, but we now also feel the pulls and desires of the flesh—Satan’s agency in this Satan-filled world for attracting us back to his self-for-self ways.

This consciousness of the flesh-Spirit antagonisms is the danger spot. Satan thereby seeks to drag us back to that separation through the Fall, in which we again think we are independent selves instead of Spirit-united selves. This independent self outlook is really the touch of the old Satan-union on us. It also means that we immediately put ourselves back under the law again. And with what consequence? We are bound by that Satan-self in our separation and cannot respond to the law or Spirit, and so Paul says,

"Ye cannot do the things that ye would." Thus we are under the condemnation of the law and experience guilt that we cannot fulfill it. Being in the lie of independent self temporarily puts us back under Satan's control. Therefore, we cannot do the things that we would. Properly caught, properly bound and condemned!

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

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

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

We Will Repeat About This Independent Self

Because of its importance, and because it is the main reason for this whole "walking in the Spirit" sharing, I will ad-

dress again what we do in meeting the assaults of the flesh. The answer is that we do not fight temptation or take condemnation for it. The very opposite. We recognize that the real temptation is to make me think I am the independent self that I am not. Then I am again "under the law," yet cannot fulfill it, because independent self is really Satan as me (Matt. 16:23). It is the sin of unbelief. What then do I do? I quickly recognize that the problem is not my having flesh-temptation, but rather my temporarily forgetting (2 Pet. 1:9) that I am no longer an independent self. Who I am is simply and solely an expresser of Christ in His nature.

Therefore, as quickly as I can, I *accept* the fact of being tempted, for we live in a totally tempting world. Accepting that, I don't deny or resist the *temptation*. Instead, I resist the *tempter* (James 4:7) by saying, "That's not me you are pulling. That's only my outer soul emotions and bodily appetites, which of course are open to all that can reach me from your outer world (for his is 'the spirit of the world'—1 Cor. 2:12). But I am not a bunch of outer responses: I am Christ as me. He is the real Self expressed by my human container self." As I do that, I am in fact doing what Paul said in 2 Corinthians 4:10: inwardly recognizing my place of death in His death to those old pulls of Satan on my human self. In place of these temptations, I am seeing myself in my true self-relationship of Christ in me as me. As I do that, the consciousness of myself as a Christ-expresser swallows up the negative consciousness of Satan and his pulls on me. Satan flees (James 4:7). I resist him by replacing false belief in him by true belief in who I really am—Christ as me. Light swallows up dark. We don't fight the dark; we recognize its right to exist, but we replace it by turning on the light.

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

—No Independent Self

Full booklet available at: zerubbabel.org

God's Providential Plan— *Through Joseph*

By Jon Langley

I've always enjoyed reading the story of Joseph. And I've been fortunate enough to see the musical *Joseph and the Technicolor Dreamcoat* several times so have come to love the music and even played a small part in our ministry's youth version when I was much younger. But recently whilst reading a children's book of Joseph to my son, age two, it annoyed me that the book suggested Joseph was somewhat of a show-off, and focused on the passage of scripture "here comes the dreamer" (Gen. 37:19), making Joseph seem somewhat aloof. It totally misses the point and after reading the Joseph story to my son, it reminded me I was previously impacted and enjoyed an audio talk of Norman Grubb's on Joseph. So I listened to it again and also read the story in Genesis.

Who knows, I guess it is possible Joseph was arrogant or a bit of a show-off but I just don't see or hear any sign of it when I read the scripture. In fact it's just the opposite. What I love about it, (and this is the focus of Norman's talk), is the deeper meaning revealed to us through Genesis 37-50, showing us the ways of God and the ways of the Spirit operating through a human life.

Ultimately God's plan involving Joseph was one of providence, ensuring His covenant with Abraham was upheld. If Joseph had not been sold as a slave and ended up Governor of Egypt the whole family would most likely have perished during the famine back in Canaan along with the oath made to Abraham. But none of what happened to Joseph was a fluke and God sure keeps His word! I think this is the real point and message being made in scripture about his life.

After everything that happens to Joseph, and when the brothers are re-united, Joseph declares in Gen. 45:7

"God sent me ahead of you to preserve a remnant." And again in Gen 45:8 more overtly—"It was not you who sent me here, but God." Finally comes the crucial verse where Joseph reassures his brothers in Gen. 50:20—"you meant it for evil but God meant it for good," demonstrating how ultimately God is in control (the All and in All) and simply but skilfully worked the brothers sin and unbelief into his own plan ensuring the survival of the family. The family is reunited and restored both physically and spiritually, and eventually re-settle from Canaan in the best of the Egyptian land—Goshen. No wonder the musical was such a big hit!

What struck me in Norman's study and from the scripture was just how fixed Joseph was in believing his union with God and the faithfulness with which he endured those years. Life assaulted and besieged him in some unimaginable ways:

Hated—by all 11 of his brothers (Jacob's favouritism and the coat didn't help). We are told "they could not even speak a kind word about him"; and this was even before he told them about his dreams!

Fear—having given a bad report about them to his Father and then finding them in Dothan which appeared to be somewhere other than where they were supposed to be, he is thrown into a pit to be killed. But then sold as a slave to foreigners, and taken to another country with a different language and culture; at age 17!

Persecuted—wrongfully accused and thrown into jail at the hand of Potiphar's wife when all he did was continuously resist her again and again, eventually fleeing the scene to get away from her relentless advances and attention.

Worry & doubt—in jail and alone possibly facing execution for all he knew. His hopes were further dashed when he was forgotten by the butler and baker after interpreting their dreams, and was left to rot a further two years in jail after they were released.

On a soul level for Joseph we can only imagine what it was like. Incredibly, we hear practically nothing from him directly about it except in Gen. 40:14-15—“mention me to Pharaoh and get me out. I was forcibly carried off....and even here I have done nothing to deserve being put in a dungeon.” I’m not sure this is how I would have reacted under the same circumstances—just a simple: mention me!?? The fact Joseph appears to say relatively little about his trials and tribulations is amazing and speaks volumes to me. No outburst, no ranting, griping, cursing of his brothers or Potiphar’s wife, no hint of resentment, moaning, whining, fist-shaking at God, or slumping into a deep state of depression or despair. How easy it would have been to get into unbelief about what was happening to him. But as Norman tells us, “Joseph was set apart from the beginning and was so into God that God got into him.” As we know from Gal. 2:20, God operates His anointed ones and His children. And I think this is the true story of Joseph.

