

Comments on Personal Growth, Stewardship and Service

Transcript of a tape recording of Bill Sadler at a study group

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USA



AUDIENCE: HERE'S A CHILDISH QUESTION if you ever heard one. I read this book, of course I want to read it all, but I want to live it. I don't want just the words just to come in and know it intellectually. I want to live it. How. How do you start? And that's very childish, but it's—

It's a very good question. I think you—I think you—I can't speak for anybody but myself. This is too intimate. What in essence you have asked me is, "What is your religion—not your theology or philosophy."

...I've never doubted that this is a dialogue. It's a dialogue between two conscious beings, one of whom is deaf. I can talk, but I can't hear. And I don't let my deafness impair my faith in the least. I keep asking my partner for help in certain directions: How can I be more useful? How can we do a better job about coping with my ego?

I'm interested in getting as much help from my partner as I can. I feel rather diffident about discussing my problems with an infinite God, even though in my mind and heart I know he's got all the time in the world for me. But somehow it seems presumptuous. He's running a big universe. And it seems to me that there are so many other things that he could more profitably spend his time on.

But I don't feel this way about this Thought Adjuster. Because this Thought Adjuster is God individuated for me. And I am his business. For this particular assignment, I am his principle concern. He may have some peripheral activities going on, but they're definitely secondary to me. Just as you are primary to the function of your Thought Adjuster.

I have no hesitancy about discussing anything with this Thought Adjuster. I have a feeling of comradeship for him. And let me explain. I've never heard him say anything to me. If I ever did, it would probably scare me quite out of my wits, and I would immediately feel this is paranoia, you know? And I would put the whole thing on ice and think about it for quite a number of weeks or

months, until my human judgment could evaluate it, or until a little time passed.

And yet I've never doubted that this is a dialogue. It's a dialogue between two conscious beings, one of whom is deaf. I can talk, but I can't hear. And I don't let my deafness impair my faith in the least. I keep asking my partner for help in certain directions: How can I be more useful? How can we do a better job about coping with my ego? This belligerent self that I'm not sure I've conquered at all. And if I were sure, then I'd be afraid of that concept, too—I'd fear this was spiritual pride, you know, which goeth before a hell of a crash.

I try to tell my partner about what life is like down here. There's a whole lot that he doesn't get out of this world, because he doesn't have eyes, you know? He doesn't have ears. He has a sensory mechanism, but it's quite different from mine. ▶

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Greetings fellow *UAI Journal* readers

FALL FELL TOO QUICKLY this year and the time for our September—October edition of the *UAI Journal* is upon us already. It is amazing to me that each year seems to pass quicker than the last – not to mention how the months go by in the blink of an eye. Before we blink again I hope you will enjoy these 3 essays centering on Personal Growth and Stewardship through Service; Beauty and the attainment of perfection through its recognition on many levels; and finally how the stewardship of service and the recognition of beauty can assist us in Living Spiritually in a Practical World.

Our first essay *Comments on Personal Growth, Stewardship and Service*, by Bill Sadler Jr. is a classic, and reads just as informatively today as it did a half a century ago. I think Bill's words apply to all generations and resonate in any time period. He clearly touches upon the necessity of meditation and camaraderie in the outworking of that stewardship which attends to the personal growth of our souls as a reaction to the spiritual service of our fellows. Sadler gives us a plan when he explains that *An idea is a validated plan for action. You could execute an idea. An ideal is something yet again. It cannot be executed until it has been translated and promoted to the level of an idea. Up until that time, it's merely a dream about a plan for action. It's something which may stimulate conduct, but it cannot guide conduct. And I think if we will get our ideals to a level of ideas, then these we can execute.* Bill then goes on to discuss the human paradox, the universal economy and humor as the divine antidote, all the while focusing on the one thing that brings it all together ... our participation!

Our second essay is the third in a series on "Truth Beauty and Goodness in *The Urantia Book*" by Rick Warren. In this chapter he focuses on Beauty; *Beauty has at least three general levels of expression, physical, intellectual, and spiritual. On the physical level, you know beauty through the senses of sight, hearing, smell, etc. On the intellectual level, you discern beauty in great thinking, writing and oration. On the spiritual level beauty is realized in spirit values, like love, loyalty, goodness, wisdom, truth and the ideals of Godlikeness.* Each of these aspects of Beauty have repercussions in our daily lives and together they help balance the intellect and harmonize our physical and spiritual natures guiding us in our stewardship and service, and paving the way for living spiritually in this day and age... as our next author describes.

Our final article by Richard Rosen is also an excerpt from his book *Hard After God* titled "Living Spiritually in a Practical World". Richard takes both the ideas and ideals Bill Sadler Jr. gives us and looks through the eyes of Beauty that Rick illustrates for us to arrive at the enlightened conclusion that *There is a great need to balance the intellectual presentation of truth with how-to-go-about-it, taking truth out of memory and living it. Truth needs hands and feet put to it.* Richard shares his personal examples with us and puts some feet and a face on the situations which seek our spiritual viewpoint and lead us to successful outworkings in the practical world of today.

So let us traverse through fall and into winter taking with us Bill's call to Personal Growth, Rick's discovery of the Beauty which accelerates

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that growth and which gives us the strength to do as Richard has exemplified in his Living Spiritually in a Practical World!

... Thus Will triumphs in life's daily apprehensions and balances all human nature Jumping between point and bone of contention in justification of character...

Happy and enlightened reading!

Suzanne Kelly ■

Comments on Personal Growth, Stewardship and Service cont. from page 1

I know he's trying to tell me about Paradise. I tell him about this world—what it means to me.

When we go to a new city, I kinda let him see the city through my eyes. We talk about this. I probably spend more time talking to him in the privy than any other single place on earth, because there's the one place I'm sure to be alone. It's when I occasionally ride trains—in the bedroom—one is alone. But that's not just because I love my Thought Adjuster. I happen to be a creature who needs periodic solitude. This is temperamental.

I think if I'm going to be able to live more of this, he's got to help me. He's got to help me be less of a mammal, and more human. The heck with being more spiritual. This is for the future. I'm content if I can just become less mammalian, and more human. I'm not trying to be a frog. I can think about frogdom, but I'm a tadpole now. I'm not trying to get out on dry land, I wouldn't live. I've got to live in water. I'll wake up on dry land.

I ask my partner, "How can I be of more service?" Because in my religion, there's none of this. My religion is very, very simple. Somewhere, at the center of all things, is the boss. And these odd critters I bump into down here on earth are the boss' kids. And they should be treated accordingly. That's my religion. I can say it in three sentences. My partner's interested in this, because he comes from the boss. He understands that these are the boss' kids, and I'm sure he'll help me in every way he can. I have no doubts about this.

The thing that dismays me is my own inconstancy. This mammalian inertia. Not that I do evil or sinful things, but I don't do enough. It's not that I dwell on sinful thoughts, but that I forget to deal with the Boss and my Partner. Yet, the book tells me that God can look on the inside of me and see that dismaying and dismal picture which I know about, and he still loves me.

I consider the imperfections of the twelve Apostles. And believe me, if you want to deal with their negatives, and I made a speech on that subject last night, they're all a bunch of slobs. But they also had qualities—and Jesus loved them—and most of them played way over their heads.

Let's take inventory of the twelve. Andrew, inexpressive, had a hard time complementing people. Peter, mercurial, undependable. John, big ego—it shown through in the fourth Gospel, too, when he was old, senile; he was "the apostle whom Jesus loved."

James, no discretion; got himself killed off early in the game because he just didn't realize what wasn't his business. Philip, no imagination. Nathaniel, a wisecracker. Matthew, a guy with kind of a lurid past, a publican, a tax squeezer. Simon Zelotes, a pig-headed patriot. Thomas, bad disposition—wife delighted when he joined up so he'd be away from home. Judas, a well-educated prig. The Alpheus twins, stupid.

Now, when I think about this, I get encouraged. Here were some real card-carrying members of the human race in good standing that the Creator Son wasn't afraid to go into business with. And to count not on these human, mammalian weaknesses and limitations, but on what could be accomplished when his Father's spirit worked within these men, and when he worked with these men as a man among men. And you know,

he had a pretty good batting average. He only struck out once. (*Break in tape.*)

—think this is fun, incidentally. It's a dismaying fun. And the humor which I bring to bear on my own religious problems is rueful humor. It's a hopeless stir and chase. You see, my ideals of what a man should be are growing geometrically, but at best my progress is a limping arithmetic progression. And I'm in the sad fix of a guy who, in a rowboat, is diligently chasing a motorboat.

Now, when I was about 15, or 17, I was running neck and neck with that motorboat. I was pretty hot stuff. When you're a young marine, you've got it made. You've arrived. Ever since then, the gap has been widening between the rowboat and the motorboat.

And I'd considered—this is a real paradox—I'd considered the alternate reactions. One is to torpedo the motorboat. This eases all tension at the cost of all progress—or, at least at the cost of all ideals. Then I thought of stopping rowing. You know, just say, oh the hell with it! You know, they said it was impossible, and so we said, the hell with it. And I think the best course of action is the third course, which is to draw deeply on humor.

I can look at the riverbank, and I believe I'm making progress upstream. And I look at the motorboat, and the damn thing's farther away from me than it ever was. I think at this point, one should laugh. There are only two other alternatives—to cuss and to cry. And I think laughing is by far the best of the three.

Audience: And I'm on the bank still trying to hue out a log. I haven't gotten in the water yet. Well, it's a stern chase, and you never make it. Here again, with ideals, Betty. Ideals are like stars. If you're going to navigate at night, I can think of nothing more useful than to have these stars. But a navigator would be a fool if he thought he could actually sail to them. The place for stars is in the skies, not in one's eyes.

Audience: (*Can't understand comment.*)

They have a function, but our disappointments rise out of a misconception of their function, at least in this life. An anarchist is a real idealist, and when he gets to Havona, he can be happy, because it says in here concerning the government of the Central Universe, there is none. When beings are perfect or perfected, you don't need government any more.

Would you like a picture of the human mind, Betty?

Audience: Yes, I'd love it!

Have you ever been to the planetarium?

Audience: Yes.

Have all of you been to the planetarium? I want you to visualize a double planetarium. It's got another hemisphere as well as an upper hemisphere. And in the center with a support is a platform. And on that platform is a searchlight, and this searchlight has got a 360 degree swing around the planetarium, and it's got an arc a little ways up and a little ways down. It can illuminate—if we can use some geographical terms—it can illuminate what I would call the torrid zone in the planetarium. It can make the whole belt of the equator, and a little ways up and a little ways down. When we go into the south temperate area, below the torrid zone, I think we've hit the true subconscious. I think the north temperate area is the superconscious. I think

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the spot of light which you throw on the hemisphere is your consciousness at any given moment. And you can swing it around, and you know you can.

I can visualize a problem in Cleveland right now, which is this telegram I got, and I can think about that. I can see George Hays. I can see the problem of the cold war going on between the editor and the editor-in-chief. The editor running mad, and the editor-in-chief running scared to death, to the point where he'll lie. And I can conceive of the red herrings we've got to use to save the situation. And now I'm back to California. Do you follow me? I've swung the spotlight. And I could feel it.

