

OUT IN THE OPEN

Volume 1 of 8

(Featuring works written from 1963-1984)

(184 Pages)

By

Francis William Bessler

Featuring a Compilation

of

The Complete Written Works

of

Francis William Bessler

From 1963-2011

Compiled in April, 2011

**Featuring
Original essays, stories & songs
In
Chronological order.**

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Laramie, Wyoming
- 2011 -**

OUT IN THE OPEN

By Francis William Bessler

Written 4/8/2011

Refrain 1:

Out in the open – it's the best way to find God.

Out in the open – truth does not depend upon applause.

Out in the open – no devil can exist.

Out in the open – there's no room for sin.

Well, my friends, I'm no guru,
but I don't think I need to be.
When I simply look at life,
it's all I need to be free.
Let others read lots of books
if they believe that will help;
but I think that if that's all they know,
what they know will be more like Hell. **Refrain 1.**

I'm told I should fear Satan
and I say, why should I?
It's clear Satan can't exist
when I'm standing beneath a sky.
Just look out as far as you can see
and all devils disappear.
So just keep looking outward
and you'll never need to fear. **Refrain 1.**

I learned long time ago,
back when I was a child,
That the only truth anyone needs
is found in the wild.
To the degree, I can be
one with the deer and antelope
is the same degree I can find peace
and that wonderful thing called hope. **Refrain 1.**

I think it's good to know
that we're all the same.
I don't need you and you don't need me
to share a common fate.
The truth we both need
is out there in the universe.
Just become one with the All –
and let that be what we rehearse. **Refrain 1.**

And when I die what will happen
to this thing I call my soul?
It will just continue on
on the merry path I know.
Wherever my souls goes,
it will stay among the stars.
Freedom's only belonging to All
whether that All is near or far. **Refrain 1.**

Refrain 2 (several times):

Out in the open – it's my favorite phrase.
Out in the open – it lets my nights look to day.
Out in the open – it's the way I want to go.
Out in the open – it's the best way to know.

Introduction

Hello! Welcome to an evolution – an evolution of me. There will be some error along the way because I think true evolutionists inevitably encounter error in their search for the truth. If I am anything, I'd say I am a **true evolutionist** in terms of searching for the truth. I guess you could say that for me the truth has evolved or developed in my mind via experience of life; and it is quite likely that the truth will continue to evolve for me until the day I die – and beyond. I don't suppose I will ever stop **evolving** in terms of seeing something tomorrow that I do not know today.

So, if you would, if you choose to review any of my volumes of written works, please keep that in mind. My writing is mostly speculation about what I write – and speculation may or may not reflect the truth about a matter. In a way, I have taken great pride in chancing error by speculating as I have done about this or that. I may still be in error with some thought or other, however in most of my writing, **I do not believe I am in error. I may be, though, because I am a speculator – and know I am one.**

I do not think I am alone in being a speculator, however. I think everyone – bar none – is a speculator. No one has the absolute truth about anything that is not definitely factual. I think many think they are absolutely right, but I don't think anyone is – least of whom – me.

I call my compilation of my written works from 1963 to present time ***OUT IN THE OPEN*** because I believe that has been my way in life. I may not be right about some idea, but I try to be open about it – even while investigating it. **I have tried not to fear being wrong.** I think many do fear being wrong and think that being wrong is the worst thing in the world. Thus, they keep behind closed doors in deciding anything and often present a different reason for doing something than a real reason. The fear of being wrong is a terrible fear that drives a lot of people, but I have tried to not let it be a fear for me.

So what that I am wrong about something? **If I am honest in trying to be right, there should be no shame in being wrong.** The only shame I should have is imposing my ways or my thoughts on another. In that light, ***imposition is the greatest shame.***

Some one once wrote: **the beginning of wisdom is fear of God.** That may be if we all know for sure who or what God is; but no one knows who or what God is for sure. Anyone who thinks about God can only speculate about God. No one can know for sure what God is in my opinion because by definition, ***God is indefinable.*** How can you define something that is **indefinable**?

Why then should I fear God when I do not even know what God is? In truth, that statement that says that **the beginning of wisdom is fear of God** is only a ploy used by some who think they have a right to dominate others. Who am I supposed to fear in reality? **He or she or them.** It is “their God” I am supposed to fear, but the truth is they do not have a God. **They are only using God as an excuse to try to control others.** But then, I am even speculating about that. I may be wrong, but it's not likely I am. Is it?

In Step With A Speculator

In 1963, when I wrote the first work to be found below, I was studying for the Catholic priesthood. At the time, I was “**convinced**” that God is a being outside of us. I did not know it then, but it turns out I was speculating about that. I did not know it for sure, even though I thought I did. I thought I did because I had not yet grown to challenge what I had been taught. I had been taught that God is a being outside of me. I had no reason in my youth to doubt it, but only because I had not thought about it. I just assumed that my parents and parish priest were right about God. **It took living for me to realize that they were no more sure about God than I have come to be uncertain.**

Anyway, I will begin my works below with a **prayer** of the time. It is an example of a life in progress. I include it as I include everything in this compilation because it reflects one stage of an *evolving me*. I am as much in love with that prayer now as I was then in regards to loving the state of mind that was me. I am no longer of that state of mind because I see that whatever God is, God must be Infinite. Again, I am speculating; but I think that **infinite** means in a way – **everywhere**. If God, whatever God is, can have no bounds, then it follows that God must be everywhere. That means God can't be a person outside of me to whom I must appeal. In my prayer that begins my works below, I thought of God as a being outside of me to whom I had to appeal; **but my speculation has changed to see God as Presence inside of everything.**

So I was wrong when I thought God was a person! So what? I wanted to be right; and, to my credit, I never compelled anyone to believe as I did. I never imposed my belief on another. If I had, I would not have only been wrong in imposing my belief on another, I would have been wrong in my belief. That should show anyone who wants to see the truth that no one has the right to impose their belief on another.

The advantage of being a speculator – and knowing you are so – is tremendous. I am talking now, however, as one who knows now I have always been a speculator. In some of my works, I may not have been of that mind. I may present myself as being more sure than I was. If it seems that way, I ask that you pardon me. Let me make it perfectly clear. ***I am now and always have been a speculator.*** Again, I think everyone is like me – a speculator – but it is very good to know it beforehand.

About My Songs

I have written a lot of songs since 1963 when I wrote the first item included in this compilation of my written works, but consider all of them for this work as more poetry than song. Almost all of them were written with a tune in mind when I wrote them, but to date, none of them have been scored. Their tunes are mostly in my head – though almost all of them have been featured as sung – mostly a cappella - in a home spun camcorder DVD program series I did in 2009. That series is called **LOVING EVERYTHING** and is comprised of 5 DVD programs that feature my songs in alphabetical order to the point of that production – the fall of 2009. Since 2009, I have

written a few new songs – all of which are included in another camcorder DVD program I did in 2010 called **GOING OUT WITH SONG**. That is a final **friends & family** program I did, ending a whole string of **friends & family** oriented programs dating back to my first in 1987. I call them **friends & family** oriented programs because they feature the same without me going naturally in them.

