

IT'S AS SIMPLE AS THIS

BY

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GOD ALL IN ALL

I have to start, however, with theology, for I have no understanding of man except in his relationship to God. I understand that God is the One Person in the Universe. Besides Him there is no other He is Power, Peace, Joy. Christ is the Way, Truth, Life. He is made unto us Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification. His name is "I AM", not "I HAVE". Finally He is declared as "All in all" (1 Corinthians 15:28). So He can only manifest Himself in all these and a hundred other characteristics by being Himself expressed in infinite variety of forms, not a Giver, but an Iser.

God created man in His own image that He might have a visible means of expressing and manifesting Himself, The Invisible in visible form. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world", and then He also said, "Ye are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14). On the material level, light is invisible electricity which can only manifest in visible form by a lamp, and in so doing, so possesses the lamp that we don't say, "Turn on the lamp," but, "Turn on the light". Thus we humans express Him in a union relationship.

JESUS, THE SECOND MAN

Jesus, as God manifest in the flesh, is called "The Second Man" (1 Corinthians 15:47), thus the perfect form of redeemed man. As such, He was His Father in manifestation. The Spirit of God in the visible form of a dove was seen by John to descend upon Him. From that time onward, it was the Spirit speaking and acting by Him (Luke 4:14-21). It was the Spirit who took Him to Calvary (Hebrews 9:14), and by the Spirit He rose again (1 Peter 3:18). At the supper table when about to leave His disciples, He said the purpose was that the same Spirit should possess them which was fulfilled at Pentecost and is spoken of by Paul in Romans 8:11 as dwelling in us. Thus, if He spoke of Himself as only seeing and speaking and doing what the Father was doing by Him, and doing nothing of Himself, and finally saying that, "if you see Me, you see the Father", then it is now the same of us, and those who see us see Him. So Paul says, "We have the mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:16); "God works in you to will and do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13); Christ "our life" (Colossians 3:4); and John, in his first epistle, caps it all by saying, "As He is, so are we in this world" (1 John 4:17); and thus we are "in the light as He is in the light"; we "walk as He walked"; we "know as He knows"; we are "righteous as He is righteous"; we "love as He loves"; we "believe as He believes". Therefore, our humanity is expressing His deity in all the forms of His nature.

WE HUMANS HAVE NO NATURE

We humans are symbolised in the Scriptures as being containers, expressers, developers, but not originators. We have our "being" in Him (Acts 17:28); the quantity, the potential (much like a computer); but, the quality of what is expressed by our being is not we, but He in His nature (like the programmer by the computer). Thus He is named "All in all", not just the One being invisible, but having derived created beings by whom He can express His Allness. Not just "The All", but "in all", which is why the coming of His Son taking flesh, and now, in the resurrection, still being "the man Christ Jesus", confirms the eternal truth as being The Person in the persons, and

not some vague dissolution of essence into essence as in a religion without an incarnate Christ.

These symbols used to describe us humans are all those which express no nature of their own but as means of expressing that to which they are attached. Vessels contain the liquid, but are not the liquid; the cup is not the coffee. We don't speak of a cup and coffee. So we are branches; but the branch is not the nature but the vine which reproduces itself in leaf and fruit form on the branch. Thus in Romans 6:20-22, we were bearing fruit of which we are now ashamed, but now the same branch (no difference in that) is bearing "fruit unto holiness" - solely vine-nature expressed by branch which has no separate nature of its own. So we are called Temples; in Old Covenant days the tabernacle by which God manifested Himself in Shekinah Glory, or alternatively a temple of Baal. The emphasis is not the nature of the temple, but of the deity who manifests himself by it. And now in the New Covenant, our bodies are the temple of the Spirit, and God is spoken of as "dwelling in us and walking in us" (2 Corinthians 6:16). We are the body of Christ, but the nature is the Head, not the body and its actions; and in that sense the body is called "Christ" (1 Corinthians 12:12). We are "slaves" (mistranslated in the King James Version as "servants"); but a slave has no operating nature of his own in relation to his owner, but solely reproduces the activities of his owner, whether of Satan (sin) or Christ (righteousness) (Romans 6:16). We are the wives reproducing the nature (seed) of the husband, and in that sense with only the husband's nature (Romans 7:4-5).

PAIRS OF OPPOSITES: THE OPERATING LAW OF THE UNIVERSE

All the Universe, from God Himself down through all His manifestations, only operates as pairs of opposites, and the one expresses itself by utilising the other to manifest itself (e.g., 2 Corinthians 5:4), and there is no consciousness except by opposites. Light can only be seen by "swallowing up" dark; sweet/bitter; heat/cold; yes/no; hard/soft, and so ad infinitum. In an armchair, the soft must utilise the hard framework to make a comfortable chair. So too in a bed. A cook can only make a dish sweet by the sweetness overcoming the non-sweetness. Our decisive "Yes" only has its strength by swallowing up the alternative "No". Electricity only functions by the interaction of positive and negative; the atom by the combination of proton and electron. And so, in our personal consciousness, we can not let an infant go near a hot stove or he will burn himself, or near a pool of water, when he doesn't yet know the difference between water and dry ground.

But as this is so on every level of our material world, it is equally and fundamentally true of our inner selves. We are only conscious of ourselves when we have discovered we are either expressers of a self-getting nature (Satan), or a self-giving nature (Christ). Our human "being", with all its potential, can only express in its quantity the quality of the spirit nature which indwells it, either that of "the spirit of error" or alternatively "the Spirit of Truth" (1 John 4:6). Blake, the poet, describes a tiger and lamb as having the same physical make-up but different types of nature manifested by them. We have already mentioned a modern illustration of this: a computer with untold potential but only operating and expanding the nature of the subject the programmer

has put into it. And we humans only become consciously functioning humans when we have been confronted by the two trees in the Garden, and made our fateful choice.

Behind that fact about us as created persons, Paul states that God Himself has a limitation: "...God... can not lie..." (Titus 1:2). In other words, He has from eternity been The Trinity, in His Father-Son relationship of love, each for the other, and the Spirit being the Reproducer of Him (them) in His nature in the Universe. If God had remained just a "One" in all His Almightyness, as a Loner He would have been a Self-for Self, compared in Scriptures to a self consuming fire. But by a "death" to Himself as a Loner, He brought His beloved Son into Being, to use a human expression (the spoken word which proceeds from a thought thus through to a manifestation), as His "express image" (Hebrews 1:3), and thus He moved into an other-love relationship, just as fire becomes light. Fire consumes. Light blesses. We now know that that outer "fire", the sun, consists of hydrogen atoms which fuse into helium atoms, and the energy released in the fusing is the light by which we live.

So, if the Eternal One is only The Love Person by virtue of a "death" to one alternative of being by Himself as a consuming fire, and a "life" in an eternal love interchange with His Son, so surely all created persons in His image as persons can only be conscious selves by being confronted with the possibility of expressing a self-for-self false spirit nature, or the self for others God-Spirit nature. That is why the Scripture says God "created evil" (Isaiah 45:7). Evil is only a person expressing self-for-self and good is a person expressing self-for-others. If God Himself had to have that settled for Himself (when it says He "can not lie" and thus express a Self-for-Self), so every created person must confront and have those opposites fixed in the one potential "swallowing up" the other. Therefore, when God created persons, He could only do so by persons having their freedom in those alternative choices. Thus, He "created evil" as the other necessary alternative which was "swallowed up" in Him, and He can not create persons as persons without their having their freedom of choice as persons. Lucifer was the first person revealed by the Scriptures as made perfectly in God's image (as we all are). By being so entranced by his own perfections (Ezekiel 28:11-17) that he chose to be a self-for-self, even to appropriating the throne of God (Isaiah 14:12-15), he became the exposer of the necessary opposite swallowed up in God. Thus, he was named "the spirit of error", and in his nature as the opposite of God, was "cast out of heaven".