When you go to sleep at night, you turn the spotlight out. And there's just a gentle green glow all over. I think above the torrid zone, I mean above the north temperate zone, in the upper hemisphere, in the polar regions, is the embryonic soul. And I visualize the Adjuster at the North Pole.

Even mortal man may contribute to the evolution of universe law, for these very seraphim do faithfully and fully portray, not necessarily man's transient and conscious desires, but rather the true longings of the inner man, the evolving morontia soul of the material mortal on the worlds of space.

This soul is a true embryo. It's carried in the womb of the mind. And it was conceived when the Adjuster invaded this hemisphere. And this soul is a growing entity.

Now, down here on the platform—oh, you could carry it on farther down to the spinal reflexes at the South Pole, you know, the vegetative nervous system. On this platform is a red button. That's the red button of decision. And all decision takes place in the conscious level of the mind. All conscious decisions. I can't make decisions at the level of the soul or the superconscious. That's because I can't get my searchlight up there. I can only get it so high. Do you follow me? There is a continual down-trickle from the upper areas of darkness into places I can find it, you know? There is a continual up-welling from the lower levels of the subconscious to the level where I can find it with the searchlight. When we wake up in the morning with a heck of a good solution to a very puzzling problem, it's a question as to where it came from. Did it come from bottom-side or top-side?

I don't regard bottom-side as nefarious, although it's distinctly mammalian in its lower levels. Bottom-side can do a terrific IBM job—running through the memory cards and giving you a darn good, a darned ingenious solution to a purely temporal, material problem. I think a lot of good comes out of the subconscious, as well as a lot of balderdash.

I think the spirit of truth is working in the upper hemisphere. I think all spiritual influences are in the upper hemisphere. I would say that the five mammalian adjutants work in the southern hemisphere. The two human adjutants, and midway adjutants—worship and wisdom—the holy spirit, the spirit of truth, and the Adjuster work in the northern hemisphere.

This is my working model of a concept of a human mind.

When we wake up in the mansion worlds, this red button of decision will register directly in the soul. I think the human soul is conscious. The superconscious mind is the north temperate zone, but the north polar regions are the regions of what I would denominate the mid-mind. It is the mind between the divine mind and the purely human mind. And this is not material mind. This is a morontia reality. A morontia embryo.

I am carrying, I am in process of—the process of gestation is going on. I am aborning me to be.

I think this soul can register things, if it's beyond the purely fetal stage, the early fetal stage. Here's an interesting statement, over on page 432, third paragraph on supervisor seraphim. We're up on the constellation level now, where the legislative function. They're talking about the law forecasters. In other words, these are the experts which they consult when they say we're contemplating the passing of such and such a law—now how will it work out? You see, if we had experts like that, we would never pass the prohibition amendment; the law forecasters would say, you're going to turn a gradually temperate group into a drinking group.

Near the end of the paragraph: "These seraphim seek no special favors for one group or another,"—they're not lobbyists—but they do appear before the celestial lawmakers to speak for those who cannot be present to speak for themselves. Even mortal man may contribute to the evolution of universe law, for these very seraphim do faithfully and fully portray, not necessarily man's transient and conscious desires, but rather the true longings of the inner man, the evolving morontia soul of the material mortal on the worlds of space."

These seraphim run a Gallop poll. And what do they deal with? They deal with human beings at the level of the evolving soul. We never knew we were polled. This all happened in the north polar regions. Do you follow me? And this tells me something about the soul down here. This soul is not unconscious. Even though I am not conscious of the consciousness of my embryonic soul. This soul can speak, and this soul can speak for me. Because my material mind is the mother of this soul, as the Adjuster is the father of this soul. This is our child.

There's about a thousand human beings on earth who collaborate with the seraphim who are, practically speaking, the superhuman government of this planet. We talked about two groups of seraphim, the progress angels and the religious guardians, as a good example of the Promethean, Epimethian balancing.

These thousand mortals—approximately a thousand—are trained and rehearsed to act in certain planetary emergencies. If you think of a famous human being, he probably is not a reservist, because by far the majority live and die, and never function. The emergency didn't take place. It's like an insurance policy. It's like an accident policy. You have it, but you hope you don't cash in on it.

These folks, I gather from this section here, function group-wise. Over on the next page it says, in paragraph three,

"The corps has no permanent head, but does have permanent councils which constitute its governing organization. These embrace the judiciary council, the historicity council, the council on political sovereignty, and many others. From time to time, in accordance with the corps organization, titular mortal heads of the whole reserve corps have been commissioned by these permanent councils for specific function. The tenure of such reservist chiefs is usually a matter of a few hours duration, being limited to the accomplishment of a specific task at hand."

Now, what's functioning here? I think the soul is functioning. And I think the soul could function if you stopped all other function. And if you stopped all other function, the reservist would have to be asleep, wouldn't he? Couldn't be

any conscious interference. Maybe even the Thought Adjuster wouldn't be there. And then maybe these human beings could collaborate—unknowingly collaborate—as a group at the morontia level of the soul.

I've often pondered. Suppose the reservist were engaged in actual warfare. Would they put him to sleep, and let him get shot up? No. I'm sure they wouldn't do that. I'm sure they'd never jeopardize the human being. But suppose a battle were in progress. What could they do? Well, I can think of one thing. I always think they do the simplest thing possible. They could make fog. They could get that darn thing so foggy, there could be no fighting, if it were that important.

As long as we're discussing the soul, I think this paragraph is very interesting. I think in certain instances a soul is functional here on earth, but only under peculiar circumstances. It's on page 1196. There's a section entitled, "Self-Acting Adjusters." And it's item four.

It goes on to say that these Adjusters "seem to possess a marked degree of will in all matters not involving the human personalities of their immediate indwelling, as is indicated by their numerous exploits both within and without the mortal subjects of attachment. Such Adjusters participate in numerous activities of the realm, but more frequently they function as undetected indwellers of the earthly tabernacles of their own choosing."

"Undoubtedly these higher and more experienced types of Adjusters can communicate with those in other realms. But while self-acting Adjusters do thus intercommunicate, they do so only on the levels of their mutual work and for the purpose of preserving custodial data essential to the Adjuster ministry of the realms of their sojourn, though on occasions they have been known to function in interplanetary matters during times of crisis."

This is real emergency line of communication which would work in the absence of all other lines of communication.

Audience: In the next paragraph, though, it says they "can leave the human body at will." What particular relationship would the soul and the personality take up if your Adjuster left for any length of time?

I would guess, if it were by design, you'd be asleep. I don't think you would be functional, to all practical intents and purposes during that time. I'm guessing here, now, but that would seem reasonable.

Audience: It says again here, "In the original life plans they were provided for, but they are not indispensable to material existence."

That's right. Because not all mortals have them prior to the coming of the Spirit of Truth. Cain didn't have an Adjuster until he asked for one.

Audience: Have you personally known anyone who you think might not have had an Adjuster?

I'd say any idiot—and I'm using the term literally—I don't think idiots have them. I don't think they're human. I don't think the top two adjutants are there. I don't they're personal, either. I think if a—oh, let's think of a human being who was injured in such a way as to destroy normal thought process from there on. I think at that point the Adjuster leaves. And at that point, in the universe records, the affairs of this human being are wound up; he's dead as far as the universe is concerned. His body might live on like a vegetable for quite a

number of years. But in the records of the universe, he died on the day of the accident.

Audience: Is this the same if a person becomes really insane.

Yes. Total insanity, I think, would liberate the Adjuster.

Audience: What if you found someone who was occasionally insane, as a sex pervert?

I think the Adjuster would stand by, if the individual has rational interludes, and try to help that person. I think that—let's say that you were out for a long time, but could come back. I think the Adjuster would stay right here, patiently waiting the return of normal consciousness. Sure. Well, I use the word because I am patient. The Adjuster is beyond that. I'm often impatient, too.

Audience: Something I would like to discuss sometime, Bill, when we get around to it is that spiritual—we mentioned that, Dorothy—spiritual life like physical energy is consumed, spiritual effort results in relative spiritual exhaustion. How is the spirit replenished, how is spiritual energy restored?

Let's read what Rodan said about that. "But the greatest of all methods of problem solving I have learned from Jesus, your Master. I refer to that which he so consistently practices, and which he has so faithfully taught you, the isolation of worshipful meditation. In this habit of Jesus' going off so frequently by himself to commune with the Father in heaven is to be found the technique, not only of gathering strength and wisdom for the ordinary conflicts of living, but also of appropriating the energy for the solution of the higher problems of a moral and spiritual nature. But even correct methods of solving problems will not compensate for inherent defects of personality or atone for the absence of the hunger and thirst for true righteousness."

"I'm deeply impressed with the custom of Jesus of going apart by himself to engage in these seasons of solitary survey of the problems of living; to seek for new stores of wisdom and energy for meeting the manifold demands of social service; to quicken and deepen the supreme purpose of living by actually subjecting the total personality to the consciousness of contacting with divinity; to grasp for possession of new and better methods of adjusting oneself to the ever-changing situations of living existence; to effect those vital reconstructions and readjustments of one's personal attitudes which are so essential to enhanced insight into everything worth while and real; and to do all of this with an eye single to the glory of God—to breathe in sincerity your Master's favorite prayer, 'Not my will, but yours, be done.'"

"This worshipful practice of your Master brings that relaxation which renews the mind; that illumination which inspires the soul; that courage which enables one bravely to face one's problems; that self-understanding which obliterates debilitating fear; and that consciousness of union with divinity which equips man with the "self" "assurance that enables him to dare to be Godlike. The relaxation of worship, or spiritual communion as practiced by the Master, relieves tension, removes conflicts, and mightily augments the total resources

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of the personality. And all this philosophy, plus the gospel of the kingdom, constitutes the new religion as I understand it.”

I think there’s another awfully good quote on page 1001: “Prayer may become an established custom; many pray because others do. Still others pray because they fear something direful may happen if they do not offer their regular supplications.”

“To some individuals prayer is the calm expression of gratitude; to others, a group expression of praise, social devotions; sometimes it is the imitation of another’s religion, while in true praying it is the sincere and trusting communication of the spiritual nature of the creature with the anywhere presence of the spirit of the Creator.”

We do require the restoration of mental energy, nervous energy, and I think that’s play, relaxation, humor, having fun, dabbling at things.

“Prayer may be a spontaneous expression of God-consciousness or a meaningless recitation of theologic formulas. It may be the ecstatic praise of a God-knowing soul or the slavish obeisance of a fear-ridden mortal. It is sometimes the pathetic expression of spiritual craving and sometimes the blatant shouting of pious phrases. Prayer may be joyous praise or a humble plea for forgiveness.”

“Prayer may be the childlike plea for the impossible or the mature entreaty for moral growth and spiritual power. A petition may be for daily bread or may embody a wholehearted yearning to find God and to do his will. It may be a wholly selfish request or a true and magnificent gesture toward the realization of unselfish brotherhood.”

“Prayer may be an angry cry for vengeance or a merciful intercession for one’s enemies. It may be the expression of a hope of changing God or the powerful technique of changing one’s self. It may be the cringing plea of a lost sinner before a supposedly stern Judge or the joyful expression of a liberated son of the living and merciful heavenly Father.”