As a naturalist, I am very comfortable with going without clothes, but not wanting to impose my ways on others, I have produced quite a few non-naturalist camcorder productions. I have also produced quite a few naturalist camcorder productions too – including the **LOVING EVERYTHING** series of mention. So, even though my songs have not been scored with melodies on paper, most of them have been recorded mostly a cappella in aforementioned DVD programs. Songs that I have written since the completion of **GOING OUT WITH SONG** are only a few – including the lead song of this series – *Out In The Open*. Suffice it to say, if desired, tunes are available for almost all my songs, though in this series, they should be considered more as poetry or lyrics without tunes. Review them for their thought, if you will, and not their respective tunes. If, however, melodies or tunes are desired, I can supply them via the mentioned DVD programs – or one can write a melody of choice to fit them.

Also, I did produce two audio cassette albums in the 1980s that feature some of my songs – sung by professional artists with accompanying instrumentals. One was called **FEELING FREE** and the other was called **MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE**. I won't further define either of those programs, but suffice it to say, they were produced by some professional friends of mine in Georgia – where I lived at the time – but have not been publicly promoted. Much of the songs of these audio cassettes have been dubbed to some natural footage in the **LOVING EVERYTHING** series. None of these featured songs were scored, however, thus confirming my earlier statement that none of my songs have been scored to date. In the productions below, when a song was featured in either **FEELING FREE** or **MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE**, a note will be added up front offering that little detail.

The Order Of My Works

My intent is to feature my works in the order of their original writing – though in typing them into pc files from earlier typewritten works, I may have altered some of them somewhat and even offered new introductions. Each work will be found in this series in the order in which they were originally written – not the order in which I may have converted them from typed format to pc format.

For instance, I wrote a philosophical novel that's included in this volume called **DAVID & BELINDA** in 1975, but converted it to pc file in 2009. When converting it to pc file in 2009, I may have altered it a little, but for the most part, I tried to leave it as it was originally written – even though in this case, I even changed a title. In 1975 I called it **NEVER BE ASHAMED TO LOVE**, but when converting it to pc file in 2009, I changed the title to **DAVID & BELINDA**. That is just to say that various works may have been revised a little when converting them to pc file, but they are being featured in this series in the order in which they were originally written; however, I may list a copyright of a work according to a date of conversion to pc file. My intent is to feature

all my works as they are found in a pc file – as if each is an individual work simply reprinted in a different space.

With that, let us begin. This first volume will present all the works I have written in chronological order – that is, in the order in which they were written – from 1963 through 1984. Volume 2 – 7 will proceed from 1984; and Volume 8 will feature all the songs I have written in alphabetical order – not chronological order. Volumes 1 – 7 will feature most of my songs, but chronologically, not alphabetically.

Enjoy as you will, then, the works of a proud speculator. If you are looking for doctrine or dogma, look elsewhere. You will not find it here; although in my opinion, you shouldn't find it anywhere. Doctrine and/or dogma implies access to infallible truth; and no one has that. Doctrine and/or dogma implies direction by an outside God, but if God is not outside of anyone, no one can be some sole recipient of direction from an outside God. Can they? So no one should dare to dictate either doctrine or dogma to another. Or so, I believe!

Gently,

Francis William Bessler

4746 E. Skyline Drive, # 108

Laramie, Wyoming, U.S.A. 82070

April 14th, 2011

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PRAYER OF A PRIEST (A Poem)

Written 1963.

Oh Lord, let all weakness from us disband
and grant us strength from your loving hand.
We stand before you and in hope implore
we may all be one in you forever more.

We servants here present before you pray
that we be worthy to light the way -
to strive for peace and to never cease
thanking you for calling us to be your priests.

In order to prepare for this delight
we beseech your guidance and your sight,
Your kind embrace so that you may gain
our lives in obedience without complaint.

On the Occasion of Dad's Death from an Elegy by Father Prado

July 11th, 1966

St. Barbara's Parish, Powell, Wyo.

(As I remembered it later in the day)

Requested by Denis Bessler of Francis Bessler – two sons of Leo & Clara

Have you ever gone beyond the timberline? If you have, maybe you have done what I did one time. I was walking through some pine trees, but I did not stop when the pine trees did. I kept right on going – right into the barren land beyond, or rather what I thought was barren and fruitless and so forth. Maybe this has occurred to you, too, but right out in the middle of nowhere, I came upon one lonely, beautiful, little flower. The beauty of that flower stood out because of the surroundings in which it was found. The petals were set in beautiful array and would have gone entirely unnoticed, except that I had chosen to travel beyond the apparent beauty of the forest into the apparent drab and sightlessness of the hills beyond. But as it happened, I was made aware of the beauty of the single flower because I took a few steps beyond the ordinary and traveled where it appeared that life was not.

Such was the case of Leo. (Yes, such was the case of Dad.) He lived a life like that lonely little flower, unnoticed and more or less without company. And only those who were willing to go a few steps beyond recognized the worth of the life he lived. Only those few that knew him were aware of the beauty of his life. Like that lonely little flower, he showed forth a beauty by the way he lived his life that was extraordinary in spite of the fact that few chose and choose to accompany him and travel the path of holiness that he did.

A great amount of security and rejoicing should be had because of the fact that he was always prepared and waiting hopefully for the end.

As long as I have known Leo, I have nearly every Sunday, if not every Sunday, seen him come to that altar rail and receive our Blessed Lord in Holy Communion. Now, this is not something he did because I came here. On the contrary, this was probably something Leo did all his life. Most likely, all his life, he received our Blessed Lord in the Holy Eucharist. And because he had such a love and devotion to our Lord, he was always ready and eager to meet Him and love and serve Him in eternity.

It goes without saying, Mrs. Bessler, that you and your sons and daughters and grandchildren should take great pride in the life that Leo led and gave to our Blessed Lord. As the family protector and breadwinner, he has shown and given you an example that you should respect and live up to.

As your representative, as your leader, and as your guide, as your spouse, and as your father, he has shown you the way – and he is asking that you follow him and eventually join with him and share with him an eternal peace. The greatest tribute you could possibly pay to Leo would be to follow his example. In fact, Mrs. Bessler, if Leo were able to speak to you today, I am sure he would ask of you just two things. First, he would ask that you would follow his example, and, secondly, he would ask your forgiveness for any wrong he has done you.

It is often said, and rightly so, that death is not an end, but rather a change from an earthly and mortal life to a heavenly and immortal existence. It is because this is so that death constitutes for the believer something to inspire hope and security, not a hopelessness and fear. Death is beautiful and we must recognize it as such – and I am sure that Leo realized the beauty of it and was because of that realization, always ready to accept it.

Like I said before, ever since I have known Leo, I have known him nearly every Sunday, if not every Sunday, to receive our Blessed Lord in Holy Communion. Because of this love and devotion, he was always ready.

If Leo were here today, Mrs. Bessler, he wouldn't want you to bereave his death; but rather he would want you to find peace and promise in his death because he was ready for it. And nothing is more beautiful than death for the one who accepts it and prepares for it with a love and devotion such as that for which your husband had for our Blessed Lord.