NO SUCH THING AS AN INDEPENDENT SELF

Here also we see this great fundamental truth that there is no such thing as an independent self, for there is only One Self in the Universe; but Lucifer, now called Satan, was self deceived into imagining he was independent. In actual fact, he forever remains God's convenient agent, fixed in his negativeness. Therefore, cast out of heaven, God uses him in His vitally necessary preparation of what He had planned from before the world's foundation - to have a vast company of sons, created persons like Himself, by whom He would manage and develop by inheritance, the Universe, together with His Son (Hebrews 1:2; Romans 8:14). These sons must come to their consciousness of being persons by being confronted with these same necessary opposites.

So, while given all God's riches of goodness in the Garden, there was one tree they must not touch or they would die to their created privileges as His sons. God intended

and purposed, by the fact of the presence of this cast-out devil in the form of a wily serpent, to entice these first two, Adam and Eve, to choose Satan's self-for-self way and take what Eve was deceived into thinking would be beneficial to herself, though against the word of her Creator. By this means, the human family would learn to its depths the opposite nature, not ours, but the nature of the "god of this world". This happened to them by receiving and eating of that false fruit, just as it was said that to partake of the other Tree of Life and eat its fruit would mean receiving eternal life (Genesis 3:22), showing that fruit to be symbolic of receiving Christ, our eternal life. Eating the false fruit meant receiving this opposite form of life which is really death, the nature of self-for-self; and Paul describes in Ephesians 2:1-3 how that becomes a fact of us fallen humans, expressing, not a nature of our own of which there is no such thing, but the nature of our false father, expressing his lusts. Jesus turned the spotlight on that fact when He told the self-righteous Pharisees (of whom we all were in our Satan-in-dwelt days), "Ye are of your father the devil and the lusts of your father ye will do" (John 8:44). Thus, Jesus exposed once for all that we humans by our faculties and appetites never have had a nature of our own, but either "take their nature from God and are His children," or "take their nature from the devil and are his children..." (1 John 3:10 Amplified). Therefore we were expressing Satan's lust nature in all its forms (the works of the flesh), which were not ours but his. In our fallen days we readily cooperated ("the lusts of your father ye will do"). He, Satan, is the sinner, but we are wholly accessory to the fact and have a like destiny.

But here we see the subtle deceit of the devil which is our vital spot in our coming to a final understanding of Who we really are. Satan deceived us into thinking that we are independent selves, even as he deceivedly thinks he himself is. Revelation 12:9 is a key Scripture on that, where Satan's chief operation was "deceiving the whole world", making us think we are who we are not. So we think we are committing those sins, being possessed by those lusts and negative responses, and we are deceived. They are his expressed by us. He imparts that deceit into us as if it is us, but it is he masquerading as us. God's sole purpose is to expose the lie of independent self. Because we are God's sons and His means of expressing Himself in the Universe, we have to learn and drink to its bitter depths that great lie of the independent self - that lie of the author of lies with which he himself is self-deceived. The fact is we can always transmit what we are or think we are, and so Satan did that transmitting to us, his fellow creatures, and we all normally think we just run ourselves, do our own things (Isaiah 53:6), make up our own minds, and "naturally" operate as self-relying. We have to learn and experience it as The Lie, so that once really seen as The Lie and the remedy in Christ, we shan't be fooled again. We may slip by temptation (we speak later of this), but we know our slip and how to return. We thus become not only saved, but safe sons. Once bit, twice shy!

THIS FALLACY OF TWO NATURES

In our first "little children" stage (1 John 2:12,13), we only have our eyes opened by the law and Spirit to our outer sinfulness made plain by our committed sins. Therefore, our only understanding of Christ's atoning sacrifice is by Him being "evidently set forth crucified among you" (Galatians 2:3; Romans 3:25), and being seen by us sinners as a person separate from us, dying on the cross. His death was evidenced by the shedding of the blood, going to hell for us (Acts 2:13), and being "raised from the dead by the

glory of the Father” (Romans 6:4). As we receive Him and confess Him by faith (John 1:12; Romans 10:9), the Spirit bears witness to us (Romans 8:16) that we are “justified by faith”, and thus have peace with God. Much more important than that, God immediately begins to bring into being His eternal purpose by and as us by the Spirit beginning to express His other-love nature in our form. In our ignorance and our deceived ideas that we have a nature of our own, we think it is we loving Him, which is an impossibility because we humans only have a love faculty. The other-love nature is that of the Spirit-Deity now indwelling us and manifesting His nature through our faculty. What we think of in Romans 5:5 as our new birth experience is we loving Him. When our eyes are open to that Scripture, we see it is His Spirit-given love by which we are loving Him. He has begun to be Himself in our form, “The love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given to us”. We are “new creations” (2 Corinthians 5:16-17), and by His operating nature in and as us, we no longer live self-for-self, but self-for-Him, and by His Spirit we see all men, even Jesus Himself, as spirit (not flesh) people, and, indeed, all things are seen in a new light as material manifestations of the Invisible One (2 Corinthians 5:15-17).

But now begins our real problem. Sins are put out of sight forever, but what about the self that appears to keep sinning? Sins, the product, are no longer our problem; the sinner producer is, which appears to be our sinful self. We, who are desperate for the fullness of God in our lives, start a second and deeper misery. The misery of the convicted sinner is his sins. The deeper misery of the born-again saint is his apparently inconsistent self! A radical discrepancy increasingly distresses him. He thankfully recognises goodness (righteousness) proceeding from him in new love, joy, peace and self-control, etc., and he is quick to deny they are from him but are the fruit of the Spirit now being manifested in his newborn life (Galatians 5:22-23).

So then he says that he is twofold. Good things proceed from him which are the fruit of the good Spirit, but then bad things are also evident which must mean he has some bad nature expressing them. That is where the fallacy, which has so taken over the evangelical church, is believed and accepted by the believer. If the good is from the Spirit, where does the bad come from? The answer supposedly is a bad nature still in me. There is the fallacy and deceit. We humans never had a nature of our own but were created to contain and manifest God in His divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). Temporarily, unless we choose to remain so, we manifest, through the Fall, our badness which we falsely attribute to our human selves. The question is, if we don't attribute our goodness to ourselves but to the Spirit of Righteousness, why then don't we attribute our badness to the spirit of badness? Why put our human selves in? We have been bemused and muddle-headed. So here is our agony, and we see the perfect purpose of God. Unless we see and experience the sin of sins, the lie of the independent self, and have come to a disillusionment and hatred of it (as Paul in Romans 7:14-24: “O wretched man that I am...”) as deep and thorough as our disgust and hatred of our old life of sins, we might revert to it again. Once we know the total truth of ourselves, we shall not revert to the falsity of independent self any more than a saved sinner reverts to his sinful condition (1 John 3:9). (We can be caught up again in a particular sin, but never again into occupation by that sin nature of Satan, the difference between sins and sin. We must get this clear.