Later on in the passages of scripture his brothers provide us a glimpse of what it was like for Joseph on a soul-level when they suspect they are being punished for their sin; “...we saw how distressed he was when he pleaded with us for his life” Gen. 42:21. In Psalms 105:18 we are told “...they bruised his feet with shackles, his neck was put in irons.”

But Joseph is a shining example of someone seeing through his situations to God. He knew and lived from “The Secret”: being the human channel through which God will accomplish His powerful works—i.e. through us! We see it played out repeatedly and powerfully in the evidence of the life that followed, starting when he

was pulled out of the pit. The Spirit of God could not be hidden and even pagan Egyptians recognised this. For example, we are not told exactly how it came to be that Potiphar picked Joseph to be his slave but there must have been something that made Joseph stand out or be noticed. Before you know it Joseph went from slave to attendant, living in his masters house and entrusted with not just a little, or even much, but EVERYTHING Potiphar owned (Gen. 39:4). Pretty amazing. We are told this was because his master saw that the Lord was with him and the Lord gave him success in everything he did (Gen. 39:3). It’s just incredible that Potiphar knew the Lord was with him. He didn’t say Joseph was lucky or had the Midas touch!

...Joseph is a shining example of someone seeing through his situations to God. He knew and lived from “The Secret”: being the human channel through which God will accomplish His powerful works.

Joseph was a young man at this stage and according to Norman: “had the concern of God on him and an inner consciousness of God.” Hence, the temptations of flesh and the devil, even in his new elevated position, had no hold on him. This was why he reacted so strongly to repeated advances from Potiphar’s wife: “How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God” (Gen. 39:9), and later fled the house to get away from her. Joseph is quick to point out that sin is committed against God, which I think is revealing about his faith and spiritual maturity.

When he was unjustly thrown into jail (there is no text to say Joseph disputes what happened), we are again told how God was with him and he found favor in the eyes of the prison warden. But Joseph wasn’t afforded any luxuries such as extra food or a prison cell with a window overlooking the Nile. No, he was made responsible for ALL that was done there (Gen. 39:22). Again we are told this is because the Lord was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did—incredible!

The fact Joseph noticed and showed concern for the butler and baker in prison Gen. 4:7 is just further evidence he was completely fixed in his faith, living from an inner knowing and assurance that God was in

control and operating through him. Despite his own unfair treatment and circumstances we hear Joseph unconcerned for himself and only for others, asking “why do you look so sad today?” I just love that bit. They mention their dreams and he is quick to say that interpretations belong to God—Gen. 4:8. Notice he doesn’t try to take any credit or claim to have any special ability of his own. Now, does that sound like an arrogant person?

As we know, the interpretations were given from God but delivered through Joseph and were completely accurate. We also know the chief cup-bearer then promptly forgot all about Joseph and did not deliver Joseph’s message to Pharaoh “get me out...” He had to wait another two years until finally Pharaoh has the dreams which confound his inner-circle of magicians and the like, but finally jogs the cup-bearer’s memory—he finally speaks up, sharing of his own experience and telling of Joseph’s talent.

Pharaoh calls for Joseph in Gen. 41:15 saying “But I have heard it said of you that you can understand a dream, to interpret it.” Now, if you’re in prison and called before Pharaoh to interpret his dreams surely this is your opportunity, especially if you are a braggart or self-righteous person to take some of the credit and get out of jail (and as Norman describes in this talk, I love how Joseph first manages to get cleaned up and have a shave—talk about being dressed for success!) But no: “I cannot do it,” Joseph replies, “but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires.” Again, Joseph takes none of the credit. After the interpretation is given, Pharaoh is quick to enlist Joseph as the man to lead Egypt through the years ahead of plenty and famine. But Pharaoh also makes the incredible and definitive statement in Gen. 41:38 “Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God”—WOW! Norman points out to us how aston-

ishing this is because Pharaoh and the Egyptians were pagans and had their own gods which they worshiped—even more amazing. (I checked all my different Bible versions and they all reference Pharaoh’s statement that the Spirit of God is IN Joseph).

The story unfolds further as everyone knows but for me this is the crux of it all. I can’t help but notice we have now been told three times during Joseph’s story that essentially God operates through his anointed ones...(1) the Lord was with Joseph (as observed by Potiphar), (2) the Lord was with Joseph (as observed by the prison warden), AND (3) the spirit of God was IN Joseph (as declared by Pharaoh).

God is in every-
thing—he determines,
not permits. He does
not permit Satan to do
evil in the world; He
determines what He
will allow Satan to do.
But what Satan means
for evil, God means
for good.

Similarly, after the brothers are reunited Joseph testifies again three times to them and we hear the repeated message that God is in and means everything—the All and in all—(1) God sent me ahead, (2) it was not you who sent me here but God, and (3) you meant it for evil but God meant it for good.

Now Joseph told Pharaoh he had the same dream twice because it emphasized God’s determination to do a thing and do it soon. And Joseph himself knew this first hand from his own dreams back in Canaan. So if we hear some-

thing three times how much more determined is God in making His ways clear that we are not independent selves but human vessels created to contain His Spirit (Christ). And that God is in everything—he determines, not permits. He does not permit Satan to do evil in the world; He determines what He will allow Satan to do. But what Satan means for evil, God means for good. So instead of looking at the situation, let us look through—to God, each situation we face being He in disguise. He with supply, He with solution—a person—Christ in us! ■

Bible Bedrock

***“Ye thought evil against me,
but God meant it unto good.”***

Genesis 50:20

The first principle of faith in action...is that inner seeing must come before proper believing. Now in this world full of evil and problems, we will always, as humans, start by “seeing things as they are”—as they appear to be—and that means seeing and believing in something that disturbs us, which we call evil, and so it may be. This is “negative” believing... and what we are inwardly seeing, and therefore believing, is what we outwardly transmit to others. We can’t help it in our looks, words and deeds, for all we share with others is ourselves; and if we see things as evil we transmit negative believing to others—we transmit darkness, not light; death, not life.