It was truly an honor for me to have known Leo – and I know that everyone of the few that did know him feel the same way. Like that one little flower out there on the apparently barren hill, he showed forth to those of us that knew him the beauty of a single life when lived for the sake and love of Almighty God. And for this, we should all be sincerely and truly proud.

JMJ (Jesus, Mary, & Joseph)

THE LOVE SONG – *first version*

(I'm Gonna Love Everybody)

(Featured in my audio cassette album I call FEELING FREE)

Written about 1974.

Refrain:

I'm gonna love everybody through the love I have for me.
I'm gonna love everybody. What wonderful feeling it'll be!
So step right up and be my love. I belong to you, you see.
Then go out and love because you first loved me.

Today I'm gonna take that girl and hold her in my arms.
I'm gonna love her dearly and enjoy all her charms.
There simply is no way that we should feel ashamed
of loving one another the way that we were made. **Refrain.**

There's a saying, friend, that goin about about.
Says that we should all be ones to let it all hang out.
I believe that's the way it should be.
There simply is no way that I can't be free.

When I'm blue, I look into the sky
Feel one with God and I share with the divine.
Then I'm convinced and I have no doubt
We should join with Nature and let it all hang out. **Refrain.**

What is love, my friend, that we should care?
What is love, my friend? Why should we share?
I have the answer, friend. I have it right here.
We should love because we're His and because we are here. **Refrain.**

COME ON OVER

(Featured in album I call MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE)

Written 1970s.

Come on over and lay down by my side.
Let me put my arms around you . Let me feel so dignified.
And as we love each other throughout this whole year,
let's not have any more tears.

Let me tell you, my Darling, what I feel inside.
Let me tell you of my love for you – how your love makes me shine.
Allow me, my lady, to take you in my arms. Let me enjoy all your charms.

I can't help but wonder how lucky I came to be -
to meet you on the streets of life – to find your love so sweet.
Like the moon up in the sky and the stars twinkling bright,
your love has been for me – my wonder and my light.

Let me tell you, my Darling, what I feel inside.
Let me tell you of my love for you – how your smile makes me shine.
And let us have a child – or two or three or four. Let us love forever more.

Come on over and lay down by my side.
Let me pass my hands through your hair. Let me look into your eyes.
And as we love each other throughout this whole year,
let's not have any more tears.

As God gave us the power to love, it's no good unless its used.
The pool of love is there for all, but only the free can be amused.
If we'd only let it be and see God in our lives,
there'd be no need for sorrow and no limit to our height.

I can't help but wonder how lucky I came to be –
to meet you on the streets of life – to find your love so sweet.
Like the moon up in the sky and the stars twinkling bright,
your love has been for me – my wonder and my light.

Let me tell you, my Darling, what I feel inside.
Let me tell you of my love for you – how your love makes me shine.
And let us have a child – or two or three or four. Let us love forever more.

I'll come on over and lay down by your side.
I'll put my arms around you. You look so dignified.
And as we love each other throughout this whole year,
we'll not have any more tears.

David & Belinda

(49 Pages)

By
Francis William Bessler

--- A Spiritual Novel ---

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Francis William Bessler,
Laramie, Wyoming, U.S.A.
February, 2009

*Dedicated to making the world safe
for those who want to love.*

INTRODUCTION

Hello! I'm Francis William Bessler, now at the age of 67. This is a bit of a spiritual or philosophical novel I wrote as Francis Ferdinand Bessler at the age of 33.

Though I was born in 1941, I did not know I was a **William** until in 1977 Mom showed me an original birth certificate that showed **William** as my middle name. That "revelation" came two years after I wrote the following story. As it happened, Mom and Dad decided to change my middle name from **William** to **Ferdinand** several months after I had originally been named **William**. Thus, my original birth certificate showed **William** whereas a later birth certificate showed **Ferdinand**. I was named **William** after a local doctor of my hometown of Powell, Wyoming named Doctor William Graham. As an afterthought, Mom decided to change my name to **Ferdinand** because of some promise to name a child after a grandfather whose name was Ferdinand. At the time I was born, I was the 7th child. Mom and Dad did not expect another. So they decided that if there was to be a **Ferdinand** in the family, it had to be me. Thus, **William** was changed to **Ferdinand** – though that change would not have been necessary because, as it would happen, I would not be the last. My younger brother, **Robert**, could have been tapped to be a **Ferdinand** instead of the **Robert John** he was eventually named.

When I found out that I had originally been named **William**, I went to court and changed my middle name from **Ferdinand** back to **William**. Not that any of that matters, except that in 1975, I briefly published the story to follow as **Ferdinand**. Soon after a *Forum Publishing Co.* of Denver, Colorado printed 1,000 copies of the original and after my placing copies with several book stores in Denver, I decided to withdraw my work from distribution because, in retrospect, I felt that I had not covered a topic I should have covered – *Satan*. So, even after going through all the trouble and considerable expense of printing 1,000 copies, I changed course and withdrew my work. Instead of selling my book, I gave copies away. Thus, of the original 1,000 copies, I have only a dozen or so copies remaining in a shed out back where I live now in Laramie, Wyoming.

In this rewrite, I thought about changing the original story to include a discussion of the **missing issue** of 1975 – *Satan* – however there is a big part of me that does not want to alter the original story to cover the **missing issue**. I want to leave the story as it was and deal with the **missing issue** separately. If interested, refer to a separate article I call *SATAN* (written 2/25/2009) for a discussion of that original **missing issue**. OK?

Also, when I first published the following story in 1975, I planned initially to call it **DAVID & BELINDA**. I changed the name to **NEVER BE ASHAMED TO LOVE** because I thought an "idea" would be better for a name of a book than a couple of characters in it. Well, as it happened, I never did change the story to include a discussion of *Satan* – though I did embrace the characters, *David & Belinda*, in another philosophical novel I wrote later that was temporarily named **NEVER BE ASHAMED TO LOVE** before being changed to its current name of **ALL'S WELL WITH THE WORLD**. At this time, 2009, that work has not been published for lack of being able to find a publisher for it.

With this effort, I am **resurrecting** my original story, however – while returning to the planned original name for it – **DAVID & BELINDA**. Maybe I should have resurrected it long ago, but I guess it just didn't occur to me to do so.

It just so happens that the idea of a rewrite occurred after reading two wonderful books on *Jesus* by **Anne Rice** – who, as it turns out, is almost exactly just two months older than me. **Anne** was born in Oct. of 1941. I was born in Dec. of 1941. I guess I am being reminded of my own *Jesus* by virtue of reading another's work on *Jesus*. **Anne Rice** is writing a series of historical fiction works on *Jesus*, allowing *Jesus* to tell his story based on ideas from the four gospels of the **BIBLE**. At this time, February of 2009, she has completed two of that series she entitles **CHRIST THE LORD**. Though her perception of *Jesus* is different than mine, I heartily recommend her works.