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

AT LAST OPERATING AS A TRULY LIBERATED SELF

So we pass through the gateway of Romans 6 via Romans 7 into Romans 8! Romans 6 was the application of Paul's second radical revelation about Christ on Calvary (Galatians 1:11-12; 4:19), and the meaning of the two levels of remembrance at the Lord's Supper - the wine, symbolising the blood shed for sinners; the broken bread, symbolising the body dead and risen for the saints. Paul ran from Damascus because, under fierce pressure, he didn't know how to stand in a Christ-in-him for deliverance, and his friends had to help him out by a rope-basket. He was "driven" into Arabia for three years as a result. There he saw and learned identification with Christ in its full meaning only given us by Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:14, 21. If He hung there on the cross as us, His body represented our bodies. But what do our bodies express? The nature of its indwelling spirit, which was sin. So Paul actually said that God made His sinless Son "sin for us". By His shed blood He "bore our sins", which were not His, and atoned for them in His blood; but now Paul was saying He actually "was made sin" in that holy nature representing ours, because our bodies express that sin nature and are thus "sin". No wonder He cried out, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" But, as Paul said, if Christ died as us expressing the spirit of sin in His body, when He died, out went that sin-spirit from His body, for a dead body has no spirit; and so out went that sin-spirit from our bodies. And into the dead body in the tomb came His own Spirit, and thus into our bodies. So Paul could say in Romans 6:10, "... in that He died, He died unto sin once", and so our bodies were annulled as occupants of sin (Romans 6:6), and we reckon ourselves "dead indeed unto sin".

If Romans 6 is the presentation for us all of the fact of our deliverance, by Christ's body-death, from the sin principle indwelling us, and, we who believe are to state that to be so of ourselves, then we faithfully do so. But we say within ourselves, "I say that, but it isn't working well in me!" "Reckon" means I say so and suppose so, but that is different from realising. There is a difference between me saying I reckon I have a book in my hands and my saying I have a book in my hands! It means that I'm not really that sure. So honest Paul, and honest us with Paul, come to the desperate cry of Romans 7: "I say I'm dead to sin, but it isn't working! Wretched man that I am. What's wrong?" Calvary fact is no good to me unless it becomes Calvary experience, and in Romans 7, it doesn't. That's why Romans 7 is written in the present tense (Romans 7:7-24), although Paul had just said it was a past fact for him (Romans 7:4-6). Because all of us go through Romans 6 via Romans 7 to get to Romans 8, and only

those who have come through can honestly give the glory statements of Romans 8:1-2, Paul must not say it for us, so he identifies himself with us in our stumbling, searching, faltering walk until we ourselves can say that [verses] “1 and 2” with him. At last, by this second travail of the believer, the light is lit, and very simply. “Why do I keep doing things I hate doing, and not doing what I want to do?”, cries Paul in agreeing with the tenth commandment not to covet, setting himself not to do it, and then finding “sin wrought in me all manner of lusts”. Now here is the secret and the answer. It was sin that wrought these in me and caused me to do and have them. Yes, sin, but not I! That was the flash of Spirit-light. “Why”, Paul says, “I didn’t want to do those things, so it wasn’t I doing them.” Then who was it? Why, obviously that intruder who got into me through the Fall and has made me his dwelling place. It is not I, but “sin that dwelleth in me”, which he repeats twice for emphasis in Romans 7:17, 20. It was sin, Satan in his nature, operating in me, but by his supreme deceit he has made me, from Adam onwards, think it was I doing it, as if I have an independent nature of my own. But I am only a vessel, branch, temple, slave, body member. The doer is the one I contain! And so Paul saw it. He had, as in Romans 6, seen in his Arabia visit, this total meaning of Calvary - that Christ’s body represented ours and our body expresses the sin-spirit. So did His! But, as He died, out went that sin-spirit from His body as ours, and in His resurrection in came His Spirit of Truth in place of that false deceiving spirit cast out forever. So, Paul moves on with his exclamation of delighted thanks in Romans 7:25 to his total statement of Who he now is with no further condemnation, but set free and knowing he is set free by the law (the fixed principle) of the Spirit of life by Christ in him from that former law (fixed principle) of sin and death, that lie of independent self-relying self. Now it is Christ dwelling in him (Romans 8:8-9) where it had been sin dwelling in him.

The whole key to this lies in the understanding that we humans never had a self-operating, self-relying nature, but were solely created to express God in His nature. But we only became conscious functioning humanity when we were voluntarily, though deceptively, taken captive by that spirit of error, so that we each were Satan-I. Then, through our Last Adam and His Calvary death and resurrection, we change back to our True Owner-Creator and are Christ-I.

Many believers know and claim the reality of Christ in you, as in Ephesians 3:17; but because we never knew the basic reality of formerly being Satan-sin dwelling in us, and mistakenly living in the deceit of a self-acting self, we have been falsely taught that we have a deposit of sin in our human selves (soul and body) and must therefore have some continual forms of warfare for the rest of our lives. Yet the glory of the revelation is that there never was or has been anything wrong with our human selves (spirit, soul, and body) which God created as “very good”. All that happened to our selves was the misuse of self by the Satan-god, and now right use by our true Christ-Indweller. This means that we can boldly accept ourselves as right selves with nothing wrong with us, and that we have always been right selves with nothing wrong with us, and that we have always been right selves in wrong hands, but now in right hands.

The flesh, Paul’s common term for our humanity, is right in its right ownership, as with Jesus (“God manifest in the flesh”). With us, it had become “sinful flesh”, but then in Christ the sin was condemned in the flesh (Romans 8:3), and “they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts” (Galatians 5:24); and “the life I

now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God” (Galatians 2:20). Flesh as humanity is, of course, always available to temptations by its appetites (Galatians 5:16-18), and can catch us out if we foolishly go back to struggle with self-effort. But if we fully recognise the Spirit expressing Himself as us/by us, then that old pull of sin and the “you ought not” law on our deceived self has no further power (Galatians 5:18). Flesh is not in itself an evil thing any more than the eye is evil. It is the lusts which are evil, not the flesh or the eyes (1 John 2:16). We need expanded understandings of the completeness of Christ being expressed by our humanity, with a growth, as in 1 Peter 3:18, and an ever-expanding conformity to His likeness expressed in our humanity (2 Corinthians 4:18 and Romans 8:29). We thus have rescued and regained our human selves from any blame in themselves and those false condemnations we lived in while in a Romans 7, deceived consciousness of our guilt. We walk blameless and sanctified as Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 5:23. We regain our human selves, mortal in the physical and thus remaining in our world to be a light in it, but holy in our spirit-selves expressed in our souls and bodies (Hebrews 10:13).

THE WAY IS THE OBEDIENCE, NOT OF WORKS, BUT OF FAITH

There is the faith entry into Who we all really are. That is why our real obedience is that which Paul names it to be in almost his first and last word in his Romans letter (Romans 1:5 and 16:28) - the obedience, not of works and self-effort, but of faith, which requires the one necessity of our inner heart acknowledgment of the actual truth concerning our Lord Jesus Christ as given us by Him. This is as real a faith committal as was our first act of saving faith, which then produced the Spirit’s witness. But this second faith committal may be said to be more difficult and radical because that first faith committal only concerned our sins and their hold on us and the guilt and fear rightly produced by them. This second committal is our very selves, the apparent producer of the sins, and self is all we have. This is why this further total committal can not be fully made until the fundamental fact has been cleared in our understanding, by the Word confirmed by the Spirit, that we never had a false self-acting self to give up its apparent selfhood. This was Satan’s lie. We never were more than containers, vessels, branches, etc., with no such self-relying, self-acting self; and so this second step, or rather stride, is only a recognition of a given fact about us as participators in Christ’s two-thousand-year-old-body death and resurrection.