“Modern man is perplexed by the thought of talking things over with God in a purely personal way. Many have abandoned regular praying; they only pray when under unusual pressure—in emergencies. Man should be unafraid to talk to God, but only a spiritual child would undertake to persuade, or presume to change God.” That’s the practice of magic. Or the attempted practice of magic. That’s where I think the energy comes from. You do use it up, and you’ve got to refill the gas tank somewhere. I think that spiritual energy comes from prayer and from worship, meditation. I think psychic energy, mind energy, losses are depleted through play, relaxation, refreshment, diversion.

Jesus said, “Let’s take a day off. “ Who was it, Andrew who said, tell him I’m very tired, and that I’d like to take a day off and while resting let’s not talk about all our problems, we’ll have some fun. This was psychological, not necessarily spiritual. These men had raw nerve endings. They weren’t out of spiritual gas.

Audience: Dorothy and I in discussing this also thought that doing good—didn’t we—in a sense was a type of a spiritual recharging.

Sure. I think that we’re equipped with three kinds of energy. If we work physically, we need calories and sleep. If we work on a loading dock, I would say we need about 4500 calories and 10 hours of sleep.

I’d like to see what any of you would look like if you ate 4500 calories in a day for a year—the effects would be startling. We don’t require that much physical energy because we aren’t burning it. We do require the restoration of mental energy,

nervous energy, and I think that’s play, relaxation, humor, having fun, dabbling at things.

And then I think spiritually this is the technique of recharging. We need to recharge in many ways. And then we need to discharge. This is living richly. To take in much and give out much.

In my own philosophy of life, I want to live as richly as I can. And to me, to live richly is to receive from this life simply everything I have the capacity to receive, and to give to this life everything that’s within my power to give. And I couldn’t honestly wish for the one without also being willing to pay the other. And the more that goes both ways, the richer the life. This is richness of living. This is life in Technicolor, in a wide screen, instead of just black and white.

Audience: This is how I feel very much to me, but I don’t know quite how to obtain it. I have fears, inhibitions, things that hold me back from—

Oh, well, we ask the questions in parts one, two, and three, and get the answers in part four.

“Jesus had a long talk with a young man who was fearful and downcast. Failing to derive comfort and courage from association with his fellows, this youth had sought the solitude of the hills; he had grown up with a feeling of helplessness and inferiority. These natural tendencies had been augmented by numerous difficult circumstances which the lad had encountered as he grew up, notably, the loss of his father when he was twelve years of age. As they met, Jesus said: ‘Greetings, my friend! why so downcast on such a beautiful day? If something has happened to distress you, perhaps I can in some manner assist you. At any rate it affords me real pleasure to proffer my services.’”

“The young man was disinclined to talk, and so Jesus made a second approach to his soul, saying: ‘I understand you come up in these hills to get away from folks; so, of course, you do not want to talk with me, but I would like to know whether you are familiar with these hills; do you know the direction of the trails? and, perchance, could you inform me as to the best route to Phoenix?’ ‘Now this youth was very familiar with these mountains, and he really became much interested in telling Jesus the way to Phoenix, so much so that he marked out all the trails on the ground and fully explained every detail. But he was startled and made curious when Jesus, after saying goodbye and making as if he were taking leave, suddenly turned to him, saying: ‘I well know you wish to be left alone with your disconsolation; but it would be neither kind nor fair for me to receive such generous help from you as to how best to find my way to Phoenix and then unthinkingly to go away from you without making the least effort to answer your appealing request for help and guidance regarding the best route to the goal of destiny which you seek in your heart while you tarry here on the mountainside.’”

You know, he’d do anything to help a person, wouldn’t he? He’d make himself out to be dumb and humble if he could only create that opportunity to accept help which in turn would give him the chance to give help. Again I say, what a salesman.

Audience: Tact.

“As you so well know the trails to Phoenix, having traversed them many times, so do I well know the way to the city of your disappointed hopes and thwarted ambitions. And since you have asked me for help, I will not disappoint you. ‘

The youth was almost overcome, but he managed to stammer out, 'But—I did not ask you for anything—' And Jesus, laying a gentle hand on his shoulder, said: 'No, son, not with words but with longing looks did you appeal to my heart. My boy, to one who loves his fellows there is an eloquent appeal for help in your countenance of discouragement and despair. Sit down with me while I tell you of the service trails and happiness highways which lead from the sorrows of self to the joys of loving activities in the brotherhood of men and in the service of the God of heaven.'"

"By this time the young man very much desired to talk with Jesus, and he knelt at his feet imploring Jesus to help him, to show him the way of escape from his world of personal sorrow and defeat. Said Jesus: 'My friend, arise! Stand up like a man! You may be surrounded with small enemies and be retarded by many obstacles, but the big things and the real things of this world and the universe are on your side. The sun rises every morning to salute you just as it does the most powerful and prosperous man on earth. Look—you have a strong body and powerful muscles—your physical equipment is better than the average.

Of course, it is just about useless while you sit out here on the mountainside and grieve over your misfortunes, real and fancied. But you could do great things with your body if you would hasten off to where great things are waiting to be done. You are trying to run away from your unhappy self, but it cannot be done. You and your problems of living are real; you cannot escape them as long as you live. But look again, your mind is clear and capable. Your strong body has an intelligent mind to direct it. Set your mind at work to solve its problems; teach your intellect to work for you; refuse longer to be dominated by fear like an unthinking animal. Your mind should be your courageous ally in the solution of your life problems rather than your being, as you have been, its abject fear-slave and the bond servant of depression and defeat. But most valuable of all, your potential of real achievement is the spirit which lives within you, and which will stimulate and inspire your mind to control itself and activate the body if you will release it from the fetters of fear and thus enable your spiritual nature to begin your deliverance from the evils of inaction by the power-presence of living faith. And then, forthwith, will this faith vanquish fear of men by the compelling presence of that new and all-dominating love of your fellows which will so soon fill your soul to overflowing because of the consciousness which has been born in your heart that you are a child of God."

"This day, my son, you are to be reborn, re-established as a man of faith, courage, and devoted service to man, for God's sake. And when you become so readjusted to life within yourself, you become likewise readjusted to the universe; you have been born again—born of the spirit—and henceforth will your whole life become one of victorious accomplishment. Trouble will invigorate you; disappointment will spur you on; difficulties will challenge you; and obstacles will stimulate you. Arise, young man! Say farewell to the life of cringing fear and fleeing cowardice. Hasten back to duty and live your life in the flesh as a son of God, a mortal dedicated to the ennobling service of man on earth and destined to the superb and eternal service of God in eternity."

Audience: That is a real masterpiece.

He launched him on the Paradise ascent.

Let's see what the Greek had to say about this.

Audience: What page is that?

Page 1777, the second year of the Revolutionary War.

"The effort toward maturity necessitates work, and work requires energy. Whence the power to accomplish all this? The physical things can be taken for granted, but the Master has well said, 'Man cannot live by bread alone.'"

Mrs. Stephen's bread would come close to that, but—

Audience: Laughter.

"Granted the possession of a normal body and reasonably good health, we must next look for those lures which will act as a stimulus to call forth man's slumbering spiritual forces. Jesus has taught us that God lives in man; then how can we induce man to release these soul-bound powers of divinity and infinity? How shall we induce men to let go of God that he may spring forth to the refreshment of our own souls while in transit outward and then to serve the purpose of enlightening, uplifting, and blessing countless other souls? How best can I awaken these latent powers for good which lie dormant in your souls? One thing I am sure of: Emotional excitement is not the ideal spiritual stimulus. Excitement does not augment energy; it rather exhausts the powers of both mind and body. Whence then comes the energy to do these great things?

Look to your Master. Even now he is out in the hills taking in power while we are here giving out energy. The secret of all this problem is wrapped up in spiritual communion, in worship. From the human standpoint it is a question of combined meditation and relaxation. Meditation makes the contact of mind with spirit; relaxation determines the capacity for spiritual receptivity. And this interchange of strength for weakness, courage for fear, the will of God for the mind of self, constitutes worship. At least, that is the way the philosopher views it."

"When these experiences are frequently repeated, they crystallize into habits, strength-giving and worshipful habits, and such habits eventually formulate themselves into a spiritual character, and such a character is finally recognized by one's fellows as a mature personality. These practices are difficult and time-consuming at first, but when they become habitual, they are at once restful and time-saving. The more complex society becomes, and the more the lures of civilization multiply, the more urgent will become the necessity for God-knowing individuals to form such protective habitual practices designed to conserve and augment their spiritual energies."

Those two statements to me have always been complementary. Jesus' personal advice to the boy, and Rodan's philosophizing about exactly the same thing. (*Break in tape*).

This discussion of human paradoxes runs all the way through this book. It might be likened to the problem of tightrope walking between spiritism and secularism, between—to have courage without pride. To be totally without pride involves the dismal picture of a deflated ego. And a deflated ego can best be described by likening it to a car with four flat tires. This car is fairly nearly useless.

The problem is air pressure. How do we get enough air pressure in these tires so that the car is mobile and runs well? This means we pump them up with pride. But there's always a

...to live richly is to receive from this life simply everything I have the capacity to receive, and to give to this life everything that's within my power to give. And I couldn't honestly wish for the one without also being willing to pay the other.

danger that we pump too long, and we blow the tires out in terms of self-love. It takes a little pride to make a person stand up.

It took some pride for Van to take on Caligastia and Daligastia, and then later on Lucifer as well. It took real courage there, and there's a component of pride in that courage.

To be totally without pride would add up to being totally useless as a potential finaliter. A son is not a subservient slave. A son can take pride in membership in that family. A finaliter is not a puppet of God; a finaliter is a junior partner in relation to a senior partner. And there is a dignity involved in a partnership relation. No matter how small one of the partners is and how large the other partner may be.

When you invest an animal with a complex personality, which really can choose, which really does have free will. When you back this up with a part of absolute divinity—absolute in terms of quality, although less than absolute in terms of quantity—undiluted, undiminished divinity, this individual has so much equipment that he could look himself over and say, "Gee, aren't I wonderful?" This is very much like one of the stewards, or better still, let's call them vice-presidents. This big tycoon went on a journey. He gave each of his vice-presidents several million bucks and says, I've had it boys, let's multiply the wealth. Suppose that that vice-president had looked at those

millions of bucks not as a trustee, but as an owner, and had taken great pride in these funds which had merely been entrusted to him.

How can we have confidence in ourselves, and at the same time realize that this wealth of personality and spirit nature is not ours by virtue of the fact that we've earned it. It's given to us. It's for free. If we can realize that this has been entrusted to us, then we can have confidence without too much pride. Great humility can be associated with great courage. And this is about the right air pressure for the tires on the automobile.

"The universal economy is based on intake and output; throughout the eternal career you will never encounter monotony of inaction or stagnation of personality. Progress is made possible by inherent motion, advancement grows out of the divine capacity for action, and achievement is the

child of imaginative adventure. But inherent in this capacity for achievement is the responsibility of ethics, the necessity for recognizing that the world and the universe are filled with a multitude of differing types of beings. All of this magnificent creation, including yourself, was not made just for you. This is not an egocentric universe. The Gods have decreed, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive—'" and Jesus put it, It makes you happier to give than to receive—"and said your Master Son, 'He who would be greatest among you let him be server of all.'"