Have I changed since writing the original story? A little, but not a lot. After 34 years, I am still in love with *Jesus Christ* – as was *David & Belinda* in 1975. Amazingly, however, since speculating that the *Jesus* of the regular gospels of the **BIBLE** may not have been properly interpreted, in 1979, I became aware of some alternate gospels that were banned in the 4th Century that actually define a *Jesus Christ* that's not significantly different than the speculation of *David & Belinda*.

In the 4th Century, before the Christian Church settled entirely on being for the time **Catholic**, there were lots of different ideas about *Jesus*. Consequent to **Constantine** becoming **Emperor Constantine** of the then Roman Empire, the Christian Church chose to not only ban certain “different ideas” about *Jesus*, but to destroy all books containing those ideas. Thus, many alternate gospels – like some favorites of mine – *The Gospel of Thomas* and *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene* – were charged by the authorities of the time to be destroyed. It seems, however, that there were some who disobeyed the orders to destroy banned books and they stashed some of them away to hide them from officials intent on burning them. In 1945, a peasant in Egypt stumbled upon a huge jar that contained some of those banned books of the 4th Century. Among works contained in that jar was a Coptic – or Egyptian language – copy of *The Gospel of Thomas*. As I understand it, other gospels - like *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene* – were discovered in some other location in Egypt in the latter part of the 19th Century.

It is speculated by some that *The Gospel of Thomas* may have been written by **Thomas**, one of the claimed twelve original apostles of *Jesus*. That may be so; and it may also be wrong. Personally, I have no way of knowing that the author is the real apostle or not; but neither do I have any way of knowing of the authors: **Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John**. Who were they? Why should I believe their stories in preference to a **Thomas** or **Mary**? I will leave discussion and debate about that to others, but suffice it to say here that other ideas of *Jesus* did exist and were believed by many prior to the **Age of Constantine**. And who's to say that some of those ideas are not closer to the real truth of the real *Jesus*? *David & Belinda* were not aware of any other definitions of *Jesus* because as their author, I was not in 1975; but in light of subsequent discoveries since I wrote their story in 1975, I think *David & Belinda* would be pleased to know they may have been on the right track.

I will not alter my story of *David & Belinda* to include any of the **alter Jesus** ideas that could be raised because of the gospels of **Thomas** and **Mary** because I did not know of those gospels when I wrote *David & Belinda's* story; however, I offer the note here so

as to forewarn you that *David & Belinda* may have been on track to suspect a *Jesus* that was actually defined somewhat as true in earlier banned gospels. I think that offers some **proof** that speculation about life can be worthwhile. I think the real tale of my *David & Belinda* is that they saw fit to challenge assumed notions of life – including notions about such stalwarts of history like *Jesus Christ* – simply because their minds told them it is right.

On the side of a note, the story of *David & Belinda* features a progression of thought. I allow my characters to settle for something as true in one hour and then have them challenge that previous conclusion in the next hour. In that manner, it may seem I am always contradicting myself by doing an about face; but such contradictions, if that is what they are, were part of my own path of progression in life. My characters, *David & Belinda*, only retrace my own thoughts – and hopefully, my own progress – to the best of my ability to recover my path of discovery. Beware, then. You must finish the entire story to know of my final conclusions of 1975 – which, as it happens – have not changed in 34 years.

I call this a novel, but it is far more dialogue than story. If you are looking for some scintillating tale suffering some exciting heroes and anti-heroes, you will not find such a story in *David & Belinda*; however, if you are open to **witnessing** a couple of human beings thinking and speculating about life, you may find my following story interesting.

If I might, I would suggest reading this work out loud. Ideally, it should be between at least two, with one reading **David's** paragraphs and a second reading **Belinda's** paragraphs. A third person, if available, could read those paragraphs not assigned to **David** or **Belinda** as commentary.

Philosophy can be very difficult to follow, however I think it is the ideal expression of the mind because it's of the rational; and minds are rational in character. For those not rationally oriented, however, more than likely, you will not find my story enticing at all. For those of you who are rationally oriented, even where you disagree with my thinking on any given issue, I think you will find thinking in any way quite a delight. I do not claim I am right in all my thinking, but I know of no one else who is either. Look upon my thought as an option of thought, if you will, and go where you will with your own thought after “witnessing” the thoughts of others – in this case, *David and Belinda*. **It can be fun to think if we stay loose and let our thoughts go where they will; and keep in mind, no one's thoughts are better than another's – just different.**

If it is unclear who is talking, **David** or **Belinda**, just pay attention to the end of a spoken paragraph. If it does not end in quotation marks, signifying that a character finished his or her thought, then the next paragraph belongs to the current speaker.

With a few minor modifications for this conversion effort of 2009, then, I leave you to my original story – including the original **Preface**. *Enjoy it as you will.*

Gently,

Francis William Bessler
Laramie, Wyoming, U.S.A.
February 26th, 2009

Preface

This is not a book of *lucid sex*; rather, it is a book of *lucid talk* – although not loose talk that has no aim but to confuse. Confuse, it might, however, because it deals with a very abstract science, and one difficult to understand – **philosophy, the study of being**. But don't let that description scare you away.

Nothing worthwhile is ever achieved at first experience, and the ideas and opinions discussed in this book are certainly no exception. In fact, it has taken me thirteen years to develop the progression of thoughts expressed in these pages. Consequently, it may take many readings before you fully grasp what is written here.

If you will retrace your steps when you encounter what may seem to be confusing, I think an additional reading will clarify the thoughts and conclusions not caught at first reading. And I promise you – each and every one of you – that once you have understood what is presented, you will appreciate the full impact of a statement like “***you shall know the truth and the truth will make you free.***”

But let me point out again – this is not a book on sex. **How** to love is not the intent of this book, but rather **why** you should ***Never Be Ashamed To Love.***

- Francis F. Bessler
(Denver, Colorado, U.S.A, 1975)

Virtue Through Understanding

Belinda, relaxed with drink in hand, looked thoughtful. “David, we’ve always had some pretty firm beliefs about the meaning of life and man’s purpose for living. Don’t you suppose,” she went on, “that we could come to a better understanding of ourselves and the world we live in if we really worked at applying some logic and sound reasoning to the question of what life is all about?”

“I don’t really know, Hon, but I think it would be worth some thought.” David recalled that Belinda had often compared man to a puppet, although man, she reasoned, was created without strings attached since he, unlike a puppet, had been given the ability to think and act for himself. But man, like a puppet, must perform in all the ways designed and intended by his maker or not realize his full existence.

A man fashions a puppet with the ability to perform in various ways; and if, after certain of its strings are pulled, it doesn’t react accordingly, its maker must be somewhat displeased, although he would have to look toward himself to correct the deficiency, since the puppet has no power to act in itself.

Man, on the other hand, given talents and intelligence by his maker, is expected to perform on his own power as designed. If he fails to react with all his given functions to the utmost of his ability, his maker, too, must be somewhat displeased, although the fault lies not with the maker. Unlike the puppet, man was created with the ability to correct his own deficiencies; so it would seem logical to assume that his maker expects him to do so.