This is serious and radical because we have had these deceived concepts of our independent selves in action, and that includes what we might call our “good” selves. It is radical to see in fullness that all the good we have done by our self-activity has been Satan-good (that “good” aspect of the false Edenic Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil). Thus trying to be and do good is as much the product of our Satan-self for-self nature expressed by us as are any of our “bad” doings. Perfect flesh living is really perfect sinning. Paul said in Romans 7:21 that “when I would do good, evil is present with me”, and that was a “law”, a set principle from which he could not by himself escape. By this he meant that while resolving to do good was right (“to will is present with me”, Romans 7:18), the actual attempt to “do good”, though unknown to himself at the time, was that same self-for-self, self-relying Satan spirit operating in his apparently good self-efforts (Philippians 3:4-6). Just as an apple seed can bring forth only an apple tree, with apples being its only fruit (some good for eating and some

not), so too the seed of Satan can bring forth only Satanic fruit, some good and some bad. Therefore, we can not easily give up our total selves and move into our God relationship until we know that there never was any good in ourselves (Romans 7:18), i.e., until we know the lie of independent self.

We cause great offense to our fellow believers when we make such statements of faith as this one: “once only Satan-I, now only Christ-I”. They still think of us as having a sinful nature. As a result, our opposition often comes from churches and pastors so long accustomed to self-condemnation in our apparent sins and failures. To them, it is like blasphemy to say nothing was ever wrong with our human selfhood. This is why this stride of faith (really only the acknowledgment of fact in Christ) is well-called by Kierkegaard (who deeply knew the human self) “the leap of faith”. When taken, it must be as serious and openly confessed and once-for-all as was our faith-step into receiving Christ. Once made, it is as marked an act as a marriage vow and ceremony.

It took me five hours in a Congo forest to say with finality that I, Norman Grubb, have been crucified with Christ and thus, in His death to sin, I have died to sin as an indweller. And then to say the “Nevertheless I live” of Galatians 2:20. But no! There is no such thing as independent living and therefore, with Paul, to say, “Yet not I, but Christ lives in me “ (where before it had been Satan living in me). That was as far as I really got on that crisis occasion, confessing with my mouth, together with my precious wife doing the same, by writing my statement on an old envelope which was all I had deep in that forest. But, once said, my confession of faith became fixed and was never to be gone back on.

The witness of the Spirit, the substance of faith as in Hebrews 11:1, comes when the believing is established enough to receive it. In 1 John 5:10 the inner witness is a given part of the believing, and while we do the believing, the Spirit gives the witness. Sometimes that takes time - for me two years; for my wife two weeks! I never went back on my established, spoken, written word of faith. The witness is from Him to me, not from me to Him, so I must avoid any seeking of it, or questioning my act of faith. No! Any delay only stirs me to confirm my “obedience of faith” in that five-hour act of faith I made, and I just went on with my normal activities until one day He must have seen I was in a right condition, the sudden quiet light was lit in me, “Yes, it really is Christ in me, expressing Himself in my form, He as me, He living, thinking my thoughts, speaking my words, doing my deeds.” This was so total that for a time I almost thought I was Christ! That didn’t matter while the glory of the inner recognition settled in me.

THEN DAILY LIVING

What followed then was the real answer to this first question of “anthropology”. What kind of person am I, now that it is settled by the Word and inner witness that my real inner self is Christ in me? How do I now in fact function as a human? Paul nicely slipped into his Galatians 2:20 statement, “Yet not I, but Christ lives in me”. He did not just say “lives”, as if I am Christ. So back I come to realise that I am still the lamp - now absorbed in reflecting the light but still the lamp. But now - all important - what a different understanding of the lamp! Now it is no longer a soiled lamp under constant questioning, suspicion, and condemnation. I now accept myself as a right self. If I am good enough for Him to accept and dwell in and express Himself by, I am good

enough to accept myself just as I am. That was perhaps the most important and revolutionary new recognition when at last I got Romans 7:17 into focus - that I never was a “bad” self in my God-created humanity, any more than I was a “good” self. Nor was I a soiled-self, as if something had poisoned my humanity - my being as a human. No, I can accept myself because the bad or good is the expression of the deity nature in me/as me - change of Deity, change of Owner, not change of my humanity - except that my physical body is the mortal part of me in which I long for a change (Romans 8:23-25; 2 Corinthians 5:1-8).

So I am Free To Be. Where I used to live in a continuous warning red light on my failures, sins, weaknesses, now I live in a green light. I think my thoughts, make my choices, do my daily jobs as right, not wrong. I refuse waves of that old sense of self-failure sweeping over me. Impossible indeed is that old false consciousness of a self-relying-self apparently running itself and merely “helped” by the Lord, and so often tricked by Satan. Now I do accept myself and act freely as a full self because I have that fixed inner witness that it is actually He as me.

As C. T. Studd in the Congo used to say to the Lord, “We are put here to see Jesus Christ running about in black [and white] bodies!” This makes my present daily living wholly “natural” and practical. I am just myself. I Be! When I am practicing my profession, I am not always reminding myself I am a carpenter, plumber, lawyer, doctor, professor, nurse, or housewife. No! I just do my job as such, but I am really expressing that know-how of my profession which was not part of my human self but which I had desired, accepted, and trained for, and which became settled in me/as me so that I call myself by the name of my profession.

So also now, as a Christian, I am not always saying I am Christ in me/as me! No! I’m just myself most of the day, just being and doing. But underneath I now know Philippians 2:13 is fixedly continuously true to me. It is He working in me “to will and do of His good pleasure”, and I boldly turn my “fear and trembling” of Philippians 2:12 into the kind of confidence John speaks of in his 1 John 4:17. I am to take no condemnation of myself (Romans 8:1), or doubt that it is He as me. That covers my whole range of activity of mind and body. I have so old a suspicion of the misuses of myself, whether of bodily appetites formerly misused and easily responsive to temptation, or soul reactions of disturbed negative emotions about conditions or people, or questionings and doubtings of the mind, that it is new for me to accept the fact that He has taken me over. I am not to doubt or question. It is for Him to keep what He has taken possession of. I didn’t choose Him. He chose me (John 15:16), so the “heat” is on Him to do the keeping. I might well question His choices, choosing me or you, but we are His choice, so I laugh and go free.

A pastor friend of mine, Keith Lamb of Kerrville, Texas, asked his folk, who are well-taught in Who they really are, “Hands up those who, like St. Augustine, say ‘I love God and do as I like’”. He said very few hands went up because we bemused folk still suspect that if we do as we like, we’ll go back down to the old flesh ways! But no, no, we who now know Who we are, “do as we like” because what we like is His will and ways! It is no longer singing of myself “Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love”. No! No! No more wandering or leaving for we are fixed as He. (We will talk a little later about temptation and soul-spirit responses.) This greatly changes

our songs and prayers for why keep asking Him to bless when He has said He is blessing? Why keep asking for the power when we say with Paul, “I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me”? Why not change “pray so” prayers into “say so” prayers?