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

For that I had to find my solution, and of course I turned to the Bible. There I found the plainest of statements, which did link God with evil. The prophet Isaiah said plainly (45:6-7), “I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil [Hebrews *ra*—adversity, calamity]; I, the Lord do all these things.” That statement is total enough. But there are plenty more. To Moses, God said (Ex. 4:11), “Who hath made...the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the Lord?” When Jeremiah spoke of God’s coming judgment on rebellious Is-

rael with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, he said that God had called the heathen king who would destroy them “Nebuchadnezzar, My servant” (Jeremiah 43:10)? The Assyrians God called “the rod of My anger” (Isaiah 10:5). All the destructive plagues of insects that destroyed harvest after harvest in the days of Joel the prophet, “the palmerworm, the locust, the cankerworm, the caterpillar,” God spoke of as “My great army which I sent among you” (See Joel 1:4 and 2:25). There are dozens of such sayings by the prophets.

We all know about Joseph, and he went even further. He left no room for us to say that God “permits” evil things to happen but does not direct them; for, even though he had suffered thirteen years by being sold as a slave by his brethren and then being thrown into prison because of the false accusation of Potiphar’s wife, still he told his brethren, “Ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good” (Genesis 50:20) Meant it! To “mean” is not to “permit.” It is direct purpose and planning.

Peter, in a startling statement in his speech on the day of Pentecost, when referring to the greatest crime in history, told the crowds, “Jesus of Nazareth...Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain” (Acts 2:22-23). Determinate counsel—no “permissiveness” there!

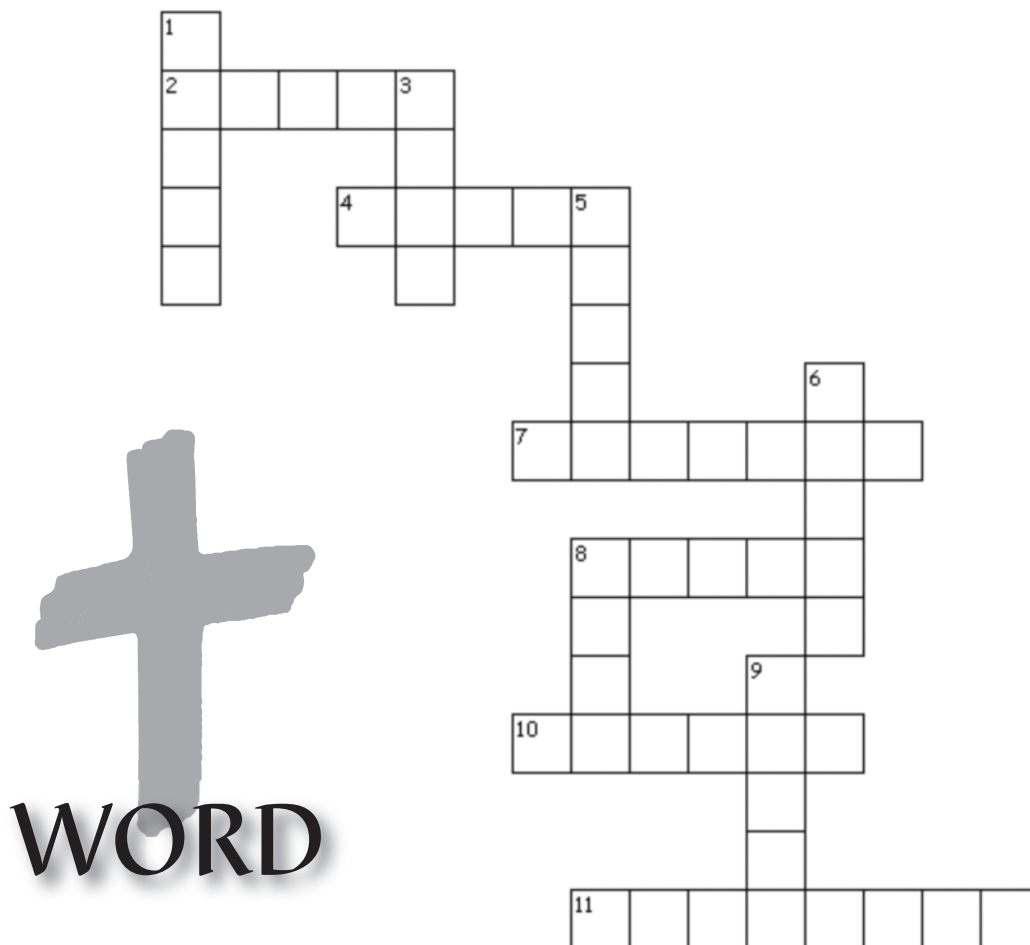
—Yes, I Am

by Norman Grubb

LIVING BY FAITH

PART 2

In this issue of *The Intercessor*, our puzzle once again looks at what God's Word reveals to us about the wonders of Faith. Jesus had much to show His followers (including us today!) about living a life of Faith. And as Galatians 2:20 proclaims, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." So it is actually by Christ's faith, as He lives His life through our vessels that we are able to step out in faith and walk, though on a flesh-level here on earth, at the same time believing in the spirit dimension, seeing as He sees, "that **all things work together** for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." So as you complete this puzzle, search for the truths in the scriptures about the life of Faith we are privileged to be called to live.



ACROSS

2. Hebrews 11:1 says, "Now faith is the substance of things _____ for, the evidence of things not seen."
4. In Romans 10:9-10, Paul states the word of faith that he preaches that "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be _____. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."
7. Paul charges Timothy - and us! - in 1 Timothy 6:12 to "fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on _____ life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."
8. Paul encourages the Corinthians with straightforward words in 2 Corinthians 5:7: "For we walk by faith, not by _____."
10. In Luke 7:9, we see Jesus' amazed response to the centurion who, though his beloved servant was dying, asked only for Jesus to speak a word, which he believed was all the authority needed to heal: "When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in _____."
11. In Mark 9:23-24, we read the powerful message of honesty and faith in the interchange between Jesus and the father of the sick child: "Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine _____."