Like a puppet, man was not made for himself, but rather for the gratification of his maker. Only if he acknowledges this can he understand what he is all about; and, understanding himself, he can therefore appreciate himself far more than he otherwise could.

Both David and Belinda felt that the key to accepting life and being happy with it could only be through understanding. Since man was made to know, he must seek knowledge; since man was made a creature of reason, he must practice reasoning; since man was made to understand, he must demand nothing less.

It’s easy to see, however, that man must not yet have come to an understanding of himself since the whole world seems to be in conflict, and conflict is possible only when there is misunderstanding between two peoples – when one or both of any given pair simply do not appreciate themselves because of their failure to understand what they themselves, and the world around them, are all about.

Such people can only *flail at the wind* in attempting to solve their problems because, not knowing who they are, they couldn’t know where they should be going; and, not having a worthwhile goal, they would only be able to travel down a path having no end but emptiness.

“Yes, now that I think about it, I’m sure we could come to some sound conclusions.” David’s mind was intrigued by the challenge of such a project. “Do you have some specific thought in mind?”

“Nothing in particular. I suppose we’d do more rambling than anything else.” She added, “Since we both feel the same way about mankind’s ability to reason for himself on the importance of existence, I just thought we might be able to come up with something worthwhile that would help us – and our little one in there – to enjoy a fuller life.”

“I’m sure we could,” David responded. “Let’s kick around some ideas about a starting point from which we both agree we can logically proceed.”

“That’s a good idea, Honey. I guess we almost have to determine a starting point to use as a platform for our ramblings.” Belinda smiled with pleasure at the enthusiasm David showed for her proposed project.

And thus was the idea launched that would lead them to one of the most enjoyable and beneficial weekends of their lives.

Just then, their little one of five, Brian, cried out from his room. Belinda dutifully responded with a drink of water for her little one, tucking him in once again with a kiss and a hug.

Meanwhile, David turned out the lights and lit a softly-glowing lamp by their bedside. They were together now, and he gently slipped off her robe and she, his clothes. This disrobing of each other meant a lot to them, serving as a beautiful prelude to an intimate moment at the end of their day. Every night, before falling asleep, they both insisted on at least embracing each other without restraint or hindrance to their mutual touches.

Tonight, both feeling a deep desire, they would love intensely and, at the end, would fall asleep in each other’s arms.

Existence – A Starting Point

During the days that followed, both David and Belinda devoted considerable thought to the question of a starting point for their search for man's purpose in life. Meanwhile, their family routine went on as usual with David at his job and Belinda tending to home duties and Brian's care.

Their free time was, as always, spent in family-oriented activities. One occasion involved a day-long fishing excursion; another day found them swimming and playing with Brian in a neighborhood pool. David was grateful that his son seemed to love the water.

As a child, David had little opportunity to go swimming. Consequently, he had grown up with a fear of water which had taken him years to overcome. Although he especially enjoyed diving and swimming under water, he still had a feeling of uneasiness in deep water.

He was thankful that he could give Brian an opportunity to learn to swim and enjoy the water early in life and thereby be free of a fear such as his own. You have to learn to be afraid like you have to learn anything else, he argued, and he wanted Brian to appreciate the water and learn to cope with it before he could learn to fear it.

Back in their living room on an evening a few days later – and after Brian had been put to bed – David asked Belinda if she had come up with a suitable starting point for their planned project.

"I do have an idea I've been tossing around in my mind," she responded. "I think a good starting point would be an assumption that life is beautiful. We could assume this to be so and then proceed to reason why it is so."

"Belinda, I disagree," replied David. "I don't think our starting point should be an assumption. In my opinion, our starting point should be a fact that's obvious to anyone who can reason. Your idea is more a conclusion than a starting point. We should be able to conclude after our discussion that, without the slightest doubt, life is indeed beautiful; and our argument should be so cogent that even the hardest agnostics would have to agree. Not everyone would accept an assumption, but only a fool would deny an obvious fact."

"And I suppose you have such a fact in mind," Belinda remarked.

"That I do."

"Well, what is it?"

"Existence!"

"That's your starting point?" she questioned dubiously. "You feel that *existence* is a fact no one can deny?"

"Unless he is a fool," he answered.

"You know, David, there are a lot of people who say we can't be certain of anything, even of our own existence. They would say that we may well be figments of our own imagination."

“Alright, then,” he said, “for the sake of argument, let’s say that we are figments of our own imagination. To be that, we must have imagination to begin with and, therefore, this thing called *imagination* exists and as such has existence. I’m not trying to prove what things are or aren’t, but simply that things are something and therefore have existence. Can anyone really deny that?”

“Only if he were a fool, as you say,” she said.

“OK then, that would be a good starting point, don’t you think?”

“I’m not so sure.” Belinda was still uncertain. “Where can that possibly lead us? At least to say that life is beautiful would provide a fairly strong and particular principle. The fact of existence, I think, would be too general and I really don’t see what we could prove by it.”

“I’m not sure either,” he replied, “but whatever it might be, it would have to be totally rational and intellectually acceptable by all open-minded people. I simply cannot see using as a starting point something that can be disputed. The beauty of life is certainly something you and I believe, however lots of people would deny it. If we are to be rational in our discussion of life, we must start out with fact, not assumption.”

“Maybe you’re right, David. After all, what can we lose? If we don’t prove anything worthwhile using your fact, we can go back and play our little game based on my assumption.”

“I take it you agree, then, that our starting point shall be *existence*?”

“For now,” she replied, “let me say, **no argument**, just as long as you agree that if we don’t get anywhere using your idea, we try mine.”

“Certainly,” he said. “That’s fair.”

“Well, it’s getting a bit late, and I don’t think either one of us has a clear idea of where we are going from here. Why don’t we think about it for awhile before we continue?”

“I’m all for that,” he replied. “Right now, I’m a little too tired to do much creative thinking anyway. What do you say we bathe and relax for the rest of the evening?”

She agreed, and soon there could be heard the splashing of water and the bubbly voices of two people very much in love.

They didn’t know exactly where their quest would lead them, but they felt they had to at least try to use their God-given intelligence to figure out the puzzle of life. They knew that *existence* had meaning, but they weren’t sure how to explain it.

So this was their plan: to allocate some time, perhaps a weekend, and try to find for themselves a reasonable explanation for the meaningfulness of *existence*.

A Natural Trinity

Existence! That would be their starting point. And during the next few days, David and Belinda spent considerable time thinking about what existence really means. They were caught up in their intriguing quest – and decided to leave Brian with Grandma and Grandpa the following weekend to allow them the freedom to delve into their project without interruption.

Actually, this would be the first time since Brian came into their lives that they would leave their little charge with a baby sitter. Neither David nor Belinda believed much in leaving little ones with baby sitters; although Grandma had often begged for an opportunity to keep the little tyke for a few days. They realized, too, that there must be some exceptions to their rule; and this one they considered valid.

Friday night soon arrived, and they were eager for the weekend that lay ahead. As planned, Brian was left with Grandma and Grandpa – and David and Belinda were free to pursue their goal. However, this was one occasion without the presence of a naïve child that Belinda fully intended to use for uninhibited loving, as well as for thinking.