I think this. If we would study Jesus' admonition to the Roman senator concerning wealth, we would get a peculiar kind of ethical yardstick, wherewith to measure our own endowments. Jesus' admonition to the Roman is not capitalistic, socialistic, Communistic, utopian, or anything else. It's one of the most original pronouncements on economics I've ever read in my life. Do you recall it?

Audience: No, I don't.

It has to do with degrees of ownership. And it's an amazing statement. And I think it helps. Jesus breaks wealth down into ten kinds: Inherited, discovered, trade, unfair, interest, genius, accidental, stolen, trusts, and earned.

Audience: What page?

1462. And in this section, he goes on to point out the degrees of ownership which attach to these different kinds of wealth, pointing out a principle, number 1, if it's unfair, get rid of it, make restitution.

This leaves you with fair wealth, honorable wealth. And then he points out that your right to have a say in what is done with this is in direct proportion to the effort which you expended in the acquisition. The more you have personally done about this, the more you have to say about this. The less you've done, the more your ownership impinges on trusteeship.

Audience: Fair! So very fair.

Sure. This thing is proportional. Jesus never told the Alpheus twins, up on the sea of Galilee, near the end of his morontia career on earth, he never told the Alpheus twins, "Now, boys, go out and preach to the multitudes." He sent them back to the fishnets.

But to Peter he said, "Peter, be a good shepherd. Feed my sheep." Jesus had made an investment in Simon Peter, and he wanted that investment to pay out.

Somewhere in the papers, it makes the statement, "What is loyalty? It is nothing but a feeling of fairness. How could you take so much and give nothing?" "What is loyalty? It is the fruit of an intelligent appreciation of universe brotherhood; one could not take so much and give nothing."

These gifts which we've received from God we didn't earn. It was a freewill gift from God. We can be proud that he thought enough of us to make us these gifts, but the receipt of these gifts should create in us a feeling first of affection for him in return, and second, of obligation. The greater the gift to the person—be it the Thought Adjuster from Divinington, or just plain downright human aptitudes—the greater the gift, the greater the obligation to that person. The steward that got—the vice-president that got five million dollars was held accountable for what he could earn on five million. The V-P that got two million was only accountable for what he could earn with two million.

Somehow that means more to mean when I talk about vice-presidents and millions than stewards and talents.

I look at it this way: if a human being has something, then he owes something. He owes something to the world in which he lives. This feeling of morality—you can get this right down on the human level.

Consider the inheritance of an American. It's a very rich inheritance. We have reaped where we have not sown. We live in an imperfect society, yet one which demands the children be educated. If my parents had not believed in education, society would have guaranteed me a minimum literacy. They would have guaranteed me enough so that if I was really hungry, I on my own initiative could have gone and fought for more.

To be totally without pride would add up to being totally useless as a potential finaliter. A son is not a subservient slave. A son can take pride in membership in that family. A finaliter is not a puppet of God; a finaliter is a junior partner in relation to a senior partner. And there is a dignity involved in a partnership relation.

We live in a society which theorizes at least equality of justice. That's good. Even though we don't have it here. But at least we're striving for this. We live in a society which says we shall have the right to freedom of speech and freedom of worship. None of these things did we personally earn. All of these things represent an unearned inheritance. And again I say, how could we take so much and give nothing?

Looking back, who made this possible? Well, a few big guys, but an awful lot of cooperating little people, like us. It took a lot of support from little people for big people to make these advances. And again, let's pay out the investment. I have a feeling of moral responsibility to the society and to the imperfect civilization of which I'm a member. Again, how could we take so much and give nothing? How can you balance pride and courage? How can you balance altruism and egoism? You need a balance. Again, if you're completely non-egoistic, you've got four flat tires. You're of no use to anyone. And if you've got a great big over-developed ego, your tires are going to blow, and you're not much use to anyone either.

How can you walk between—well, going back to Jesus and that wonderful section on the “Acme of Religious Living” in Part III.

They use such words as this: His faith was childlike, but not childish. There's a world of difference. He depended on God, but never presumed on God. In other words, he did the things which he should do, and trusted that God would do the things which God should do, and which he couldn't do. He had courage, but he was never audacious. He was warm-hearted, but not sentimental. He was stable, but not prosaic.

How can we arrive at a balanced life? This is the only resolution, I think, of the human paradox. And again, they admire Jesus in these papers not so much because he was one thing or another thing, but because of the exquisite symmetry, the balance, of his character.

He was generous, but not foolish. He was frugal, but not miserly. He was cautious, but never cowardly.

This is something we each have to work out. I'm very proud that I can call myself a son of God, a human son of God. I'm very proud of the future which spreads out before me. But I also feel very humble, because I didn't earn a damn bit of it.

I can take credit only for how I use these talents. If I have any brains, I can't take credit for the brains. I was born with them. The genes were good to me. Neither can I be critical of someone who, well, as one superintendent put it, he said, “You mean my foreman here was out for a short beer when the Almighty passed out intelligence?” I said, “Check. That's right.”

He isn't to blame. The Alpheus twins did the best they could. This, to me, is the resolution of the human paradox. Can you receive? Gladly. And having received gladly, can you give generously? There's a cycle here. The more you get, the more you give. The more you have, the more is expected of you. Of the teacher, more is expected than of the pupil. And of the master, more than the servant.

When we are tempted to magnify our self-importance, if we stop to contemplate the infinity of the greatness and

grandeur of our Makers, our own self-glorification becomes sublimely ridiculous, even verging on the humorous.

One of the functions of humor is to help all of us take ourselves less seriously. “Humor is the divine antidote for exaltation of ego.”

I think one of the most rueful sessions of laughter I ever had in my life was in connection with a trip out to California. I had seen this group, and I had a very rugged weekend following, out on San Pablo Bay with a couple of crazy Marine buddies of mine who run a newspaper down there. This was a very, very lost weekend. And coming back on the Superchief—I barely made the train—I tumbled into bed, because I'd done everything except sleep. The next morning I got up, and I looked in the mirror. And the events of the weekend were writ in bold hand on my face. My eyes looked like a couple of bloody oysters floating in a bowl of skim milk.

Audience: Laughter.

And the whiskers looked singularly unattractive. And I had a generally washed out expression. You know, I looked like a fella who should go to school for many years to work up to the level of an Alpheus twin. And I got to laughing when I thought, “Willy, here you are, trying to be Saint Polycarp for the blue book movement, and if this is what our unseen friends is got to work with, God only knows they are real hard up down there, they are real hard up!” I never felt so humorously humble in my whole blasted life. I've never forgotten that incident.

Jesus breaks wealth down into ten kinds: Inherited, discovered, trade, unfair, interest, genius, accidental, stolen, trusts, and earned.

And I had a feeling of tremendous compassion for these people whom I can't see who I'm sure produced this book. Gee, they're hard up. They're desperate. They're out recruiting like we did during the war, you know? Is the body warm? Can he speak? Hire him. You know? And I think this. I can tell you this much about psychometric testing. This is not always true, but quite often, a person who is a real religious fanatic has an extremely high score in the religious motivation, and he just plain flunks our crude test of humor.

Audience: Flunks what?

Humor. From the social-intelligence test. You know Moss? It isn't a very good test, but Lord, it's the only one in existence. You see, he takes God seriously, and that's wonderful, but then he takes himself seriously, and that's horrible. And I can just see him—let's turn the clock back years. Let's see, that would make this 1459. That does it.

I can just see me, standing up, you know, and the faggots are piled around my shins, and this guy with this thin-lipped smile is saying, “Sadler, for the good of your soul,” as he lights the tinder, you know. And I don't want to be a martyr. I'm willing to be, but they're going to have to catch me first.

These things, to me, are how to resolve this human paradox.

Example—you try this sometime. Go out when the sky is pretty clear at night. When you can see—well, I always think of that wonderful cartoon in old Life magazine. It's in an alley on the lower east side of New York. And this is long before they began to put in modern housing. And there're two little kids

standing in the alley, and there's washing hung out everywhere. And they're looking up at the night sky. And the little boy is holding the hand of the little girl, and he's saying to her, "Gee, sis, look at the stars, as thick as bedbugs."

Audience: Laughter.

So go on out some night when the stars are as thick as bedbugs, and start thinking about how big these are. Consider the light years of distance. Consider that every one of those little specks—with the exception of the planets—is a star. And most of them are much bigger than our sun. Consider the vast distances you're looking at. Consider how many planets there

**Here you are, strutting
around on the ball of
mud, a little midge,
squeaking in a tiny
voice, I am important,
I am important, I
am important, I am
important...**

are. With how many people on them. Each one of them with egos, each one of them with paradoxes to resolve, each one of them with a Thought Adjuster, personality, and the Spirit of Truth, and all the equipment that glitters so. Consider how little of the universe you're looking at.

Consider how much more of the universe there is that we can't see. Just like this. It goes on and on and on. Consider that it's a half a million light years from here into Uversa, which means it must be another half a million from Uversa into the outer margins of Havona.

Consider all that you can consider. Double it. Cube it. Take it to the fourth power. Then stop and think that all this tremendous picture that you're trying to build up in your mind is nothing but the least pinpoint of a revelation of an Infinite God. And as you contemplate this, you'll start shrinking.

You can't take this very long. Get inside quick, before you disappear. You keep getting smaller, and smaller, and smaller. And less and less significant. Do you follow me? Get in under the roof, where you can feel normal sized again. Because I think you could completely vanish if you kept the process up long enough.

This is good for the ego, too. Here you are, strutting around on the ball of mud, a little midge, squeaking in a tiny voice, I am important, I am important, I am important, I am important . . .

The human paradox, I think, is a matter of being sane. And sanity is defined in here as an orderly arrangement of mental systems. In other words, if you've got the Adjuster operating as a controlling nucleus in your life vehicle, you're going to be fairly sane, because you've got a stable atom there. You can swing your ego around the Adjuster as an orbital electron, but you cannot swing the Adjuster around your ego as a human nucleus. The masses are too disproportionate. If you tried—*Question?*

Audience: Pardon me. You just said we are all a little insane.

Oh, definitely.

Audience: Are we all (can't understand tape). Does this book agree we are all—

No, that's my own idea. Even as Paul, some things I teach by command, and others by permission.

Audience: Laughter.

Ye shall not muzzle the ox that fed about the grain. No, I think we're all a bit insane. We don't really think—I think Jesus was sane, completely sane. I don't think anybody else

has achieved that level of sanity. In other words, Jesus saw clearly. Jesus saw where values were. He was utterly sane. Now, I think we achieve relative degrees of sanity, which means we're relatively insane, because if we're less than totally sane, we're partly insane. Real sanity means, in part, less rationalization. Rationalization is nothing but lying to yourself, or finding good reasons for doing bad things. You know? It's an internal snow job. It means less projection. That is to say, a more honest criticism of one's own faults and less of criticizing of those faults when discovered in other people.

Audience: How can one be honest with oneself, totally? They can't. It's an ideal. I'm describing an ideal here. I don't think any of us can attain it. But that doesn't mean we can't strive for it. And here again, I think is where humor comes in. Just about the time you think you're real sane, maybe you should have an St. in front of your name, take a look in the looking glass and have a good laugh and get your feet back on the earth again, you know what I mean? Humor, along with prayer and worship, are the tools of sanity. I think there's an awfully good statement just above "The Human Paradox" on page 1221. They say, "This choosing of the Father's will is the spiritual finding of the spirit Father by mortal man, even though an age must pass before the creature son may actually stand in the factual presence of God on Paradise. This choosing does not so much consist in the negation of creature will—'Not my will but yours be done'—as it consists in the creature's positive affirmation: 'It is my will that you will be done.'"