DOWN

1. We see in John 12:24-25 that just as Jesus gave His all for us in His life and death, so our life of faith that He lives through us will involve all that we are in whatever way He directs: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of _____ fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."
3. In Hebrews 11:17-19 we read, "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said that in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the _____."
5. In Mark 11:23, Jesus spoke of the power of faith available to us: "For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not _____ in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith."
6. Ephesians 4:4-6 proclaims the central belief that is all we as Christians can rely upon: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one _____, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."
8. Jesus responds in Luke 5:19-20 to the faith of the men who brought their friend to him for healing, "And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus. And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy _____ are forgiven thee."
9. The joy of all Christians is proclaimed by Paul in Romans 5:1, 2, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have _____ with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

Faith Illustrations

THE STORY OF JOSEPH—PART 1: JOSEPH'S DREAMS AND IMPRISONMENT IN EGYPT

JOSEPH'S DREAMS (Genesis 37:1-11)

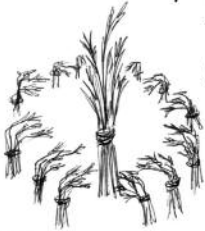
Joseph was 17 years old, tending flocks with his brothers, and shared a bad report about them to their father. Now Israel (Jacob) loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an ornate robe for him. When his brothers saw their father loved Joseph more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.



Joseph's dreams made his brothers hate him even more.

He told them: "We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it."

Then his next dream: "This time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me." When Joseph told Jacob, he rebuked him, and said, "What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?" His brothers were jealous, but his father kept the matter in mind.



JOSEPH SOLD BY HIS BROTHERS (Genesis 37:12-36)

Joseph's brothers had gone out to graze their father's flocks at Shechem. Jacob sent Joseph to get a report about them. When Joseph arrived, a man told Joseph his brothers moved on to Dothan, and Joseph went there to find them. But when they saw him coming, they plotted to kill him. "Here comes that dreamer!" "Come now, let's kill him, throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we'll see what comes of his dreams." Reuben convinced his brothers to throw Joseph into a cistern (well) so he could go back to rescue him. When Joseph arrived, they took off his robe and threw him into the well. Later, they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites travelling toward Egypt. The brothers sold Joseph to the merchants for twenty shekels of silver. When Reuben returned to the cistern and saw that Joseph was not there, and he tore his clothes, and said, "The boy isn't there! Where can I turn now?" They slaughtered a goat, dipped Joseph's robe in the blood, and took it to their father. When Jacob recognized it, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and mourned for many days and refused to be comforted. Meanwhile, Joseph was sold in Egypt to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard.



POTIPHAR'S WIFE (Genesis 39:1-23)

Potiphar was an Egyptian and the captain of the guard for Pharaoh. When Potiphar saw that the LORD was with Joseph and gave him success in all he did, he made him his attendant—in charge of all he owned. The LORD blessed the entire household because of Joseph. Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, and Potiphar's wife took notice of him and repeatedly tried to get him to come to bed with her. Joseph refused: "How could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" One day he went into the house to attend to his duties while no servants were inside. She caught him by his cloak and said, "Come to bed with me!" But he ran out of the house. She lied to her household servants and later her husband: "He came in here to sleep with me, but I screamed. When he heard me scream for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house." Potiphar burned with anger and threw Joseph in prison. The LORD was with Joseph, and He showed him kindness and favor in the eyes of the prison warden, who put him in charge of all those held there, and responsible for all that was done there. "The LORD was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did."



THE CUPBEARER AND THE BAKER (Genesis 40:1-23)

Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker offended their master, the king of Egypt, who threw them in the same prison, and the captain of the guard assigned them to Joseph. One night these two men had a dream no one could interpret, so they were dismayed. Joseph said: "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me your dreams." The cupbearer shared: "I saw a vine in front of me, and on the vine were three branches. As soon as it budded, it blossomed, and its clusters ripened into grapes. Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes, squeezed them into Pharaoh's cup and put the cup in his hand." Joseph interpreted: "The three branches are three days. Within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your position, and you will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand, just as you used to do when you were his cupbearer. But when all goes well with you, remember me and show me kindness; mention me to Pharaoh and get me out of this prison. I was forcibly carried off from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done nothing to deserve being put in a dungeon." When the baker heard this favorable interpretation, he shared his dream: "On my head were three baskets of bread. In the top basket were all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, but the birds were eating them out of the basket on my head." Joseph interpreted: "The three baskets are three days. Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head and impale your body on a pole. And the birds will eat away your flesh." The third day was Pharaoh's birthday, and during a feast for all his officials, he lifted up the heads of the cupbearer and the baker in the presence of his officials. He restored the chief cupbearer to his position, so that he once again put the cup into Pharaoh's hand—but he impaled the chief baker, just as Joseph had said to them in his interpretation. The chief cupbearer, however, did not remember Joseph. (See next issue for part 2.)

Forgiveness

By Vicki Larkowski

Despite learning about Jesus from a very young age, I was a sneaky, arrogant child who did not obey my Heavenly Father (or my earthly one). As a teen, I lived a cycle of underage drinking and sexual sin, followed by regret for those sins, followed again by giving in to those temptations because I had not fully closed the door on them. I was pregnant by age 18. With those permanent consequences, God finally had my attention.

Shortly after my son was born, my mother introduced me to a small group of believers in our Midwestern area. We all gathered twice a week to enjoy fellowship and study God's Word. I was learning to be accountable and hearing God's Truth about Who I am in Christ—that I am a vessel containing either Christ (as a believer) or Satan (as an unbeliever); there is no independent me.

Through that Minnesota Bible study, I met friends in the North Carolina ministry; and a few years later, my son and I moved to North Carolina, followed by my mother.

There, through God's grace and through His people, I was parented and I was taught to parent. I was maturing in faith and became a trusted youth leader, employee, confidant, and friend. My father-

less son was surrounded by Christian role models and friends; he experienced far beyond what most children born to unwed teen moms experience.

But daily life still felt hard (even though much of the *hardness* was from consequences of sin). Walking by faith did not feel easy—nor did accountability or trusting God to give me His highest and best in every circumstance. At 34 years old, I had not been on a date since becoming a mom. My mother and I shared a home; I feared that would be our living arrangement into old age. My son bore the scars of having been born to a young, rebellious, unequipped single mother; I feared what further embarrassment and humiliation his teen years would bring. I felt tired and bitter and guarded. I felt ashamed of myself and simultaneously envious of others. I saw my friends being obedient to God and sacrificing in various ways, and I feared what God would require of me. I wanted to escape responsibility, accountability, discomfort, and exposure.