With a glint in her eyes that meant *you can't get away from me now*, she pursued her pleasure. David was ready for her *joyful irritation* and succumbed to her assault without resistance. If she hadn't started their evening in this passionate way, he was prepared to be the tiger. This time, however, she was the aggressor; and it pleased him that she felt free enough to occasionally make the advances.

On those occasions, she'd often say *Satisfaction guaranteed!* More often than not, she lived up to that pledge admirably. Now and then she'd give her guarantee of satisfaction the moment he arrived home from work. He recognized this as her **love code** and would bathe early in anticipation of a delightful evening, knowing he could look forward to her most intimate love acts. It had become her way of saying *I'm in the mood, Honey! Be ready!*

On this night, due to their newfound freedom, they loved a little longer than usual; however, it wasn't at all late when they, relaxed and refreshed, launched their planned search for answers.

"What quality best defines *existence*?" asked Belinda, as she sipped from a cup of fresh black coffee.

"Certainly, anything that exists has a **being-ness** about it, so to speak" David replied. "If something exists, it is in a state of being; however, I don't think that simple knowledge advances us any."

"I agree. There must be something else that would tell us more."

"Maybe we can help our cause if we can answer the question: **existence is a statement of what?**" suggested David. "What logically would follow if something exists?"

"I think I have an idea."

"Alright," he said, "what is it?"

Truth!

“Truth?”

“Yes, truth,” she said again. “If something exists, it can be said to be true or have truth. Isn’t that so?”

“I guess it is, but where does that lead us?”

“I’m not sure,” she replied, “but I think it is something substantial.”

“It may well be,” he agreed. “When you think about it, it says a lot more than *beingness*. Existence and being are really the same thing, but truth is definitely a distinct idea from existence, even though they probably have to exist simultaneously.”

“What is truth? I mean, in your opinion, what is truth?”

“Truth,” he answered, “can be nothing more than a **fact of existence**.”

“Fact of existence?” she questioned. “Maybe so, but I think a better explanation would be **an affirmation of existence**.”

“Why do you say that?”

“Because, Honey,” she replied, “when you say that something is true, you affirm it to exist – or say that it does. Anything that exists is affirmable. Therefore, truth must be an affirmation of existence.”

“Sorry, I disagree,” he retorted. “Would you say that an act of affirmation is an act of an intellect?”

“Yes, I guess I would.”

“And that an affirmation process presupposes that there is an agent around to do the affirming?”

“Yes,” she said.

“Then, accordingly,” he replied, “nothing can be affirmed except if there be someone to affirm it. In that case, only those things whose existence was affirmed by some intellect would, in reality, be true. No, My Dear, I can’t buy that. It seems to me that truth cannot be made dependent upon someone’s intellect.

“Things must have truth of themselves,” he continued. “To say that your cup of coffee doesn’t exist or isn’t true unless you or I or someone else actually affirms that it’s so is just not acceptable to me. That cup is true regardless whether or not anyone is around to acknowledge it. To define truth as a fact of existence does not make what is true dependent upon any intellect.”

“I guess if you really analyze it,” Belinda responded, “what you say is correct. Actually, there aren’t many who would stop to analyze it.”

“No, there aren’t; and we would have been among the multitude if we hadn’t decided to go on our quest.”

“We may have gained an inch or two,” she said, “but merely coming to a greater understanding of truth doesn’t mean much.”

“I’m betting, though,” he responded, “that this little discovery, if you wish to call it that, will lead us to more significant notions about life and its meaning.”

“I certainly hope so. Where do we go from here?”

“I think we could probably delve into what makes a thing true, or what makes it what it is,” he replied. “Have you ever thought about that? For example, if we were to analyze a salad, what could we say makes it up? It seems to me, if we know the answer to that, we can know why it exists as a salad and not as something else – a rock, for instance. What contributes to the truth of a salad? Am I getting through to you, Honey?”

“I think so,” she replied. “You want to know what it is that causes a thing to be identified for what it is. Using your example, a salad is what it is because it contains a mixture of certain ingredients, namely fruits and vegetables or both. A salad exists as a fact of existence or as a **salad truth**, so to speak, only when this condition is present.”

“Very nicely put,” he responded, “but I’m after something more general than that. I think maybe I could say it this way: as I see it, a thing is what it is – or is true in its own identity – when the necessary goods for its identity exist in the conditions necessary.

“Getting back to the salad, let’s say that we have available some lettuce, tomatoes, and cucumbers. When these elements are mixed together in a cut-up fashion or condition, we have what is called a **salad**. Without these elements, our particular salad couldn’t exist. This idea pertains to everything, though – not just a salad.

“A rock is what it is,” he continued, “because of the goods or properties of its specific matter, combined with a principle of adhesion. A given life is what it is because of certain elements of matter or flesh, along with a particular principle of life. Regardless what you name, it can be said that it is true in its totality and specific identity only if it possesses its necessary goods or goodness.”

“Correct me if I am wrong, David, but I get the idea from that last comment of yours that you are equating the terms of **goods** and **goodness**.”

“You are reading me right, My Dear. Don’t you think they should be equated?”

“To tell you the truth, I’m not sure,” responded Belinda. “It seems to me that **goods** has a different connotation than **goodness** in that goods refers to specific parts or properties and goodness refers to the idea of rightness or value of a thing in relation to something else. **Goodness** expresses an entirely different notion to me than **goods**.”

David thought briefly. “**Goodness**, in the realm of moral judgment, does mean rightness and benevolence and kindness and a whole host of other things, I admit, but goodness within the scope of my interpretation can be correctly understood as the state of a thing having its necessary goods, as **the goods or properties of a thing taken together**.

“I think it’s entirely proper to say that if a thing has its goods, it has **good-ness** – like a thing has **true-ness** if it’s true. It’s in that sense that goodness must be understood in the context of my argument. When I say **goodness**, then, I’m speaking not of moral judgment, but of a thing’s goods or properties collectively understood.”

“In that light,” she remarked, “goodness is what makes a thing go, what makes it tick, what gives it its being in the first place. It is not the value of a thing after it’s made, but rather the composition of a thing before it becomes what it is.”

“That’s right, Sweetheart. Goodness is, for this discussion, the **first principle of being** because only if a thing’s goods exist in their proper relation can identities flow.”

“You know, David, now that you’ve explained your idea of the nature of goodness, I find myself liking your explanation much better than the preconceived notion I had of it. It sure simplifies things to think that achieving goodness as a goal in life is really based on possessing the necessary tools in life, so to speak, to allow the fullest possible existence.

“It stands to reason that people are good not because of what they’ve done, but because of what they are. And what they are is entirely dependent upon their having it all together – upon their seeing things in proper perspective, upon their disposing themselves to be open to gratefully experience the many blessings of life.

“*Goodness*,” she added, “*is what you possess before you can act virtuously, not what you express because of your virtue*. You don’t act virtuously and therefore are good. On the contrary, you are good and therefore act virtuously.”

“Belinda, My Lovely Wife, we are connecting. I could not have said it better. It’s important that we both understand our terminology in the same way. Otherwise, we will end up *batting at the breeze*.”