TRIALS ARE ADVENTURES; TEMPTATIONS ARE OPPORTUNITIES

There arises that constant question of our formerly sin-conscious selves. What about sin and temptation? This is where the revelation of no human nature but only the two Deity natures (we having been formerly Satan-I but now Christ-I) answers our questions. The key is that temptation becomes asset instead of liability, just as James leads off his most practical of letters by saying, “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations [trials is the same word]”. How can that be? Because we are now loosed from that former suspicion that temptation is sin, and that therefore my responses to it are sin. Both are false.

The temptation question is plainly settled by that invaluable letter to the Hebrews where we see Jesus in His full human nature, particularly in chapters two through four with the one outstanding word in Hebrews 4:15, “Jesus... the Son of God... tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin”. Perfect Jesus, perfectly tempted. Sinless. Thus temptation is a necessary part of human living. The reason is obvious. We live in a world which is shot through with every form of self-sin solicitation, as we have said, so that in our mortal bodies we remain in contact with our fellow humans as light in a dark world, for we meet the same flesh-world assaults as all do, but we know how to turn them into assets and can show the way to others.

The vital difference is found in our new-mind consciousness. We used to mistake temptation for sin and were also suspicious of apparent sinful tendencies in our flesh. We rapidly took condemnation with every “drawing” of temptation on us (James 1:14). Actually, the “lusts” are just the normal strong desires (the correct meaning of that “epithumia” word in the Greek) by which the Universe, on all levels, surges forward all the way from Einstein’s equation which proves that all mass is really energy ($e = mc^2$), right up to the love-drives of person-hood in God and man. So temptation is merely by whatever form our human desires of mind and body are excited to respond by the drawings of the deity spirit through our flesh (depending on which spirit). The philosopher Spencer rightly said, “Life is response to environment”. We say, “which environment?”

Now with our renewed mind knowing that all humanity (flesh), created “very good” by God, has no negative or positive inherent pull in it, but responds without condemnation to what draws it, we by infinite grace have been drawn to God (John 6:44). Equally, we often are drawn in our present life in the world by the lusting Satan-spirit, but the vital point is that we take no condemnation for such negative sin-drawings. We live in the no-condemnation reality of Romans 8:1. If Satan can get us into taking condemnation for temptations or get us to believe again that we are independent selves, then what we believe holds us. But if instead of being tricked into such negative believings we accept temptation as Satan’s right by all his emissaries of people and things (for we are within his camp to rescue his captives), we then do not deny or oppose any forms of temptation. We recognise that they do not issue from our flesh,

but from the sin-tempter of our flesh, and then we take no condemnation. By this we are able to pull Satan's teeth, and he becomes a roaring but toothless lion (1 Peter 5:9), unless we give him teeth by responding by fear or condemnation. We "agree with our adversary quickly" as Jesus said in Matthew 5:25, or he will imprison us. If we agree with his right to attack us, we have well-blunted his sword. By thus freeing Satan to exercise his rights, we are equally now free to exercise our own. We answer his assaults by affirming Who we are, Christ in us/as us, which really is practicing the daily death-resurrection process of 2 Corinthians 4:10.

The light of expressing ourselves as Christ (light through lamp) swallows up the darkness. Where we are tempted to hate, we love with God's love, including enemies. Where tempted to fear (which is really negative believing in evil), we have the faith of God for the situation: anxiety with assurance; depression with affirmations of Him as our joy, though soul feelings may last. We "resist the devil" as James says (James 4:7) by submitting to God, and in that affirmation that coward of a devil flees. 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, recognising Who we are, Him as us, and we loving as He loves, walking as He walks, overcoming our world as He did by faith, just as John says in his letter. We even turn an infatuation for someone into a positive faith action so that, instead of being overwhelmed with condemnation that we should not have such an infatuation, we by faith see Christ forming Himself in that one.

Depressions, tensions, compulsive jealousies, hurts, and bitterness - per haps going back a long time ago into our earlier life - are all transformed when they are not resisted with false condemnation (as if we were independent selves) but rather are received as temptations meant by God and which we therefore "count" (though do not feel) as "all joy" (James 1:2). We deliberately replace all negative reactions by seeing them as His set purpose (we will see later how God "means" all things). We meet them by reversing our negative believing - by affirming that He works all things after the counsel of His own will (Ephesians 1:11) and that there is no power but God.

Sins are committed when we deliberately respond, positively or negatively, to temptation as an independent self. These responses James calls an adultery (not a fixed marriage union) from which a return is made by confession and the forgiveness and cleansing of 1 John 1:9. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." God never sees sin because of the blood of His Son, and we, therefore, are forgiven. Thus, our guilty consciences are cleansed from the sin of the slip into independent self (Hebrews 9:14), and we replace our sin-consciousness with praise. John underlined that committing a sin is a rare, not a regular, fact, when he adds, "My little children, I write this unto you that ye sin not; and, if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father". Thus the committing of sins is rare whereas so often we have been mistakenly taught that it is continuous and common, so often through confusing temptation with sin.

This whole area of temptation and sin is most important for us believers for this is where so much of our confusion and conflict resides. If we do commit a sin, we must be careful not to slip back into that false self-effort which tempts us to resolve that we won't commit it again, if it is something we often repeat. When we are in such a

situation, we stand in our total faith position: He as me is also my Keeper (Jude 24), so when we feel desperate through the weakness of an apparent habit, we boldly tell Him we can find no deliverance by our own false self-effort or good resolution (that lie of the independent self). We are already delivered. We boldly say, "I shall do it again unless You keep me; but you are my Keeper." If we commit it again, we return by the same way of 1 John 1:9 and back again to that same position of faith as an already delivered person, and faith is the substance.

The same is true if it is something which is not sin in any specific form named in Scripture, but we find ourselves tempted to consider a harmful "habit". In this we walk the same way. We shall not look for "deliverance" by good resolutions or forms of that lie of self-effort. No! We boldly say that we do not even talk of a needed "deliverance". We are in that same position of faith that I as He know no such thing as a habit which is not He as me. I continue as before with no condemnation, and disregarding the condemnation of others; and in that freedom He will make any changes that please Him. Faith will produce changes that no negative false condemnation can produce.

The soul-spirit differentiation of Hebrews 4:12 is a key Scripture for living in the abiding rest the writer speaks of as our continued experience in Hebrews 4:9-11. That rest, of course, means not indolence, but rest from the strain of the sense of incapacity in our daily activities to be replaced by the consciousness of capacity ("we've got what it takes"), which results in far fuller, not lesser, activities in God's sufficiency. This is obviously so when we know that we are He as us, in place of the lie of independent self.

We may often be disturbed in our new freedom of living unless, as the Scripture tells us, we have seen clearly this difference between soul and spirit. Paul simply likens it to the difference in our bodies between joints and marrow. Marrow is the life of the bones. Marrow is likened to our inner spirit union where our selves are joined to His Self, and from which our new life flows. Joints are the means by which the marrow-life operates in outer form. They give flexibility. So our spirit joined to His Spirit, where our knowing Who we are is the permanent flow, expresses itself by our outer forms of soul.

The soul, like the joints, gives outer emotional expression to our spirit-love, and mental reasonings and explanations give expression to our inner spirit-knowing. Thus, soul emotions and reasonings are of vital value to our Christ-manifestation, but can equally be penetrated and assaulted by Satan on either feeling or thought levels. A great many of our unsolved problems find their answers as we continually differentiate between soul reactions and spirit-fixed-condition and replace the soul disturbances by recognition of our true being as He. Spirit is like the sea - total and beyond disturbance. Soul is like the restless waves, but we are like the sea. So also is the difference in this verse between "thoughts" (variable soul level, good or bad) and "intents" (fixed spirit-life purpose).