Although I was well-versed in the truth that I am a vessel containing either Christ, I still fell for Satan's enticing *lie of the I*—that there is somehow a *just me* who can live in some neutral space apart from God's perfect will. There was Christ, there was Satan, and there was some *me* in the middle who could kind of, sort of *steer the ship*.

Much will be demanded from everyone who has been given much, and from the one who has been entrusted with much, even more will be asked.

Luke 12:48b

And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.

Galations 6:9

By believing there was an independent me in any capacity, I'd given Satan control. I'd refused to speak truth against the lies. With Satan doing my seeing, my thoughts grew darker. I no longer saw my friends as Christ-operated vessels who wanted God's best for me. Rather than fearing where Satan would take me, I feared the reactions of others. I

wanted to permanently hide. My main focus became to find relief. *Somewhere there had to be an easier, simpler way.* I quit attending Bible study.

Then, like a dog returning to vomit (Proverbs 26:11), in summer 2005—ten years after we'd moved to North Carolina—I quit my job and dragged my 14-year-old son halfway across the country to my childhood hometown.

I was banking on a made-up neutral spiritual place where—while I might be some sort of *milquetoast Christian*—I certainly wouldn't become allied against my friends or return to my previous sins of drinking and promiscuity. I didn't intend to cause that much hurt and destruction. I just wanted to move on, leave the past in the past and maintain some degree of a godly standard, hopefully with a husband and children.

This, of course, is impossible. As Christian believers, we are either clear vessels of Jesus Christ, or we are in the sin of unbelief and thus temporarily enslaved to Satan until we confess our sins. There's no *just me* to tell my temporary slave-master what he can and cannot do.

Satan had the reins and quickly took me to all the places I'd previously sworn I wouldn't go. I did the things I swore I would never do. I hurt people in ways that I cannot take back. Rather than repent then and there, I made excuse after excuse. I continued to run from the light because my deeds were evil (John 3:19-20).

Appealing to both pride and shame, Satan's lie remained: *Now you can NEVER go back. You can never face any-*

one with who you've become. I would feel agony over my secrets and how I'd led my son down a path of destruction that I had never intended. Instead of bowing my knee, I carried on in years of self-loathing and pretending my ever-evolving consequences were not as bad as they were. But I knew I was living on a lot of grace and feared what consequence would happen next. My continued sin was ever unfolding before me.

Yet I didn't confess and repent the whole of it.

I did know I had a sin problem. James 5:16 haunted me. So, I confidentially confessed my biggest sin secret to a counselor in hopes I could leave it all behind me and carry on. That only brought momentary relief.

By the way, I did get a husband and more children: I married an unbeliever, and we care for our two grandchildren born out of wedlock. We experienced happy times; but inwardly, peace eluded me. What would Satan take next? My health was deteriorating and I struggled to think clearly on daily tasks, much less spiritual matters.

I tried to move on and say I was a vessel of Christ, but I knew too much. I know God's word commands that I confess my sin. I couldn't live with any confidence or authority that Christ was operating through me if there was a sin block.

I longed to see my husband to submit his will and life to Christ as his Savior, yet I knew I had no right to ask that of

God after my years of defiant sin and choosing to be unequally yoked in spite of knowing better. My now-adult son was living enchained by the consequences of both my and his own sin.

God is the Hound of Heaven, always pursuing us. In His mercy, as sin hardened my heart and blinded my eyes and fogged up my brain, God's Truth remained inescapable. In early 2017, my father's death was one of many wake-up calls, as was a concerning conversation with a young person to whom I'd once been a role model and who now was also rebelling against God.

I desired to be right with God. Yet, I still didn't surrender all. I feared what God would ask of me. (I was such a disobedient

fool for Satan that I still couldn't see how he'd robbed me of EVERYTHING. In truth, what could I possibly hold onto that Satan hadn't already stolen? Nothing is mine to lose.)

Finally, in the summer of 2017—12 years after I'd moved away—I let down the defenses. *I am wrong; 100% wrong. No excuses. Not a single defense. No gray area. No neutral place. God knows it, and I know it. My friends have been 100% innocent. What excuse could I possibly make for not confessing my sin and asking their forgiveness?*

There was no skirting it. Just as Joseph's brothers knew they were *truly guilty*

Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

Psalm 139:7

about [their] brother, I knew I had to go back to the point where I left—to the body of believers I'd hurt—confess my sin and make things right. I feared the outcome, but I knew what I had to do. It did not matter what God might ask me to do or give up or change. His Way is the ONLY right way. EVERYTHING else is a lie.

That was my first point of surrender. But I *still* acted on fear. Instead of getting on the phone and doing the hard thing, I made a list of people from whom I needed to ask forgiveness. I planned to write letters to each of them and mail them all at once. And then I agonized over those letters.

Clear direction: around that time, on the phone with my mother, I confessed my sin to her and asked for her forgiveness. She still lived near and fellow-shipped with our friends. In our next conversation, on a Tuesday, Mom asked if I intended to confess and ask forgiveness from any of them. I told her that I did; she recommended that I simply call people one at a time. I agreed and, even though I felt fearful about conversing with people I'd sinned against, I was grateful for Mom's guidance.

Recalling David's words in Psalm 51:4, I asked God to forgive me.

Then came my test.

The day after our Tuesday call, Mom called me: *Hey Vicki. Just call Bible Study tonight.*

Okay; I'll do that.

I did not know what to expect, but I do

know my sin hurt people in ways I may never understand. I had been allied against God and against His righteous people for many years. I would ask forgiveness no matter the outcome. I would listen to whatever they had to say. I would take full ownership.

So I called. It was surreal to hear voices I hadn't heard in 12 years. They sounded warm and kind and eager to hear from me. They listened quietly as I confessed my sin and asked for their forgiveness. Only a few minutes had gone by when my friend Page gently stopped me to say, *Vicki, it was Satan.*

It. was. Satan! That deceiver had duped me and I had refused to stop believing his lies for over 12 years! They'd known it all along. But I had to be broken and repentant before the gift of forgiveness could be of any value. God had forgiven me. And His people forgave me. Furthermore, they—the very people I had been allied against, who had every right to be angry with me and cut me off—rejoiced and were encouraged by my repentance. Sweet, AMAZING, indescribable grace and mercy!