It seems to me that a lot of this creature paradox, this human paradox, can be resolved if you are pretty certain about God. If you're sure about God, and sure about his love, and if you've got enough maturity to not presume on him, just trust him, I think in the child-Father relationship, you have your best cure for this human paradox. You know you're a creature. You're of a different order of being. You're not his equal, you're merely made partly in his image. And you keep things in proportion that way. (*Break in tape*).

A mammal and a Thought Adjuster have nothing in common. And that man is caught in the middle, because human nature impinges on both mammalian nature and the Indwelling Spirit, indirectly.

But again, so are mammals. So we have a spiritual potential. I don't know. It seems to me that people tend to move in one of two directions. Either they sort of give up on the spiritual side, and just enjoy being mammalian—and I'm afraid a lot of people are simply responding to the simple mammalian urge to live—or they get real persnickety on the other side, and sort of—who was it who founded the Methodist Church? Was it Wesley?

Audience: Wesley—

Wesley. Yes. They attempt sainthood in this life. And I think in attempting sainthood in this life, you're going to warp like a pretzel. I mean, I just think you wind up as some sort of a monster. Because you're trying to be a frog, and you're not a frog. You're a tadpole.

And I'm a little bit thick, but I don't quite see why all of this noise and shouting about this. Because I feel cheerful about being a mammal. I feel hopeful about being a finaliter.

And I know I'm in the middle. And that both ends are playing me in the middle. And I laugh about it, and I just can't get too excited about this. I do not personally see this problem in my own life. Maybe I'm blind. I know I'm a mammal. Comparative anatomy has convinced me of this. I did some dissection once upon a time. And I feel a kinship with God. And the paradox, to me, is divinely humorous. It's funny. It's not tragic. It's just plain darn funny. I can chuckle at this paradox.

Audience: It's also fascinating.

Yes, it is.

Audience: Well, I think it's thrilling!

I mean there is so much—I see this in myself, and I see it in my fellow men—there is so much that's great and grand and noble in humanity, and so much that's just plain damn foolishness.

I think some people set up standards which are just plain unrealistic. And they—I think people confuse mores with morals.

Audience: Oh, yes.

A student of history—even a casual student of history—is bound to develop a certain sophistication in his attitude toward mores, or the customs of whatever tribe in which one chances to live. I happen to live in a Midwestern American tribe. And we have our mores.

Different times and places provide different standards of conduct. And feelings of guilt arise, psychologically, through a transgression of the mores. And this does not necessarily mean the guilt that attaches to sin, which the papers specifically define as conscious disloyalty to Deity. But you feel uneasy if you run counter to the mores of your time and place. If you believe in these mores.

I'm not so concerned about the quote "lusts of the flesh" unquote—and the word lust meant something quite different when it was used in the translation, it meant desire.

I just think that people set up standards that are unrealistic. And then, fail.

They take an ideal, and presume that it's an idea. It's not.

An idea is a validated plan for action. You could execute an idea. And ideal is something yet again. It cannot be executed until it has been translated and promoted to the level of an idea. Up until that time, it's merely a dream about a plan for action. It's something which may stimulate conduct, but it cannot guide conduct.

And I think if we will get our ideals to a level of ideas, then these we can execute. You cannot execute an ideal exactly. You can attempt it, but you're going to fail. And this, I think, is where we say, well, gee, we're falling down. Mea culpa, mea culpa. Bring on the sackcloth and ashes. I don't think this is realistic living. Here. I think there is a possibility of developing, from this blue book, a religion the like of which this world has never yet seen. A religion that's full of good humor. A religion which is full of the joy of existence. A religion which is totally devoid of fear on the theological or spiritual nature.

A religion which people wear casually and yet earnestly. A religion which is gracious in its tolerance, in its leashed strength.

A religion which has nothing to do with any one day of a week. A religion which pervades the whole of a human life, twenty four hours a day. A religion which is dealt with in a familiar, friendly way. A religion which is a part of a human being.

A religion which is inseparable from philosophy, from ethics, from morality, from economics, from political thinking, and everything else. A religion which seeps down through all the levels of a human personality until it becomes indistinguishable from the whole social fragrance of that human being.

This, to me, is religion which appeals. And this, to me, is a religion which you don't find very much of in human history.

You remember in this government on a neighboring planet? They don't have any churches at all. Here's a world that's evolved to the point where it's ahead of us, at least socially, economically, and politically. No church has yet appeared in that society. That intrigues me. That intrigues me. What do you think about this idea of religion?

This is a religion which you're good-natured about. This is a religion where you don't pick it up gingerly, you know. You breathe it, like you breathe air. You drink it like you drink water. It's a normal part of living. It's real. It's not something that's dissociated, compartmentalized, or set off. It's something which your—it's so much a part of your life that you're casual with it. It's a familiar thing. You're casual with it like you're casual with clothing that's well broken in—an old suit of tweeds. It's a friendly, familiar, warm thing. It's nothing which you feel either ashamed of or heroic about. It's something which you just are.

Here's a thought about religion. Can we have religion without a priesthood?

Audience: Yes.

I think I am about one of the most unbishop-like persons ever to become connected with a religious movement. I am absolutely a layman. And anything other than that thought is repulsive to me. Can we have a thing like this without having priests and ministers?

Jesus started out with a bunch of fishermen.

Audience: He was a layman.

He was a layman.

Audience: A carpenter.

And there wasn't a single one of the Apostles who was a graduate of a theological seminary. Is it possible that we could do this with the blue book business? Or, if we've got to have something, could we at least be as wise as they were in the commonwealth of Israel when they required that each rabbi learn a trade. Paul was a tent maker by profession. At least this keeps the rabbi in touch with reality, you know? The few ministers I've met who really appealed to me—well, more than half of them have this quality. They entered the ministry late in life, after having been very successful businessmen. And there was something very real about these guys.

I met an Episcopalian priest in Hudson, Ohio, who had been a wingding of an insurance agent and entered the ministry at age 40. I met him at age 50. Gee, the guy talked real, you know? ■

Can we have religion without a priesthood?

Beauty and God

from the book ~ TB&GnTUB

Universal beauty is the recognition of the reflection of the Isle of Paradise in the material creation.

[Paper 56:10, page 647:8]

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AND YOU ARE A REFLECTION OF BEAUTY here on Urantia. At least, your essence, your God fragment is. Can such a grand and glorious universal personality as the Paradise Father, and bestower of this fragment of himself, ever be less than beautiful, true and good? These divine qualities, spiritually expressed, reflect a Paradise Partner living within, one who fosters and inspires beauty in you.

Your indwelling piece of divinity is a perfect reflection of the source of all beauty.

This eternal spark living at your center is inherently, magnificently and absolutely beautiful. Your indwelling piece of divinity is a perfect reflection of the source of all beauty. God is beauty, and beautiful, in the absolute sense. Likewise are Father's spirit led children of Urantia attractive, no matter their physical appearance.

To God, a Father, the most beautiful part of you is your spirit values as they are manifested in brotherhood. Fruits of spirit value grow within the universal family when you choose to do Father's goodnesses to others, explore greater and greater truths, and spontaneously create new beauty by simply being true to your personality gift and the God who gave it to you.

Once you become accustomed to spiritual living, on the way to Salvington and eventually Paradise, you will many times reflect beauty to Father in manifold and diverse forms. But how best to use your free gift of divine creativity to express the inner beauty you feel, once the road to Paradise has been chosen—right here on Urantia?

Whatever mode of expression you choose to create beauty (and there is an infinite variety), your creations will be unique to your growing talent, and increasingly perfect according to your capacity for the spiritual comprehension of beauty. Beauty is an aspect of God's nature and being, to know genuine beauty is to know the real God. To create beauty is to aspire to Godlikeness.

The expression of beauty at the spirit level is the most real beauty of all. And all spiritual reality is inherently appealing to creatures who possess a spirit essence, the piece of God living in your mind. Attunement with this indwelling being of beauty, goodness and truth is the key to the spiritual level of reality and your only avenue to eternal life.



Soft glow musical flow image

Perfection of beauty in eternity, in all its spiritual aspects is the ultimate achievement for Paradise Pilgrims like you who start out on a physical world that still suffers its ugly patches. But there is no ugliness in the Central Universe:

...The Father enjoys the Havona reciprocation of the divine beauty. It satisfies the divine mind to afford a perfect pattern of exquisite harmony for all evolving universes. [Paper 14:6, page 160:9]

During the billions of years of education and experience between you and the central universe, some works of beauty you labor for will surely be team creations. In your future career there may be trillions of siblings temporarily gathered to work on one of Father's far-seeing projects of cosmic creativity (as with the evolving Supreme Being).

Your personal input, enlightened action, and wise effort will be needed at every step of the cosmic odyssey. The Cosmos is God's shining project. It is the panoramic unfolding of the all-encompassing beauty of God the Father, the First Source of beauty, even the one who indwells you. One of the most beautiful of all facts, aside from the indweller, is that Father has a role for you in this divine undertaking, this eternal outworking of his good purposes.

Is it not beautiful that God craves intimate creative partnership with you? Apparently, every soul has a place to be and serve, even co-create God's beauty, ever helping expand Father's family to untold shores, and in great variety. As you go, you get better and better at exemplifying Father good grace, compassion and spirit fragrance. You become in fact and in deed, his ambassador of beauty! You are included and needed all the way to home to Paradise. After that, you continue serving the universe family around the eternal circle of divinely beautiful patterns, potentials and actuals.

God's residence is central and eternal, glorious and ideal. His home is the beauteous pattern for all universe headquarters worlds; and the central universe of his immediate indwelling is the pattern for all universes in their ideals, organization, and ultimate destiny.

[Paper 11:9, page 127:4]

No matter what may happen to the Universe of universes in eternity, you can be certain all genuine beauty will be after the pattern of Father's unimaginably majestic Self and his Paradise abode. By the time you reach Paradise your personality will have traced a new, singular path strewn with new expressions of beauty, upheld by enduring truth and always guided by God's flawless goodness.

All bona fide expressions of beauty have divine origins and eternal implications. They become part of the Supreme Being, the "experiential" God who will bring together all of spirit value that has accrued in time/space into one great person, simultaneous with the settling of 7 superuniverses in "light and life." Through it all the creatures of the superuniverses will copy patterns of beauty modeled after Paradise and Havona creations.

Paradise/Havona are the origin and showcase of all the patterns of marvelous cosmic beauty that bejewel the universes. Beauty extends out through Havona's billion university worlds, on out to our superuniverse level—the Supreme's territory—time and space.

Someday, and by your hand in some measure, beauty will pervade all the inhabited worlds in the "375 million galaxies" now forming in the Outer Space Levels—beyond time and space. Beyond the Supreme lies a beauty that is ultimate, even absolute! Are there words that dare attempt to describe ultimate or absolute beauty? Not yet, but it is informative to know something of the scope and measure of beauty on the grandest of scales—eternity and infinity.