“That’s for sure,” she agreed. “Alright, let’s go over what we’ve determined so far – to put our discoveries in proper perspective – to make sure we are on the same page.”

“OK,” he said. “We started with the idea of existence, from which we subsequently deduced the notion of truth, which in turn, we defined as a fact of existence. Then we concluded that in order for anything to exist and be true, it must have its proper goods or goodness to exist specifically in its own identity. That is where we are at this point.”

“That seems to summarize it,” she said. “Now,” she pondered, thinking out loud, “if a thing has the necessary elements to be what it is, it must therefore possess a resulting identity – a specific oneness or unity about it. Right?”

“*Unity*?” David mused. “That does seem to be another distinct idea, completely separate from truth or goodness. Certainly, *if a thing has the necessary goods or elements to exist in its own identity, those elements must be unified*. I’ll buy your idea of unity being an essential characteristic of existence – or of things within existence.”

“I’m glad it makes some sense to you, My Love. I’m not sure where this is all leading, but I must admit it is kinda fun going there.” Leaning over, she kissed him – then smiled at him, pausing slightly before continuing. “Assuming the acceptance of unity as a third distinct characteristic of existence – or an existing thing – what would be our next consideration do you think?”

David thought for a moment. “You know, fundamentally speaking, that might be enough. I don’t think we can be more complete about a thing in general than to acknowledge that it has necessary properties – or at least, a necessary property of goodness – that it has a specific unique identity or oneness – and that it is a complete fact of existence in the totality of its unity and parts. In other words, we may have determined that the three basic elements of existence are *goodness, unity, and truth*. Can you be more complete than that, considering that we’re trying to find qualities that must be true of all existence – or of everything in existence?”

“How about *beauty*?” Belinda questioned. “I realize this was my original suggestion for a starting point, and I may be a bit prejudiced, but can you deny that everything is beautiful? Don’t you think that beauty can be attributed to everything that is?”

“You have heard it said, My Dear One, that beauty is in the eyes of the beholder. I think that’s true.”

“Oh, do you now?” she quipped. “You don’t think I’m beautiful of myself without someone else having to say it?”

“You can think it of yourself, alright, but don’t you think you’d be a little biased?” he said, gently poking her in the ribs. “Anyway, regardless whether or not you are beautiful, beauty can still be no more than a characteristic attributable to existence, not an essential element thereof.

“Beauty, like color, for instance, is a quality not inherent in an existent thing, but something that may be attributable to that entity by some outside source. Color is not in the thing seen; rather, it is in the eyes seeing. Likewise, beauty is not in the thing, but it

is in the eyes of the one making the judgment. Otherwise, there could be no such thing as color blindness. Red would come out as red, no matter who is judging it.

“Unlike beauty and color,” he added, “the qualities of *goodness*, *unity*, and *truth* are inherent in an existent – and not at all dependent upon some outside source. Therefore, they are not mere **attributes** of existence, but rather essential **elements** of existence. Don’t you think?”

“I think I am beginning to, My Dear, and I’m also seeing some wonder in it all. You know, I didn’t understand until we discovered it for ourselves why some of those old thinkers called the qualities of goodness, unity, and truth the *transcendental* attributes of being. That’s a good word – and very meaningful when you think about it. Goodness, unity, and truth are transcendental attributes because they *transcend* the importance of all attributes – simply because they are inherent to all being, whereas no other attributes are.”

“That’s a fine observation,” he replied, “but I think I would quarrel with those old thinkers, as you call them, for even referring to the qualities of goodness, unity, and truth as attributes. An attribute – at least in my mind – means **something bestowed** – though I admit the term may mean something different to others. The transcendental qualities of goodness, unity, and truth are not qualities bestowed by another, but are within a thing itself. Therefore, I do not see them as **attributes**. I see them instead as **elements**.

“Be that as it may,” he continued, “I think our discovery of what might be called the *trinity of existence* or *universals of existence* could very well serve as an appropriate breaking point. What do you say we call it a night, My Dear, at least for thinking?”

“I’ll go along with that,” she replied, “however, I think that tomorrow we should delay further discussion on what you call the *universals of existence* until later in the day, until after we have had an opportunity to discuss the *why* of existence. I am rather eager to dive into that question.”

“I’m not sure we shouldn’t continue from where we left off tonight,” David responded, wrinkling his brow in an expression of doubt, “but perhaps we’ll be able to tie the *what* and *why* together later on. On that note, I guess I agree.”

“Let’s grab a quick bite before we go to bed,” suggested Belinda. “I’m hungry.”

David heartily agreed. After their snack, they retired to the bedroom where they embraced and slept.

Expression and Identity

Surprised to find herself awakening at such a late hour, Belinda could hardly believe it was already past nine. Late as it was, she decided to let David sleep while she went to the kitchen to prepare a bit of breakfast.

She couldn't help but turn her thoughts to her son, wondering if he had given his grandparents any trouble the night before. It was, after all, the first night he had ever spent away from Mom & Dad.

When he was younger, Brian had been content to sleep anywhere when away from home. Recently, though, he frequently rebelled against bedtime when not in his own bed. Belinda hoped her little one hadn't given Grandma a bad night. But for Grandma's willingness to keep Brian for the weekend, however, they would have had to find some other way to conduct their intellectual quest. Belinda realized this and was grateful.

Having warmed some rolls and brewed some fresh coffee, delightfully light of heart, Belinda returned to the bedroom and her sleeping husband with two hot steaming cups of coffee and a plate of warm rolls and butter.

David rarely awakened to anything other than an alarm clock or the cry of his child. She was always amazed at how, no matter how deep in sleep he was, he was out of bed and into Brian's room in a moment at the first sound of the child's crying. Yet, under other circumstances, an earthquake couldn't awaken him. It sometimes angered her a bit that he would even refuse to wake up on those occasions when she wanted loving during the night, although it angered him more to learn that he hadn't awakened to satisfy her.

Sitting by the bed, Belinda nudged him, suggesting that he share coffee and rolls with her. The aroma of the coffee must have reached him, for he was soon sitting comfortably propped against the pillows.

"How did you sleep?" she asked, knowing full well that he slept as sound as ever.

"Alright," he said. "How about you?"

"OK, I guess, although I've been awake and up and at 'em for over an hour. Do you realize it's already past ten?"

David looked at the clock, expressing some disappointment that he had not awakened earlier on this special weekend, although he had to agree it was unusually wonderful to sleep in for a change. With Brian, that didn't happen often.

Before long they finished their light breakfast and continued with their quest. "Since you're the one who feels that we should turn our attention to the *why* of existence, have any ideas?" asked David, sipping his cup of coffee.

"Yes, I do, Honey," replied Belinda. "I think we can logically determine the answer to this question only if we ask the question of ourselves in causing something to exist. If we determine what, in general, motivates us to make something or cause something, I think we may be able to reasonably step up and come to know the why of existence."

"I agree," David responded. "It's the old but valid argument of determining the unknown by proceeding from what is known."