This then covers the "young man" second level of true being as detailed for us by John in his 1 John 2:13-14 statement of the three levels. The young man now has "the word of God abiding in Him", Christ in us/as us; and therefore he is "strong" in God as his strength in a permanent union. He must meet, confront, and overcome all the negatives

of “the wicked one” in his daily living; the “overcoming” is the “coming” of Satan in all pulls back to independent self, and the “over” of the “overcoming” is in Who we really are, recognising Christ as us. As we do that, the light of that recognition swallows up the darkness of the assaults - all that we have been looking into in relation to temptation and liberation. Here is the complete young man, graduated with his total person-hood of spirit, soul, and body, now consciously and fixedly the spontaneous expresser of Him Whom he had been predestined to manifest in his human form. “Ye are the light of the world.” As “young men” we have found our true selves!

THE FINALITY! WE ARE ROYAL PRIESTS

There is then this third level, the father level, found in John 2:12-14. It is the way of the Spirit joined to our spirit (where we have moved from knowing merely God’s acts to participating in His ways, Psalm 103:7). It is He carrying out His love activities in the world by us, which, of course, are the outgoings of God in His eternal nature of Self-giving “that the world through Him might be saved”. This is the new and final quality of living in which laying down our lives that others may have their predestined completion is not seen as sacrifice but glory, just as John always spoke of Jesus’ coming Calvary as “The Son of man being glorified” (John 7:39, 12:23).

In the fulfilment of this there is the discipleship process in which we are being trained to be apostles, God’s sent, commissioned ones, whatever our walk of life. All of us who are “young men” of necessity are moved into the royal priesthood life as being the nature of Him Who now expresses Himself as us. It is the “taking up your cross” stage, beyond the point of going to His cross for salvation, and then on His cross and thus He in us/as us we now move on to become participators in His cross.

Finally, there is a warning Paul gives in 1 Corinthians 4:14 that there is now the call to us to “take up your cross and follow Me” and thus be Who He is. Some deeper recognition is involved in this and not all believers follow through into the total meaning of our New Being. See in 1 Corinthians 4:8-14 where Paul so differentiates between the Corinthian Church with its blessed and gifted members, and himself and others who were “apostles”, and warns those saints (1 Corinthians 4:14) about their danger of coming short of their completion of taking their intercessory share in the Spirit’s saving actions by the Saviour’s body.

As disciples, learners, as in Luke 14:23-33, the Spirit takes us through detaching-attaching processes. By these we are loosed from our over-attachment to even what are the “good” things of life: family bonds, earthly possessions, over-concern for our own security or physical well-being. “If any man hate not father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sister, yea and his own life also, he can not be my disciple.” And, Jesus says, there is a sitting down and counting the cost of this by which we become, not just saved, but co-saviours with Him (1 Corinthians 9:22). The Spirit will make apostles of just those who take the full position of faith that He is doing it, which will be in various forms the fulfilment of Paul’s description of an apostle in 1 Corinthians 4:9-13 and 2 Corinthians 6:8-10). This is the top level completed Spirit-self.

For Paul, in Philippians 3:7-11, that meant that after the joy of his salvation (“... what things were gain to me those I counted loss for Christ”), he then gladly counted all things as loss compared to finding his own completion as Christ in human form in the

young man state, "... the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord". This, he said, meant that he "suffered the loss of all things", and that plainly hurt him in the young man stage. But now as the apostle in the royal priest stage, it was actually repulsive to him to think of retaining what it had then cost him to give up, "do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." Total reversal, not of attachment to the bad things of life, but the good things to be absorbed in the best, the only true things. These were to "win" the privilege of equality in co-saviour-hood with Christ, way beyond the stages of relying on Christ for his personal needs; now it was to be absorbed with Him in paying the necessary price for the fulfilment of a world's need and that meant being one with Him on that co-saviour-hood, fatherhood level, sharing in manifestations of His power by faith action ("the power of the resurrection"). It also meant sharing in the suffering and death experiences of a priest-intercessor ("the fellowship of His suffering and conformity to His death"), from which would then come the co-resurrection of many from the dead - the intercessor's gain.

For us also, not by our self efforts but by His own way of conditioning us, the Spirit will fix us who are willing from the heart in this same reversal of Paul's, where our total passion becomes to hold nothing earthly - whether loved ones, possessions, or life itself - of any value except as how they may fit in our all-absorbing passion, "the zeal of God's house eating us up". In this way, we "win" (Paul's word) a leveling up with Christ, not now of reliance on Him for my own needs, but being aligned with Him in His Saviour-hood. We are taken by the Spirit those same ways He went of utilising the power of God at our faith disposal (which Paul called "the power of His resurrection", Philippians 3:10). We are joined to Him in that death resurrection process of the intercessor, where death-pressures involve us in taking the place of others that they may live, which he called "the fellowship of His sufferings". This takes us right up to death itself (Philippians 3:10); and this produces what Christ's out-resurrection produced, not just His rising, but the "bringing many sons to glory" (the full meaning of that special "out-resurrection" word in Philippians 3:11). And so we go, as co-labourers to the limit, and glorying in it, even as He went to the pain and shame of the cross, not with sorrow, but joy (Hebrew 12:2). We are among, not just the Spirit-baptised members of the church at Corinth who rejoiced in their own spiritual riches and fullness, but among those with the marks of apostleship: weak, despised, poor, a "spectacle" to be stared at as crazy, yet apostles (1 Corinthians 4:9-13; 2 Corinthians 6:8-10).

We see this as the glorious completion of the "completed man in Christ", the human side of the mystery of Christ in man, which Paul coupled together in his basic standard statement of Colossians 1:26-28: Christ in us (verse 27); we, complete men in Christ (verse 28). This was the ideal to which Paul pressed forward, not a perfection of sainthood which had been his for years, but a perfection of co-saviour hood in the fulfilment at all costs of his high calling. For him that was the glorious taking of the gospel to the Gentiles and the building up of the saints in Christ, his two-fold ministry (Colossians 1:23,24).

This had meant for the Saviour Himself an incompleated task until He laid down His life for us (Luke 12:50), and so it did for Paul (Philippians 3:12-14). And for us that means, as anointed ones (which all we believers are), we move right into our high calling. We are then pressed by the Spirit into this total absorption in Him flowing out

of our inmost being (travail) into others, in countless unexpected ways, so that each of us is fulfilling various intercessions in action, in whatever outer position of apparent unlikelihood we are in. These intercessions, which are the Spirit, The Intercessor, interceding by us (Romans 8:26), drive us to a sense of committal which we do not seek, but which takes us over. We have moved from our young man condition of rejoicing in the inner revelation of being He in our forms, fixed eternally, and are now becoming free from overriding self-concerns to involvement outside ourselves in people and situations. The reality of the royal priesthood takes us over.