Before the personal emergence of the Ultimate and the Absolute, but still remote in the future to us, the Supreme Being will personalize. The Supreme Being is a beautiful masterpiece of Creator and creature ages in the making. It is fraught with significance regarding beauty because you and every time/space, God conscious creature helps Father create this evolutionary God of experience. The Supreme's emergence is part of the outworking of God's transcendently beautiful and eternal purpose.

Essentially you are a being of highly personal living beauty who will eventually eternalize in Supremacy. But you are more—you are also a child of God who progresses from Supremacy, on to Ultimacy, even to the Absolute. You are a part of the plans of eternity, the divinely beautiful unfolding of unimaginably cosmic proportions and unbelievably enormous circumstance.

Cosmic time scale aside, all genuine beauty you create here and now has real, lasting value—eternal value that accumulates in supremacy and beyond. Beauty's quality and cosmic significance depend on divinity content. Divinity content depends on your capacity for spiritual understanding and action.

The quantity and quality of beauty coming from you is in direct proportion to your understanding of, and experience with, divine beauty and its Deity originated co-ordinates—goodness and truth. The more you know and create beauty the more you discern, incline to, and integrate with it. But truth and goodness must be integrated with beauty, and in the right proportions, to preserve balance of character and symmetry of personality in the face of ever new and perplexing levels of reality.

The discernment of supreme beauty is the discovery and integration of reality... [Paper 2:7, page 43:1]

Father has a great ocean of potentially beautiful experiences calling you to walk its many shores, splash in its gentle surf, even explore its depths—but only when you willingly volunteer and are properly prepared. This progressive and creative exploration of the Universe's experiential potential is always done in the beautiful spirit of fatherly love and cosmic joy, never by force or coercion.

The Master of Beauty in this corner of the cosmos is Jesus. His matchless presentation of living beauty set the Nebadon standard for it in a single human life on Urantia 2100 years ago:

...In the life of Jesus you see man at his best. Man thus becomes so beautifully real because Jesus had so much of God in his life. [Paper 16:9, page 196:2]

Without God's beauty life is unadorned and absent an essential of personal satisfaction. You crave and create beauty when you live the spiritual life, it is natural and inevitable. That is because Father's aesthetic sensibility is designed into you—all part of what it means to be a discreet, individualized, personal point of conscious awareness—able to choose, interact, sense, even co-create beauty. The beauty you have so far created was possible because eternal, pre-existent beauty took up life in you, as your Paradise Pilot, your "Mystery Monitor." Beauty becomes a part of your soul by the guidance of this indwelling God, all divine values do. Values are the real substance of the soul. But what is beautiful to Father, the source of all souls, all beauty and spirit values?

...The supreme beauty, the height of finite art, is the drama of the unification of the vastness of the cosmic extremes of Creator and creature. [Paper 56:10, page 646:4]

There may be no more well known use of high contrast in the art of religious painting than Michelangelo's mural on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Rome, Italy. It is of Adam reclining, naked, appearing somewhat lackadaisical. But his curiosity appears faintly aroused, and his gaze is fixed on Father. He even extends a limp finger in Father's direction as this all-knowing, all-loving God does definitely reach out and immediately respond to curious man, offering the hand of friendship, even sonship.



Painting, by Michelangelo

...Man finding God and God finding man—the creature becoming perfect as is the Creator—that is the supernal achievement of the supremely beautiful, the attainment of the apex of cosmic art. [Paper 56:10, page 646:4]

Putting man and God in the same image is to contrast the widest separation of freewill consciousness. It depicts the great chasm between the perfect, infinite, eternal consciousness of God and the imperfect, time bound, space limited consciousness of humanity. That Father is perfectly and consciously aware of you personally, all the time, even desiring your friendship,

By the time you reach Paradise your personality will have traced a new, singular path strewn with new expressions of beauty...

is goodness and truth beyond the mere word beautiful, is it not?!

Wherever Father reigns supreme beauty is manifested as a harmony of form, intellect and spirit. Material, mindal, and spiritual beauty embellish and enrich your path from Urantia to Paradise and in increasing proportions until some form of absolute beauty is reached in eternity. That is the destiny, the final expression, of beauty as concerns personal creatures. Beauty spans the ages, bringing meaning and value to all at every stage.

God indwelling you bridges the humanity/divinity chasm with perfect condescension and divine agility. All that stands between you and meeting Father on Paradise is the acquirement of vast galleries of cosmic knowledge through countless years of expressing God's beauty, giving out divine goodness, learning and teaching truth—right up to perfection itself.

Expressing celestial beauty depends on bringing certain contrasts together in an appealing way. A blank palette is not appealing, nor is a square block of marble an attractor of the eye. And a silent piano cannot stir the sublime nuances and sensitivities of beautiful feelings and reactions.

A Mighty Messenger declares:

...Beauty, art, is largely a matter of the unification of contrasts. Variety is essential to the concept of beauty. [Paper 56:10, page 646:4]

The most beautiful 'things' to any Father's eyes are seeing his value-laden children work and play together, as loving siblings. To adorn his daughters and sons, Father instills and fosters divine values around brotherhood, truth, loyalty, goodness, love, character and devotion to service. In your interactions with siblings you make choices of tremendous variety and extreme contrasts from highest beauty and lowest ugliness. This process allows you to select higher and higher—more beautiful—values over time, and advance in space toward God's residence.

Beautiful values are incorporated into your soul during an immense drama filled with a staggering variety of experiences and personal interactions that unfold on your way to Paradise. The desire to express this variety occurs naturally with the soul's increasing grasp of the limitless potential for co-creating divine beauty and love.

God has the ability to recognize and animate your potential for the creation of love and beauty with respect to your ultimate destiny in eternity. Father does fully know your potentials as well as your inherent beauty. Our God has a great plan that is simply indescribable in beauty, symmetry and value. But reading about it is a poor substitute for experiencing, creating and maintaining beauty.

...Descriptive words of things beautiful cannot thrill like the sight thereof... [Paper 195:9, page 2083:4]

As a native born Urantian, Father sees beauty in you as a new child of the universe, his child. God's love is always beautiful and always fatherly. Indeed, Father's divine eye, upon beholding his supermassive universal family strewn in greater and greater concentric rings around Paradise, must surely be pleased with the cosmic beauty of it. After all, God was not forced to establish, uphold and expand a beautiful and replete universal family, He loves it, and you!

...The olden concept that God is a Deity dominated by kingly morality was upstepped by Jesus to that affectionately touching level of intimate family morality of the parent-child relationship, than which there is none more tender and beautiful in mortal experience. [Paper 2:6, page 40:6]

Apparently Father wants you to love him and the rest of the family ever more perfectly each day, because your living love and personality interactions can result in those most beautiful acquisitions of character—spiritual values. Beautiful values and the high ideals of brotherhood are what Father enjoys developing and observing in his great universe family of personalities. Real art points the soul in that direction. Beautiful art, art worthy of the name, always reveals something of eternal, spiritual value.

Hence materialism, atheism, is the maximation of ugliness, the climax of the finite antithesis of the beautiful. Highest beauty consists in the panorama of the unification of the variations which have been born of pre-existent harmonious reality. [Paper 56:10, page 646:5]

"Pre-existent" in the quote above implies God's original and primal reality of absolutely perfect beauty. Apparently creating, possessing and upholding the unfolding cosmic family yields divine satisfaction for Father, or it would never have been made possible.

Even humans enjoy creating beautiful families and seeing them flourish under God's good light. But wherefrom arose this Being who can create beauty, intimacy and light on such a vast scale, one who creates living beauty in repletion, eternal and infinite?! 'Father—how can you be so beautiful? Even create beauty in, through and with me?!

...Beauty sponsors art, music, and the meaningful rhythms of all human experience. [Paper 56:10, page 647:1]

Beauty surely has a role in the eventual "age of light and life" here on Urantia. Beautiful music is the mutual language and the gathering call of the God-smitten everywhere. In reaction to the discovery of their ever deepening love relation with God, believers of all categories are constantly creating something good, true and aesthetically appealing, from great music to fine art to transcendent worship.

The energy unleashed by the discovery of the indwelling God must find expression. And every creation of real beauty will move Urantian culture one step closer to this long anticipated age of glorious beauty, this age of spiritual light, this age of the open and robust pursuit of the God-like life.

Genuine artistic beauty always reveals something unique, whether it is an appealing object, a great story, or a noble ideal never before conceived just so. Genuine art may take innumerable forms, there is no limit to the creation of beauty, but it always presents a unique way to perceive divine reality, a new way to integrate with it. Genuine beauty manifests in and through you when you invite the divine indweller to lead you into realms of higher and higher beauty.

The existence of beauty implies the presence of appreciative creature mind just as certainly as the fact of progressive evolution indicates the dominance of the Supreme Mind. Beauty is the intellectual recognition of the harmonious time-space synthesis of the far-flung diversification of phenomenal reality, all of which stems from pre-existent and eternal oneness.

[Paper 56:10, page 647:2]

The most beautiful 'things' to any Father's eyes are seeing his value-laden children work and play together, as loving siblings.

How sublimely beautiful is this “eternal oneness,” that can conceive, create and foster such magnificent expressions of art, sculpture and music?! God is our Creator Father who projects not only the grand stage for cosmic life, but also the meek and the heroic players, as well as the instrumentations of the orchestra. Even the audience Father designed with an eye and ear able to catch the cosmic, harmonious syncopations of divine beauty, truth, and goodness. Are you already keenly anticipating the celestial sights and sounds of the Mansion worlds, your next stop in the eternal career? Between now and then, life can be a lovely song, eh?

Rodan of Alexandria thought beauty and goodness could be accumulated, for use later presumably. He suggested you:

...build up for yourself and in yourself reserve galleries of beauty, goodness, and artistic grandeur.

[Paper 160:4, page 1779:4]

Beauty has at least three general levels of expression, physical, intellectual, and spiritual. On the physical level, you know beauty through the senses of sight, hearing, smell, etc. On the intellectual level, you discern beauty in great thinking, writing and oration. On the spiritual level beauty is realized in spirit values, like love, loyalty, goodness, wisdom, truth and the ideals of Godlikeness. All religionists worthy of the name know and create beauty, sometimes spontaneously “as they pass by,” and sometimes by design. This repercuts in a happiness that balances the intellect, and this helps harmonize the physical and spiritual.

The modern age will refuse to accept a religion which is inconsistent with facts and out of harmony with its highest conceptions of truth, beauty, and goodness. [Paper 195:9, page 2083:1]

How high are your conceptions of beauty? Your comprehension and expression of the deeper meanings and uses of beauty, art, rhythm, variety, harmony and symmetry are stoked by your unique talent, imagination and creativity. But developing the conceptual framework and artistic skill required to produce lasting beauty takes time and energy, albeit everyone has a capacity for beauty, if only its appreciation.

High concepts of beauty are what true religion teaches, alongside truth and goodness. Creating great material, philosophical or spiritual beauty may require great skill, but ordinary everyday beauty even a baby can create—by simply living. A forest or a valley is beautiful by merely being.