That phone call lasted only 15 minutes. It was that simple. Following that evening, I called friends one-on-one to ask their forgiveness in more specific detail. Every single person forgave me and welcomed me back like a prodigal son, with the generosity of Joseph toward the same brothers who previously had plotted to kill him.

Meanwhile at home, my husband was witnessing all of this. I had confessed my sin toward him too. He had good reason to cut me off. But he too forgave me. Six days after I called Bible study, my husband prayed to accept Jesus Christ as his personal Savior.

When I finally bowed my knee and confessed my sin, I had no expectation of restored fellowship. Yet the moment I obeyed—repented, confessed, and received forgiveness—that fellowship was immediately restored. I remain in awe of this gift. Like a magnetic pull, I couldn't wait to see my friends face to face. I cannot adequately describe that face-to-face

Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge.

Psalm 51:4

reunion. But I do believe I know how Joseph's brothers felt when he forgave them and welcomed them back. That is total forgiveness and restoration!

What is now more apparent to me than ever is that, while I certainly deserve condemnation, God's plan is for me to be a clean vessel for His Spirit so that His mighty power can be expressed immediately and boldly for His purpose: to save the world. Onward!

I have lived many years as a fool for Satan; now I am a fool for Christ (I Corinthians 4:10). ■

The Rest of the Story—Part 2

by Norman Grubb

In the second part of this two-part article, Norman Grubb describes how a full understanding of union liberates us from the false idea of any change or resources in ourselves.

We have now found that the key to life is, not assistance or partnership, but replacement. Redemption from our sins was not something half and half. It was not we being able to do something for ourselves in getting right with God, and then He helping us out. It was only when we saw we were lost and done for that we found, not assistance, but replacement. His blood for our sins. Now we find that there is no half-way house for ourselves. It is not He helping us to live, and we in partnership with Him: it is He replacing us. His blood in place of our sins, His self in place of ourselves.

We can never stress this too much, because all the burdens, distresses and problems of us Christians have their source in our old, old habit of looking for some ability or enablement in ourselves, and often the exhortations from the pulpit give the same misleading emphasis—you *ought* to love more, pray more, be better, etc., then feeling desperate because it isn't there: whereas the truth is that, as old tin cans, we don't look for change or resources in ourselves. This is the point—humanity does not change, but we move over in our inner consciousness to Him whom we contain, who doesn't change us but is the Changeless All within, and Him we affirm as all we need.

What we have to learn and experience about ourselves and the relationship of humanity to Deity is now completed. They were absolute lessons—the lessons of replacement. They could not be learned without exposure before remedy, and it had to be absolute exposure. There could be no shred of recognition of His blood in place of our sins, or His self in place of ourselves until we had come to the total end of our self-justification, and our own self-reliance; usually these two

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lessons are learned in succession, the one before we are redeemed, and the other after; and each entails a total brokenness, conditioning us to recognize and accept the total replacement.

With this relationship in clear focus, it is safe for us now to turn around and pay attention to our humanity, and give it back its rightful place. It has been a case of the disappearance of the human self as a background for its reappearance where it really belongs. We never were,

of course, pots but persons. But we had first to know, and know for ever our pot relationship—that it is the exclusive He and never we, and we not becoming something but containing Someone. When we have so learned this that we shall never depart from it, but know we are vessels for ever, we the creature, He the Creator, neither one ever becoming the other, nor mixing in that sense, then we are free for the right form of self-affirmation and the total uninhibited activities of the liberated self.

Our discovery, then, is that our actual relationship with God is not that of vessels containing Him, but of a unity, Person with person, which could not be possible between two inanimate entities, such as a vessel and what it contains. Indeed, in this sense, the vessel analogy, if regarded as a complete illustration, is misleading, because it can leave us with the mistaken impression that our relationship with God is variable, just as a cup may contain liquid at one moment and be emptied at another; whereas the real truth is an indivisible union, in which there can be no such thing as sometimes a fullness, sometimes emptiness, or a partial filling. When we feel like that or believe it, we are accepting an illusion.

The point is that the actual fact of the relationship of the union cannot be safely realized, or lived by, until once and for all it has sunk into and become fixed in our consciousness that He is always the all, and we nothing but the container, the ves-

sel. That is why the vessel relationship is a necessity as a permanency in our consciousness, before the union relationship can safely be to us what it really is.

The analogies of the union given by Jesus and Paul are likening our relationship to Vine and branch, Head and body. In each case they form a unity. When we look at a tree, we do not divide in our minds between trunk and branches, we see one tree—a unity. Equally a head and body form a unity, and we regard them as such. When we see people, we do not see so many heads and bodies: We see just persons—a unity. We do not even speak of a union, which directs the attention to two coming together to make one. We speak of a unity where the two have become one. So it is with the Trinity and us.

Now we come to what we have already seen to be God's sole purpose in Christ dying and rising, and we with Him: the destruction in death of the old

union with "the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience," and the union in resurrection with "the Spirit that raised up Jesus from the dead"—God Himself: and the union has produced the unity. This has been the fact in all of us since in our need and in our freedom, we saw, believed, and received the Christ of God. From that moment (whether specific or dateless) the unity was a fact. He had joined Himself to me and I was joined to Him. As Paul said, "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." In that unity, He has become the real I, again as Paul wrote, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

In other words Paul did not say that he and Christ lived side by side within him, as if it was, "I live *and* Christ lives in me": but that though he was a living human, as much after conversion as before, yet the real Paul was no longer himself, but another Self in his place: "I live

yet not I, but Christ lives in me." The real Paul was Christ walking about and talking, just as Paul wrote in another place, "Ye are the temples of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them."