SPEAKING THE WORD OF FAITH

The royalty is our enthronement. “God, who is rich in grace... hath quickened us together with Christ... hath raised us up together, and made us sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus... far above all principality, and power, and might” (Ephesians 2:4-6; 1:21). This is our Throne Life, “the power of His resurrection”. The king as well as the priest. It has as its basis a new stretch of understanding of God, not just personal, but universal, and that He means, not just weakly permits, all that comes to us, evil or good. The most used Scripture to illustrate this is when Joseph said to his repentant brethren, after their selling him as a slave and all that followed with Potiphar’s wife and years of imprisonment, “You thought evil against me; but God meant it for good” (Genesis 50:20). Then the bold statement of Peter at Pentecost, “Jesus of Nazareth... Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and slain”, and that early recorded prayer, “Against Thy holy child Jesus both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the people of Israel, were gathered together for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done”. (Acts 2:22-23; 4:27-28).

As we have already said, in creating persons like Himself, He created a freedom of choice, and evil is that alternative false choice of Lucifer’s seeping down to us; and then God’s perfect meaning is that while there is the reaping of the harvest of false choices, He always has the perfect plan by which apparent losses are really gains, just as Satan’s Calvary became God’s resurrection of millions of Satan’s captives and when Pilate said to Jesus, “Don’t You know I have power to crucify or release You?”, Jesus answered, “Thou couldest have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above.” From above? We would surely have said, “from beneath!” (John 19:10-11), but ultimately “beneath power” is actually from above.

So now seeing this foundation truth of the devil himself being really God’s convenient agent for good, we learn to see through our plentiful negative situations, and thus help others to do the same, and by the exercise of authoritative faith, persistently, boldly affirm God means just that, and my only sin is when I don’t believe that He is my God and Father of love when it appears, and indeed is, an operation of the devil himself. Then as I believe against all appearances, and not lightly or easily, I have the inner calm of being able to accept an evil thing as from God. This is where I am moving on to the royal authority of faith of the Hebrews 11:32-34 type. What was in earlier childhood and young man stage a simple faith in my daily walk with Jesus now becomes the formidable weapon of faith by which I am “more than conqueror” in all situations; a conqueror in a stable walk on rocky ground, and more than conqueror by knowing

how to apply the conquest to bringing good out of evil, supply out of need, advance out of retreat.

I learn the lessons of that key of achieving faith of Mark 11:12-14; 20 26. I ask God my favourite question in all contrary circumstances, “What are You up to?” Not bringing my confusions and distresses to Him, but first asking, “Why have You sent me these distresses?” Then, knowing all is from Him, as Jesus instructed the disciples in that Mark incident, I see by my inner seeing of faith that a mountain is really only, not a barrier, but a plain surface on which God sends His supplies. (See what the angel said to Zechariah when Zerubbabel was weighed down by a sense of failure, Zechariah 4:7: “What art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel... a plain!”) A problem is an opportunity!

Then, as Jesus instructed His disciples not to get into anxious praying, but to operate the “faith of God” (not faith in God), Mark 11:22, I catch on to what God is doing in the situation, and say He is doing it. I do this by what He conveys to my normal mind as I (or we if a group of us) think a thing over, knowing that “we have the mind of Christ”, and thus expect to find His mind through my mind, regulated by the Standards of the Word of God and often Confirmed by it. Then as I, or we, take this or that to be His mind, I decide what it is He would do in this situation, conveying His desire through my desire (Mark 11:24). Then having made that decision, I speak the word of faith, my prayer being a believing that what I desire I received and saying so. This is what Jesus meant by saying, “have the faith of God”. Against all my soul feelings of absurdity and unlikeliness, and all external appearances, I say that word of God’s faith, and God’s faith is given us in Romans 4:17, “who calls the things that be not as though they are”. Then I go forward as having that matter settled in my faith consciousness, and constantly as recognising it as settled. Then comes the continued supply, even if sometimes it is slow in coming or comes in inexplicable ways as with Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. This is the Royalty of the Royal Priesthood.

The priesthood is the summit. He is “the Great High Priest”. This is marvellously the final expression of the Being of God, and therefore of us as His re-expression. Marvellous that the nature of the One in the Universe, The Eternal Being, is purely other-love. He for His universe, not the universe for Him. The Lamb on the throne. Fantastic! The Lamb slain, ever fulfilling the eternal law of the cross - life issues from death. The One whose total nature is that He died that others may live. The highest position through eternity given, as Paul revealed, not to a conquering monarch, in the usual sense in which we think of conquest, but to the One who has conquered His Universe and won all to Himself by becoming their servant to the final point that “He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross”. Then God’s verdict is pronounced in the presence of all peoples, “Wherefore God has highly exalted Him and given Him a name above every name” that all should bow the knee to Him and confess Him as Lord! (Philippians 2:5-11). What? A king crowned with many crowns, yes. The king, but crowned with a crown of thorns that we all might become co-kings with Him!

So we now as He. Freed from our own self-problems, a permanent drive “eats us up”, that all the world, and that means for us all within our guided reach, must share this life’s secret which belongs to them if they but knew it, “Beloved, now are we the sons

of God and it doth not yet appear what we shall be”. And so a priest is a commissioned person. He can’t help it. He doesn’t seek out the commission, it seeks him out. It’s a divine “must”. What must? Whatever confronts us as the area within our reach where we can bring Christ to others. I had to be a witness to Christ to my fellow-soldiers in World War I. I had to knock on doors of the men’s rooms in Trinity College, Cambridge, when I went from the army to the university and invite them to come to our Christian Fellowship and find Christ, out of which came the birth of the now worldwide Inter Varsity Christian Fellowship. And, always seeing that the front line is the place for a soldier in a war, when I heard of C. T. Studd, who had sold all (being England’s great cricketer and a wealthy man) to take the gospel to tribes in Africa who had never heard of Him, I had to go and join him. And now after years of taking Christ to the unreached peoples of the world, in my “old age”, just coming ninety, I have to take this final total reality of Christ reliving His life in our forms and going into saving action by us, to all who will give me a hearing. This life is a glorious “have-to”. Therefore in actuality, every born-again son of God has at once begun to be a priest-intercessor, from the moment the Spirit has made his body His temple. We are a commissioned people!

The way of the intercessor-priest is by whatever form of involvement the Spirit indicates to us that we can be in action in bringing our light to others. Obviously there can be no limits to what special way that is. But it will be in the form of self giving, in no way engineered by us, but by which we take the place of those we are intercessors for, that they might take their places as redeemed sons of God. It is thus vicarious. It just will cost and will be a death for us, not sought for by us but in some forms our heart and mind and body involvement for these others will bring a death: to our reputation as “fanatics”, to our material and physical expenditure, to who knows what in what way, for death, as Jesus said in John 12:24 presses out His life for others (1 Peter 2:20-25). Paul again said, “We which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you” (2 Corinthians 4:12). That’s the cost of intercession following on to the commission. Often we may not realise we are in an intercessory “death” until we find we are! But then knowing that this is the intercessor’s way, we anticipate the glory in the suffering. He “poured out His soul unto death and... made intercession for the transgressors” (Isaiah 53:1-2). “For the joy set before Him, [He] endured the cross” (Hebrews 12:2).

But, it makes such a difference if we have come to know this intercessory way of the priest and are not just going blindly along it (which we probably all do in our early “little children, young men” days). We then know that the ultimate of an intercession is the gaining of it. Prayer may, intercession must! But this means we can not rest or lay down our arms of faith until it has been gained. This may be part of our “death”, for we are taking no “no” in the commission. When we haven’t understood this, then we may speak of our calling or ministry as “called to be faithful, but not necessarily successful”. But no! We hear God’s word to Joshua picking up Moses’ commission, “then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, then thou shalt have good success”. I have personally walked that way since the Spirit revealed that to me even in my college days. I couldn’t take it when I heard an annual report of some ministry described as faithful but not successful.