...Beauty is most religious when it is most simple and naturelike. [Paper 167:6, page 1840:5]

Beauty has its religious aspects and associations. Religion can overdo beauty with ornamentation, but nature never. The inherent cosmic appeal of natural surroundings can help attune the creature with the Creator. The place to introduce God to humans is in the natural world, in a park, or under a night sky of wondrous sparkling gems. This is especially true of children, who almost always have an affinity for outdoors—the ‘cathedral of nature’.

When the hand of man joins the hand of Father to co-create natural settings—as with gardens—feelings arise in garden visitors that inspire the beauty-seeking soul and quiet the mind for focused prayer, truth discernment, and worship. And worship has the potential to be the most beautiful and pleasant of all human experiences. Beauty, even when created for secular ends—as with a golf course—can be an inspiration to divine communion. Natural beauty, feelings of gratitude, and sincere worship are easily stimulated and linked in God-conscious beings.

Philosophy you somewhat grasp, and divinity you comprehend in worship, social service, and personal spiritual experience, but the pursuit of beauty—cosmology—you all too often limit to the study of man’s crude artistic endeavors. [Paper 56:10, page 646:4]

Crude art is the mother of greater works. With the computer, the Internet, and humanity’s ever expanding freedoms, great works of art are proliferating rapidly around Urantia, especially under the influence of this new revelation that offers a truly awesome new vision of the meaning, purpose and value of beauty, art and cosmology. Truth, beauty and goodness are the eternal foundations of a new and emerging philosophy of living for Urantians, one as solid and enlightened as divinity itself.

Beauty, rhythm, and harmony are intellectually associated and spiritually akin. Truth, fact, and relationship are intellectually inseparable and associated with the philosophic concepts of beauty. [Paper 44:7, page 507:3]

Genuine beauty reflects divine unity, God is beautiful and God is One. Enlightened philosophy is an attempt to unify the cosmos in God. It is an ordinary miracle of grace and divine love that you and God can unite to create a workable and living philosophy of lasting beauty out of your daily experiences, and that you have a meaningful eternal role to play in this cosmic beautification of yourself and your surroundings. Provided of course, that you make the ultimate beautiful choice offered by Father, that of survival in eternity. It involves choosing the philosophy of love and life encapsulated in this simple three word conceptualization of Father’s nature and character—truth, beauty and goodness.

Beautiful art, art worthy of the name, always reveals something of eternal, spiritual value.

It should be reassuring that you have not far to look to perceive beauty no matter your location in time and space. Your own mind is beautiful in that it is inherently creative, unrestricted in thinking, unlimited in imagination, instantly responsive, and utterly pliable. Indeed the inner life may be the most beautiful of all. There you are free to create beauty without boundary, and in partnership with the God of Mind.

Mind is proof of the perfection of the beauty of divine ministry in that mind is so beautifully responsive to your every whim. It is through the filtering process of mind that you experience beauty. Your mind filters are a unique set of standards for what is beautiful. But you might well ask: “What constitutes beautiful thinking? What if all my thoughts were beautiful? What is beauty of thought to God?”

Expressions of beauty can be static, as with an appealing sculpture, or living, as with you, a child of God. Living beauty is a sumptuous light that reflects hues of spirit meaning and divine value acquired by you. Beauty is always pleasurable and savory to personal and sentient beings with the intellectual/emotional capacity for discerning and appreciating it. Beauty will always be discernable and expressible by beings centered in spirit love, and love is always personal.

Though not the same, love and beauty are eternally conjoined companions. You are made in God’s image in that you are a personalized, individualized, spirit-energy being propelled by Father’s rich, good, true and beautiful love. The deeper realization of this astonishing fact sparks a beautiful reaction in all those dedicated to knowing God’s

character and person. Such personal reactions have an element of graciousness, whether the reaction is to an object of art or to someone's inner loveliness. In personalized beings like you, grace can become graciousness—that compelling quality of beauty which always grows out of a “love saturated soul.”

Your own mind is beautiful in that it is inherently creative, unrestricted in thinking, unlimited in imagination, instantly responsive, and utterly pliable.

Truth is coherent, beauty attractive, goodness stabilizing. And when these values of that which is real are co-ordinated in personality experience, the result is a high order of love conditioned by wisdom and qualified by loyalty.

[Paper 2:7, page 43:5]

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Living Spiritually in a Practical World

Excerpts from ~ Hard After God

When your life is sweet, it does not result from happenstance, but by a life aligned with that which is right.

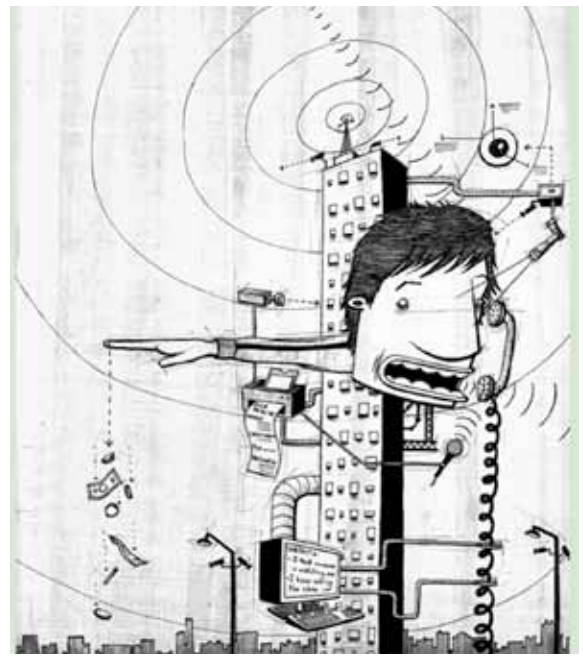
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OVER THE YEARS EVE AND I HAVE BEEN intensely exposed to Christendom in addition to our Jewish traditions. While we've encountered many sincerely seeking to live moral lives, there were few who understood and with determination entered into the spiritual life—the real life, the one in which God is a personal friend, with whom we cooperate daily in going about our Father's business.

It is easy to be intellectual about truth. In many ways intelligence is overrated. It is the heart and its love for God (truth, goodness and beauty) that determines the state of your soul. It is better to be of small intellect and large heart than swelled head and stunted soul.

There is a great need to balance the intellectual presentation of truth with how-to-go-about-it, taking truth out of memory and living it. Truth needs hands and feet put to it. Have you ever seen truth walking? It's a thrilling experience to behold. So it was for the disciples of Jesus and so it is in every generation in those

...a determined and persevering effort to reprogram harmful habits of moral choosing into a lifestyle of seeking and doing the divine will.



vessels of light and love who go about living the gospel of Jesus, their light shining and impacting lives as they “pass by.” This comment describes well the difference between truth merely stored in memory and truth living through a human vessel.

I was most impressed by the talk. ...The most impressive part of it was the living Gospel of Jesus transforming an individual and demonstrating it in daily life. This is the first time I have heard a Urantia Book reader give an account of how the teaching of Jesus is actually incorporated into daily living successfully. Urantia Book readers are an interesting lot of many stripes. They are very cerebral and adept in advancing intellectual arguments on abstruse topics in places far removed from our daily lives. That is easy to do, but to live the life that (the speaker) described takes spiritual courage and stamina. After all it is the fruit that tells the tree. (Paul Premsagar; email to author, May 30, 2003.)

I've recounted my spiritual experiences with the theme of making practical and personally applicable that which is spiritual. The concept of spirituality is difficult for many, conjuring up a gamut of associations, from the regimenting religious to the incomprehensible mystical. This book is designed to impart some “Aha” moments, a precursor to personal growth.

Changing your character

Changing your character is the most difficult thing in life. Character reflects the quality of your soul. It is the pattern of the soul, containing all of the beauty and all of the ugliness which characterizes the soul. It is the sum of a multitude of moral decisions.

Fifty percent of making the change is recognizing what it is that needs changing. This means being downright honest with yourself; what are your real motives and true intent for what you have done or intend to do. The other half of change is the devising and wise implementation of a plan to accomplish it. What needs to be overcome is “character momentum” meaning a determined and persevering effort to reprogram harmful habits of moral choosing into a lifestyle of seeking and doing the divine will. Here's an example:

My father having died when I was seven left my mother with two young children to fend for herself. In order to preserve her middle class lifestyle, my mother lived frugally and taught us likewise. Unfortunately, the principle of economy became the criterion of my decision making. I do not recall an instance in which such things as generosity, helping another in need trumped the money criterion in our household.

So as an adult spending as little as possible became my mode of living. But after God introduced me to himself the following encounter demonstrated something was wrong with my belief that money is the principle of decision making. From it I recognized that my character had a flaw: it was niggardly.

Someone who appeared to be a "street bum" asked me for a "handout." (I put these terms in quotes because they reflect my prejudicial view of someone asking a stranger for money.) I reluctantly gave him a quarter. Afterwards my conscience bothered me. What if God brought him to me for a reason? Should I have entered into a conversation with him; perhaps there was something God wanted him to hear? Perhaps something I should hear and learn? Perhaps he had a genuine need as opposed to squandering it and I should have given him what occasion warranted?

And that began the 50% portion of overcoming this deep-seated propensity: recognizing what needs changing. I somehow had to become generous, making decisions not primarily based on money.

I made a rule: anything costing less than so many dollars would not be a factor at all in a decision. This amount varies according to your economic position. For someone wealthy it could be \$100. For someone in poverty, one dollar. The second rule: first consider the matter as if money were not a concern. What would I do if money were not an issue? After that the cost becomes part of the decision. Resources are finite and wisdom dictates how to allocate them.

What have been the results over the years? Definite improvement. But my erroneous view on money was so deeply ingrained that I remain vigilant. Some things are so rooted that while they can be ameliorated in this life they must wait for the next to be eradicated. I hope this is not the case.

Work daily on what needs changing. And despise not the day of small things: the niceties, courtesies and graces of living. Small things practiced regularly form a habit so when big things arise, the momentum you created ensures you attend to them. He that is faithful in that which is small can be trusted with that which is great.

Enlarging spiritual capacity

In general, the sincere desire to know God and speak with him expands spiritual capacity. Events in your life that turn you to seek God grow the soul. You react differently to your environment as spirit capacity grows. For example, an enlarged cosmic viewpoint allows you to remain above another person's negativity and inspires you to actively seek his welfare.

This lifetime enables change that takes substantially longer in the next life. And whatever is avoided now must be dealt with later. Who wants to awake in the next world and find himself in remedial education? I suspect it would be embarrassing. This inducement along with the more important motivation to become perfect as God is perfect serves as an incentive to ask these questions:

- Does my soul continue to grow?

- Do I remain determined to become more like God each day?
- Are my moral decisions done in conscience of my highest understanding of what is good, true and beautiful?

I find that my mind more and more easily see things from a higher perspective. How would God see it? This helps me from becoming personally involved so emotion does not trump principle. Rather, spiritual understanding trumps emotional reaction. The divine principles the human.

I read an account of a homeowner who saw burglars robbing his neighbor's house. He went outside and shot them both—dead.

I have a tendency when I hear such accounts to see myself wreaking havoc on these miscreants. Then my spiritual nature nudges me. How would God look at this? And the answer comes clearly: "Vengeance is mine. . .saith the Lord" (Rom 12:19). In other words, it's all right to use force to stop an injustice from happening, but not to execute your judgment of what justice should demand. As individuals, we do not know what led up to a person's evildoing, his circumstances, his motives. That's the job for collective judgment by societies' institutions developed for this purpose.