That is why Jesus had said, "Ye *are* the light of the world," not "You *have* the light." If we have a thing, it is not we, but just something we hold in our hands, as it were. But Jesus did not say, "You are darkness, but you have me who am light." He said, "You *are* light." But how could that be when we are darkness and he is the light? Unity. Because he and we are one, therefore, he says, "You are the light." That is why John wrote, "If we love one another, it is God dwelling in us and his love perfected in us." Our loving is really He loving by us. Again unity. ■

—*The Spontaneous You*

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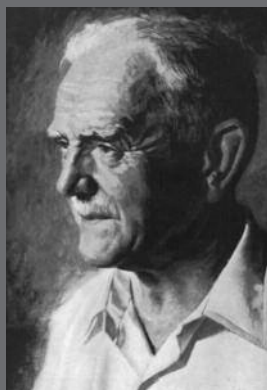
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ACROSS

2. HOPED
4. SAVED
7. ETERNAL
8. SIGHT
10. ISRAEL
11. UNBELIEF

5. DOUBT

6. FAITH
8. SINS
9. PEACE

DOWN

1. WHEAT
3. DEAD



Faith Notes

...the consciousness of myself as a Christ-expresser swallows up the negative consciousness of Satan and his pulls on me. Satan flees (James 4:7). I resist him by replacing false belief in him by true belief in who I really am—Christ as me. Light swallows up dark. We don't fight the dark; we recognize its right to exist, but we replace it by turning on the light.

—No Independent Self

We replace all negatives (without condemnation for feeling the pull of them, and thus accepting Satan's right to pull) with the positives of Christ as us, and we as expressions of God as love, power, peace—recognizing who we are, Him as us and we loving as He loves, walking as He walks, overcoming our world as He did by faith...

—To All Believers...

It's as Simple as This

You don't spend time during a day asking yourself whether you are really there, do you? God is your other you, so you don't need to keep asking whether He is there either. You and He are one. What you are doing, He is doing...

—The Spontaneous You

I only exist to contain Him. A vessel does not become the liquid it holds; they are separate, unmixable entities: so I as a human do not become the power or love or wisdom of God; I merely contain Him who is all these, and everything.

—The Spontaneous You

Let us deliberately affirm, against all appearance, that this is not the difficulty it appears to be. Instead of looking at the situation, let us look through—to God, again not afar off, but the very situation being He in disguise. He with supply, He with solution, He with change, where we only see the opposite.

—Who Am I?

Faith Lessons

Part 2: Joseph

by Norman Grubb

We conclude this two part article with a look at Joseph—a perfect Biblical example of a life of obedience and faith.

Joseph is the perfect example, outside the Saviour Himself, of the trained servant of the Spirit. He, too, like the One he prefigured, “learned obedience through the things he suffered.” He had to learn. All have to learn. There is no shortcut. Learning obedience means learning that we were never created for independent action, to be self-acting selves, but for submission, to obey and to love and obey: and learning that this is made wonderfully actual by the Spirit of obedience living within us, the Spirit of Him who “became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

All this is wonderfully seen in Joseph. Pure in youth, taking a lonely stand against sin in the family circle, he boldly declared the revelations God gave him, amidst hatred and envy from his brethren, for the word of faith always sounds like boastfulness to the natural ear. Only his father Jacob, who well knew that Voice himself, sensed its authenticity in those dreams and recognized the chosen vessel. How did Joseph think they would be fulfilled? Could anything have been further from his thoughts than captivity in a foreign country, slavery and the dungeon? Could a believer's progress ever be more sharply downward than his? How did Joseph think they would be fulfilled? How did he retain his faith and not become an atheist? Sold as a slave by his own brothers despite his pitiful entreaties, bought and put to work in an Egyptian officer's household, what had God and His supposed revelations to do with all this? But “the Lord was with Joseph...and his master saw that the Lord was with him.” That does not happen to the rebellious man. Every indication is that Joseph, distressed and mystified, bowed the neck to God's will. He learned the first lesson of obedience. God was his circumstance, God his environment: it is not in self to order our outward way aright; our very enemies are carrying out God's plan for us.

But, as with Abraham, the test on the body must go to the limit. If this young man was to be next to the king in the wealthiest nation on earth; if he was to live right in a world of luxury, profligacy and idolatry, and yet not be of it, a stranger and pilgrim unspotted by the world, the one pure light in a great darkness, he must most surely be lust-free and heart-free both from “the pleasures of sin” and “the treasure in Egypt,” from which even the great Moses had to flee. So there came to this lonely young man in the full bloom of his youth this subtle and continuous temptation, so flattering to his pride and so alluring to his flesh. Could any but a God-indwelt young man have resisted it? Listen to his answer to her. It would be a horrible breach of trust towards his master, a great wickedness, and finally, and the words were addressed to his heathen temptress, a sin against God. It was the answer of a firmly dedicated heart: the matter was settled for him; his body was not for fornication, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. The battle for the body was finally won.

We can hardly imagine the scene on the return of his trusting master, when he believed the wicked lie of his wife. His disappointment: his rage; Joseph's distress and helplessness: the arrest, the blows stick, the dungeon, the feet hurt with fetters, the iron entering his soul. We do not think on this occasion that the bodily distress was of first importance; Joseph had become accustomed by now to those kinds of hardships. It was into his soul that the iron sank, says the Scripture, when they hurt his feet with fetters (Ps. 105:18 marg.). His mind was assaulted. As he had learned that his Lord, not self, was the owner of his body and director of his circumstances, so now he must discern between the mind of self and the mind of the Spirit: God must also be the God of his soul-life. Did he doubt the authenticity of those boyhood dreams He had good cause to. How could he prove they were not just ambitious daydreams? But once again, there is no evidence that he wavered in faith. The test and proof of

this came without warning one morning when he found the imprisoned butler and baker distressed because no one could interpret their peculiar dreams. Without hesitation Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong unto God? Tell me them, I pray you." Could he have done that if he harbored secret doubts about his youthful dreams? Did it not mean not only that God gives interpretations of dreams, but that God gives them to him? Not just that God can, but that God does through him. This was the proof of union. He knew the difference between his human thoughts and the thoughts of the Spirit within him. As he was tested on his body and material circumstances, so he was on his soul, and in both cases he came through unscathed; he seemed to demonstrate that, where most of us have to learn our nothingness by our failures and that only God in us is the victory, Joseph knew this from his youth and was able to walk in it. It seems as if he was one of those rare souls that went through his wilderness education with a Canaan experience!