That is also where the declaration of faith that God is bringing something to pass, not yet visible, is a form of the death. When Rees Howells had this “commission”, in the early days of World War 2, confronted with all the might of Hitler and Mussolini, to see and say God would destroy these dictators and open the world to the gospel, in the power, and spirit-confirmation of the word of faith given them and declared by them, they held the celebration of the end of that war just at the time when Hitler’s panzers broke through into Holland, Belgium, seized France, and threatened Britain! No wonder the public papers called him a false prophet, and the majority of God’s people, ignorant of the fundamental principle of intercession, said the same, and some to this day. But read Doris Ruscoe’s little book “The Intercession of Rees Howells” (Christian Literature Crusade), and trace that warfare of faith through to its amazing almost unbelievable open doors and vast worldwide response to the gospel today, far “more exceeding abundantly above” what Rees Howells himself “asked or thought”.

Intercession is The Intercessor Himself, The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:27) operating in us/as us, in His whole divine process of Commission, Cost, Completion. It will so often appear to us in our appearance-humanity that it is we caught up in the commission, we who are torn apart by some forms of dying (certainly usually to our reputation as fanatics); sometimes physically and materially. But, the Spirit then reminds us, “These are the sufferings of Christ” by you (1 Peter 4:13). This is He manifesting His Resurrection Life by you (2 Corinthians 4:11), for “we” is He, no separated “we”.

So do I make the point clear? The priest-intercessor is the Bible description of all of us born of the Intercessory-spirit. The intercession is the driving of the Spirit in us/as us which simply immerses us in the necessity of others having the Christ we have in salvation and fullness.

In our earlier “little children” stage, there is the drive, and we respond to it with a mixture of much “fleshly” energy, which is God using our soul-body energies en route to our learning the ways of operations by Spirit-leadership. This was Moses starting off his rescue of his enslaved brethren by killing the Egyptian mistreating an Israelite, a vast contrast to Moses forty years later overcoming Pharaoh by the word-of-faith activities which produced the plagues and the release of the nation from its captivity. We then go through the process of our own inner settling into the young man stage of Galatians 2:20, where we become “established, strengthened, settled” (1 Peter 5:10). And now we are consciously in our “father” stage, where we have, like Paul, “won Christ”, and thus the highest privilege of being levelled with Him as co-saviours (1 Corinthians 9:22), co-commissioned, co-labourers, co-sufferers, co-diers, co-risers in co-resurrection which with us brings “many sons to glory”.

This priesthood-intercession may take a multitude of different forms in the originality of the Intercessor Spirit in us and by us. But it now means a commission no longer in ignorance of the fact that I am an intercessor. I am grabbed by some involvement in God’s saving purpose, maybe starting in one life and on to many. There it is. I can’t help it. I am “in it to win it”, to use my friend Roy Putnam’s phrase. This is my Spirit-given commission, small or great, which may last long or short until it has been gained. It may be as “simple” as one mother of a missionary I knew, Mrs. Scholes, both a widow and blind, who so gladly gave her only child, her son Jack, to be a pioneer missionary in the Congo. When she became blind (in the days before state support in

Britain of such a condition), and her friends said her son must come home to care for her, here was her reply, “His homecoming is just what would kill me! My life is in Jack taking Jesus to the Africans”, and he never did come home except for furlough visit. “Mother Scholes” was an intercessor.

The cost is the battle of faith and works. I am a soldier in my front line. The heat of the battle is what Paul called “fighting the good fight of faith”. All the lives of the great men of faith in the Bible illustrate that battle. Do I confront some apparent impossibility and have to move into some word of faith on the basis of Mark 11:20-24, which must be maintained, persisted in and confirmed by the inner confirmation of the Spirit? Watch that often swaying battle of faith in those faith-victors of Hebrews 11. That is the heartbeat of intercession. There is then the further cost of whatever form of activity-involvement the Spirit takes us into. I am a “missionary in action” in some field of action.

The final is the gaining of the intercession; the persistence in the commission until we see the completion: Jesus’, “I have a baptism to be baptised with and how am I straitened until it be accomplished”, (Luke 12:50); and Paul’s “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course”. Prayer may... intercession must! Commission. Cost. Completion.

TO SUM UP

Here is the outpouring in a kind of resume form of what I daringly call (to me) Total Truth. I gave it in more detail in my recent book Yes I Am (out of print).

The main point is that the heart of revelation is that there is Only One Person in the Universe manifesting Himself in infinite variety of visible forms. Therefore the human self, His highest form of manifesting Himself created in His own image, is basically nothing but a vessel, branch, temple, body-member, slave, with its perfection of created being and potential (Acts 17:28), but with no nature of its own by which it expresses itself. Much like our modern-day computer with its great potential, but only reproducing the input of its programmer, our only reason for existence, glorious as that is, is to express God in His nature, and reproduce Him in all His forms of sacrificial love-activity so that we are He in our forms.

But because nothing in the Universe, from God Himself through all His creation, can operate except by interaction with its opposite, and the one utilising the other for its manifestation, so we, in ourselves as His highest form of creation, can only know ourselves and operate as selves by being confronted with the opposite. Created to manifest God in His nature of Self-giving Love, we were confronted with and caught up by that false “god” of self-loving self and were then deceived to the point of thinking it was ourselves operating ourselves, instead of the true fact that it was that evil one expressing his nature by us. It is a ridiculous and total impossibility for humans to be self-operating selves. There is no such thing in the Universe.

Our Last Adam then, our Lord Jesus Christ, representing us, voluntarily accepted His Calvary death in our place and as us. Thus “made sin” as us, by His death He “died to sin”, that sin-spirit which occupied us, and by His resurrection His Spirit of Self-giving Love replaced that false spirit of error. This then is the fact in us when in our freedom

as persons, by the grace operation on us first by the law and then of the Spirit, we come to recognise Who we now are: formerly Satan-I, now Christ-I, as in Galatians 2:20.

We are liberated to recognise that there never was anything basically evil in our human selves, any more than there was anything basically good (Romans 7:18). But as formerly sin-expressers through Satan in his sin form indwelling us, now we are God-expressers through Christ in His holiness nature indwelling us. So we boldly now accept ourselves and be ourselves with no condemnation, with no change necessary in our human selves created in His image, but the radical change is in the One expressing Himself in His nature as us; not change of human self (which had no nature) but of Deity owner and indweller expressing His nature by us. We are free to be - kept by our Keeper.

Living in this present Satan-infected world, as lights in a dark place, we are continually assaulted by every kind of enticement to respond to that tempter around us. But we have learned not to take condemnation for temptation, but to recognise and accept it as living always within range, even as Jesus was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. Thus recognising the subtle temptation to respond to the lie of the independent self and taking no condemnation for the pulls of Satan by temptation, we are equally free to recognise Who we really are, the Spirit of holiness in us/as us, and we expressing Him in whatever replacement meets the temptation: hate by love, fear by faith, lust by self-giving love and so on.

Finally, free from pressures concerning our human selves, we are captured by the pressures of self-giving love, God in His lamb nature, and lay down our lives as intercessors that others may find their secret of life, "death in us, and life in you". This is finally total fulfilment in present-day world living; Paul's Colossians 1:28, "presenting every man perfect in Christ Jesus".