He that is faithful in that which is small can be trusted with that which is great.

So in this example my spiritual perspective dictates that I don't seek out these thieves with intent to kill. If I were led go outside to stop them, I would imagine a gun pointing at them would have been sufficient.

How do you enlarge the spiritual capacity and receptivity of your soul? Speak with God—all the time. Discuss your thoughts, your feelings, your ideals, the problems for which you need counsel. Be unrelenting in your communion. The very act enlarges spiritual capacity. Speaking and communing with God expands the soul. Let it be said that there's a whole lot a' talkin going on.

How to know what God wants you to do

For a standard of how to make decisions, try this: make each decision according to your highest conception of truth, beauty and goodness. Ask yourself, does the decision bring about the greatest good, contain the utmost beauty, and reflect the highest truth? It is not required to find each of these three elements in the choices before you. If genuine truth is present, then will beauty and goodness be there. And so it is with each. Discerning the will of God through truth, beauty and goodness requires

...the ability to discover beauty in things, recognize truth in meanings, and discover goodness in values [*The Urantia Book*, Paper 100:2, page 1096:2]

I was hard pressed to come up with an example of beauty. I thought as much as I could and found no inspiration, no examples. It indicated I hadn't yet grasped the concept sufficiently. So I waited. (You can't speak with authority on something not gained by life experience.) Suddenly, after many, many months, I was listening to something that brought to mind in a flash the example of beauty I had been seeking and the understanding of how it applies to decision making. This is the example:

I enjoy having things in order, arranging them in harmony and symmetry. An example is how much I enjoy writing, choosing just the right words and phrases to express ideas. This is coupled with document formatting: precise spacing between lines and

paragraphs, rightly sized margins and indents, appropriate typefaces, etc. How does this example of beauty round out the triecta of moral criteria: truth, goodness and beauty?

First off, it makes it easier for the reader to get through the writing and understand it. By contrast, I receive email from a person who invariably writes one looong run-on sentence. No paragraphs to distinguish among ideas and subjects. What if someone were to write a book, single spaced, without a break in the type, no chapters? This gives you a sense of format that's not beautiful. And it affects function: it's difficult to read. It forces me to "beautify" it. I first edit the email, inserting paragraphs so I can better understand it. In this example there is no thought of the reader, only the ease of the writer. Secondly, it's unpleasant to look at. No white space for example.

Another correspondent writes in all caps. Easier for him not to hit the shift key, but not for the reader. You get the idea.

The purpose of beauty, as a reflection of the divine, is service to others. How does it affect them? Does it make things easier? Does it uplift the spirit by its harmony and choice and arrangement of elements? Doing things decently and in order, having things arranged just so, has a properness. It is lovely to look at and beautiful to behold.

Natural problems and spiritual trials

There are natural problems and there are spiritual trials. A natural problem deals with the material circumstances of life.

Rules are made for men; men are not made for rules. Do not live by man-made conventions and laws simply because they are in place.

It challenges your mind and your emotions, how you utilize them to address the difficulty. The situation may remain in the domain of the natural and not impact the soul. For example, fixing a flat tire. However, seemingly natural difficulties can have spiritual importance, such as the decision as to who should fix the flat tire: "Not me!"

By contrast, a spiritual trial entails decisions of right and wrong, moral choices, which either accelerate or hinder the growth of the soul. The highest moral choice yields the highest possible value and greatest cosmic good. We are faced with numerous small decisions of moral choosing. When we are faithful in that which is small, chances are we will do that which is right when great decisions come along. It will have become a lifestyle to do the right thing.

Disobeying a direct order of a superior is not a light thing. But the principle to do the right thing regardless of cost (courage) was becoming my way of living; so disobey I did in this situation.

I was working at a rubber retreading plant in my early years. My job was to adhere new tread to prepared recycled tires. One day the boss asked me to change the dates on the treads in storage. This he explained was in order to meet the manufacturer's criteria of return. I said, "Boss, falsifying the dates is not right; I will not do it." The next day he fired me, refusing to give me the reason, but it was obvious. I thought, so this is what's it's like to suffer for doing right, never having experienced it before.

Practical religion in daily living: Demonstrate good fruit

Eve knew someone who requested help to sell her property. Eve counseled her over a period of three years during which she was selling, not selling, then selling again. At each decision to sell again, Eve did a good deal of work preparing the property for sale, and she would change her mind. And during all this time, never an acknowledgment, much less a thank you, for Eve's unrewarded

effort. But her need was genuine and she kept returning for advice, so Eve kept on with her awaiting the conclusion of the matter. And in time this woman finally made up her mind and did list the property for sale—with another company!

Now this woman had been closely associated with a spiritual community focused on raising God consciousness. And while her efforts to raise her spiritual consciousness are laudable, she failed miserably in translating it into practical fruits of the Spirit, one of which is being thankful. I don't know her well enough to comment whether or not she lived out loving service and unselfish concern for the well being of others. Such a pronounced lack of thankfulness alerts you to the potential of other lapses in living the God-life. It's most helpful to discern who you are dealing with, for both that person's sake – as well as your own.

In regard to her association with a religious community, we've encountered similar lack of translation of religious teaching into practice among devoted adherents to religions of all kinds. It's like a dairy farmer not concerned or caring enough to offer a pail of milk to his distressed and hungry neighbor. No wonder religion has a bad rap. Why not the milk of thoughtfulness? And let it not be skim milk; leave the cream.

Rules are not sacred

Rules are made for men; men are not made for rules. Do not live by man-made conventions and laws simply because they are in place. There are times when they need to be altered. Motive and intent is the guide. Would God be proud of your reasons for transgressing a so called standard? Be sure to apply wisdom in making the decision. Count the cost; there may be risk involved. Calculate and quantify and be prepared for what may result.

I had been covering the early hour of the work day for my colleague. On Tuesdays, our house is cleaned and Eve and I would often take an early breakfast together before I went to work. Eve confirmed breakfast one Tuesday, but I said that I couldn't make it because we were running late and I would be late to the office to cover the timeslot of my associate. She felt bad and I felt bad. On the way to work I reflected, "What if I were not there for a half-hour? What is the downside? Other than a call or two that would go to voicemail, not much." I had not thought it through. The determination to be at work at all costs at the appointed time trumped a signal to my spirit that I should at least examine my standard practice of being reliable.

Reliability, an obvious virtue, could become an idol. And so it is with all things. Allow your Spirit to tap you on the shoulder and say, "Not today my son. Let's depart from that which is expected and habit." Now, I wouldn't mind taking the week off from work – but where's that tapping on my shoulder? Oh well!

Every rule of man, every convention, each tradition—including religious ones—is man-made, not sacred. They can be altered. Be sure the reason for so doing aligns with what is good, true, and beautiful.

Unselfishness and thoughtfulness

In our real estate business, we have this adage:

What's good for you is more important than what's good for us. We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give.

In other words, think of another more than yourself. It's the practical application of believing we are all brothers

and sisters, children of the Father. It's common to give family priority attention and service. It counteracts being self-centered and selfish.

When you read the paper you know how sometimes you fold it over on itself to handle easier. Well that makes it more difficult for the next person who must first undo all that folding. So when I finish, I unfold the pages to make it easier for Eve. That little extra effort, it's called thoughtfulness.

Be attentive to small things heaven lays at your feet and take a moment to see if you need to be about the Father's business.

I was so zealous in religious studies that each Bible teaching was tantamount to a sacred obligation and to be attended at all costs. Eve wasn't feeling well one evening, but would I heed the need of my wife for me to stay home with her and miss the sacrosanct meeting? Not on your life! Eve later used this incident of thoughtlessness to illustrate that people are more important than things: relationship above all.

The same neglect showed itself when Eve would call me at work. Whomever I was speaking with was more important than my wife and I would allow her to remain on eternal hold. That, thank God, is history, for her call is now treated as from the Queen – which it is.

Years later, having learned this lesson, during my job selling software to business and government with rarely a moment to spare, I had occasion to speak with a mother concerned about the online safety of her children. I forget the particulars, but her genuine need touched me and so the weightier matters of my commercial accounts were put aside for the moment and I counseled in regard to the use of our monitoring software to deal with the problem she had explained to me.

Etiquette and civility

These days the word etiquette conjures up a stuffy Victorian era of rigid unreality. But that is not fair to this lovely concept. Etiquette and civility are designed to make others comfortable in your presence. Now isn't that loving?

Eve met John, who was having difficulty in his marriage, and after some discussion, John asked if he could meet with me on the weekend for in-depth discussion from a man's perspective. Eve foresees what would make a guest comfortable and she immediately went about preparing. She bought half-and-half (we don't drink coffee), and set up the coffee maker, prepared the bath guest towels, arranged trays with water glasses, cookies and other treats.

Eve demonstrated thoughtful and caring concern for our guest; she valued him. And that is what etiquette is about. Now I would not have gone as far as that. I suspect it has to do with being a man. Us men, we just don't seem to enter into such niceties easily. I would think, "Come over and let's take a look at what's in the refrigerator and then do what we intend to accomplish." But Eve has shown me by her example the way things ought to be—although I would go about it differently and not to the same extent.

After we prepared for John, not only did he fail to show up, he did not have the courtesy to call and apologize. It is as if he made the appointment and then decided he could do whatever he wanted and it would not make a difference. Want an example of selfishness? There you go. And this guy was a dedicated church going Christian. Want to know why many run the other way when they encounter a serious "Christian?" Zoom!

Does what you say mean something? If you have difficulty in this area, speak fewer, but carefully chosen words, knowing they reflect the intent of your heart. You are known by your words.

A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh. [Luke 6:45]

Agree with your adversary while you can

My sales had been poor and my boss confronted me ready for a fight. Instead I agreed with him, "They are dismal. It's a problem and it requires a solution." I offered no defensive or self-justifying rationalization, knowing it would provoke his wrath. In fact, I complimented him on his calm demeanor in the face of such poor sales. He recognized that his anger and threatenings would not motivate me (he was used to it working with others). I had taken control, applying the principle that "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger" (Prov 15:1). I did this consistently as these incidents arose; over time he came to know that I would not respond to fear and intimidation.

Etiquette and civility are designed to make others comfortable in your presence. Now isn't that loving?

The whole man

This book is divided among three topics which together comprise the whole man:

- The spiritual life
- The life of the mind, which encompasses intellect and emotion
- The natural life (material living, including the body)

If any of these components are either missing or dysfunctional, you have a car driving on three wheels (Oy Veh!). The topics encompass our experiences and those of others and sets them forth in a way intended to translate the abstract into easily understood practicalities. After all, what good is knowledge when it is arcane and nearly impossible to apply?

We seem to spend our entire lives working to integrate these components of the whole man in order to become a unified, contented, dynamic personality. There is a reason for this ceaseless effort. The drive to move forward comes from the Divine Father's fragment of himself gifted to each of us. The insecurities of life's adversities are replaced with a sense of adventure when you recognize you're not alone. The divinity that resides within will guide us with certainty to the completeness we seek. What a fascinating journey!

Happy trails to you. ■



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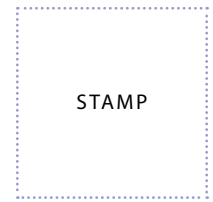
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