Yet two more years passed in silence. Had God forgotten to be gracious? Was His mercy clean gone for ever? We ask that, but Joseph did not; for if there had been doubts in his heart he never could have answered that sudden summons to appear before Pharaoh himself, with only just time to shave and change his clothes. There he stands before the whole court, asked by Pharaoh to interpret the dream, confronted with the failure of the whole body of the magicians to do so, yet perfect master of the situation. What is in us comes out in a crisis. There is not time then for pretence and build-up. But Joseph's secret is plain to all that read. He walked in pure light. He knew the inner bond between empty self and mighty God. The difference between the mind of the flesh and that of the Spirit were unmistakable to him. So when Pharaoh said to him, "I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it," like a flash Joseph answers, "It is not in me: God shall (not God can) give Pharaoh an answer of peace." No impudent boastful claims here, or what would be much more likely in a person uninstructed in the ways of the Spirit, fearful, falsely humble disclaimers; but the clear calm statement of the man with the Holy Ghost, I can't, but God can, and will through me; till at the end Pharaoh is saying, "Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?"

One more necessary test came to Joseph, a test of his inner self, his spirit. Prosperous, powerful, busy, it looks as if even the reality of those first dreams faded, for he named his first-born Manasseh, "for God hath made me forget...all my father's house." Then, one day he was face to face with his brethren, the ones who had hated and sold him! What was found in that pure spirit? Vengeance or sentimentality? Summary justice or superficial forgiveness? Vengeance was not there, not a trace of it; the dream came back to his memory, it says, and doubtless a great thrill at this marvelous proof of God's faithfulness; but his vision in the spirit had progressed far beyond that. His delight was not in the sight of his brethren doing obeisance to him. No, he saw with God's eyes, that all the years of his suffering and exile were the working out of a plan of transcendent wisdom: "Be not angry with yourselves; for God did send me before you to preserve life.... Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good." It was not for his glorification, nor for his position of power, but that the plan of God through the ages, the promises to Abraham should be fulfilled, "to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance"; and his father Jacob pointed to the still more distant and glorious purpose of it all, when he later said to Joseph, "from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel." Such a man had no place in his heart for bitter vengeance. In the wisdom of God he led his brethren to true repentance and acknowledgment of their sin, which he freely forgave and never withdrew, neither during their father's lifetime, nor after. It was the heavenly Spirit dwelling in Joseph's spirit, not now sanctifying his body as the instrument of His great purposes, nor enlightening the mind with revelations of things to come, but loving and saving enemies, and leading them to repentance through a self which was no longer itself, but the dwelling place of God. Where Abraham was called to sacrifice his son, Joseph was called to forgive his enemies by the same God that worketh all in all. ■

—The Liberating Secret

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– Romans 8:28

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by Norman Grubb

–*The Spontaneous You*

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The Intercessor is published for about \$10,000 an issue on the Lord's provisions. We have had a generous outpouring of God's gifts thus far and are truly grateful to each who has participated. By faith, we look for the continual outflow of the "word of God" by us.

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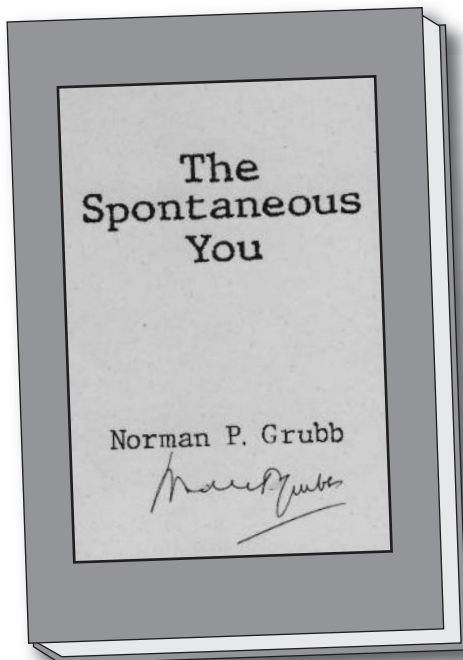
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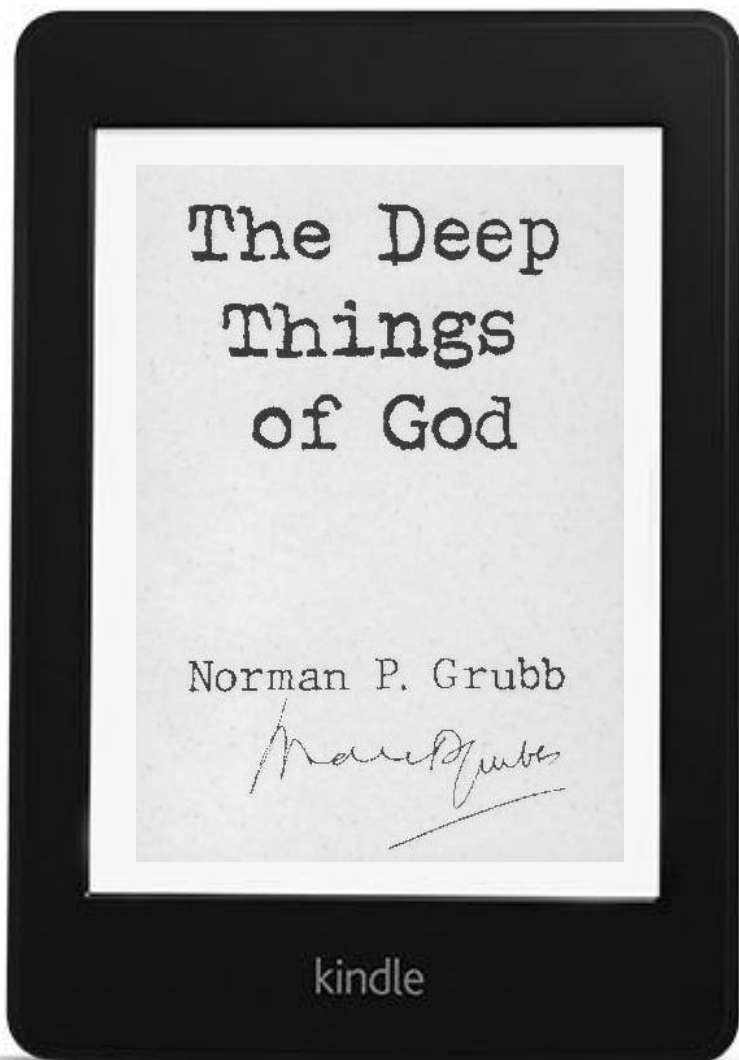
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