“Yes, I guess that’s what I mean,” she replied, nodding her head in agreement. “Do you think there could be a general reason that could apply to why one might cause things to exist?”

“Right off hand, I don’t know. Let’s find out.”

“How do you suppose we do that?”

“Simply by looking at a variety of acts that we might do to effect existence, then checking to see if there can be a universal motive that we could apply to each case.”

“That seems plausible. Let’s see,” she mused. “If I make a dress, why would I do it? The answer to that may be that I make it because I want to or I make it because I need to.”

“That’s good for a starter,” he said. “Let me cite several more examples. For one, I’m going to build a house. For another, I’m going to write a song. For another, I’m going to fry a chicken. Accordingly, I might build a house, like you made your dress, because of simple desire or because of necessity – or maybe for both reasons. I would probably write a song because of desire also, as well as fry a chicken, although I might do both of those things out of necessity. If songwriting is my business, I guess I’d have to write songs.”

“It seems to me,” expressed Belinda, “that almost anything we do to cause something to exist could be either from desire or necessity or both. We couldn’t say, however, that either desire or necessity could be dictated universally as reasons for being. Maybe there isn’t a single reason that could be applied to all existence.”

“Perhaps, but maybe there is some universal character that could be applied to both the reasons of desire and necessity. It could be said, could it not, that both desire and necessity are expressions. If I say I need something, I’m expressing the fact that I cannot do without that something; and if I say I desire something, I’m expressing a wish.”

“Maybe you have something there,” agreed Belinda. “It would seem that whether a thing exists because of necessity or simply because of desire, it would definitely exist as the expression of something else. ***Regardless of the source of the expression, it can definitely be said that the reason why any given thing exists must be because it is the expression of something else.***”

“I’m not so sure that what we say is true,” suggested David. “I mean, let’s take the case of an accident. An accident, as an unintended happening, may be neither a necessity nor a desire. Therefore, it may not be the expression of anything.”

“Couldn’t you say, Honey, that an accident may be due to the weakness of the subject causing the accident – and therefore, it could be said to be an expression of the subject’s weakness?”

“Yes, I guess you could. That would seem to indicate that we were wrong when we determined that all existence has to be due to either desire or necessity.”

“That’s not important, is it?” commented Belinda. “The only thing of significance is that even though there are many particular reasons why things might exist, the universal and general reason is that they exist as expressions of outside agents, and nothing, absolutely nothing - except maybe expression itself, if there can be such a thing, can defy that law.”

“That means you and me, too,” he added. “We also exist because we are expressions of something else. But what does that really mean? What is the significance of being the expression of something else?”

“To answer that, I think we have to know what we are an expression of. The particular thing that expresses us should indicate our significance.”

“Maybe so, but I think the way to go about it would be to analyze what our expressions mean to us, and then maybe we can understand what we might mean as expressions of something else.”

“That seems valid. Alright, you artist you. You ask me to pose for you in the nude, since that is the way you like me best, and then you try to recreate me on canvas. In other words, you are expressing yourself through the medium of a painting. Why would you want to do that?”

“Sweetheart, the reason is pure and simple. I love you, and therefore want to decorate the house with you; and since you won’t fit on the wall and on the couch at the same time, I have to find another way to spread you around. For that reason, I paint you so that I can see you in more places than one. For me, it would be an expression of my wanting you more than I can have you.”

“Then you would say that you would paint a picture of me because you love me, and your painting would be an expression of love?”

“Absolutely!”

“Suppose I call you a bum and, taking it to heart, you get angry and clout me. What would you be expressing in that instance? It certainly wouldn’t be love.”

“No, it certainly wouldn’t. In that case, my action would be an expression of anger – or maybe even hatred. Hatred and love are both expressions, even though they are opposites.”

“True enough,” she replied. “It seems to me that the eyes of the beholder, so to speak, determine the expression. The way I see you is the way I will react toward you. If I see you as offensive or ugly, I won’t want to tolerate you – even though, in reality, you may not deserve the reaction or expression I offer.”

“That may well be true,” he commented, “but it could also be true that I may do something offensive that would cause you to see me as unworthy and ugly. Therefore, it is both the subject and the object that determine expression.”

“But, Dear, you’ll have to agree,” she said, “that the prime determinant of an expression is the subject, simply because, in our example, in the end you will see me the way you have been molded to see me; but it will still be you, in spite of your many influences, that will be doing the seeing and the expressing.”

“I can’t disagree with that,” he replied, “but where is this discussion leading us?”

“I think into something significant. You said you thought that, in order to understand what we would mean as expressions of something else, we would have to analyze what our expressions mean to us. So, we have determined that our expressions mean to us what we have been molded to make them. Basically, it seems to me, expressions as products of a given agent could qualify as characteristics of either hate or love.”

“Maybe so,” he replied, “depending on what you mean by hate and love.”

“To put it as simply as I can,” she said, “to hate something is to want to destroy it. To love is to want to build or be constructive. Hate is destruction. Love is construction. If you love something, you want to at least maintain it, if not generate more of it. If you hate something, you don’t want it to exist in the slightest degree. You want to eliminate it altogether. Depending on the way I have been molded to see you, I will either love you or hate you in some degree.”

“Alright, I accept that, at least for the moment,” he replied. “Are you not trying to say that *if we can determine ourselves as expressions of love or hate, we can know something about our expresser – and therefore, why he or she or it would want us to exist? It follows that if we can know why we are being expressed, we’ll know the reason for our existence.*”

“Oh, sage of sages!” she quipped. “You have hit the nail on the head. Now, if you can, tell me why I exist. Am I an expression of love or hate?”

“According to your line of thinking, My Dear, it would be impossible for you to be an expression of hate, since it is obvious that you are not being eliminated from the realm of existence, but rather allowed to exist. Evidently, you are an expression of love – since your expresser made you into something and maintains you in that existence.”

“But who is my expresser?”

“In general terms, I suppose you might say *Nature*,” he replied. “You are a product, like everything else we can feel and touch and see, of Nature.”

“Nature must, indeed, love us – since she allows us to exist in the first place, then maintains us as her expressions,” she added.

“I think it would be more aptly put to say that *Mother Nature loves and therefore she expresses something positive – and that something positive includes you and me. She couldn’t be expressing hate since she is not seeking to eliminate us. Since we exist, we must obviously be expressions of love.*”

“I’m not sure we can go that far, Honey. Can we really say that everything that exists, by virtue of its very existence, must be positive and, therefore, an expression of love? How about pain or sorrow? Can we say these are expressions of love?”

“Maybe we can’t,” he replied, “but Mother Nature, the true expresser, can.”

“You’ll have to explain yourself on that one.”

“Look,” he said. “*To us, pain is something negative and not at all a love expression, but Mother Nature doesn’t take into account the way we might feel things. A germ to us would be considered offensive because it causes discomfort, but to Mother Nature, a germ must be just another facet of her positive expression.*”

“You know,” Belinda retorted, “I’ve never thought of it that way, but I’m sure you’re right. *Mother Nature expresses herself in individual existences – and it may make no difference to her that those individual existences are sometimes at odds with one another.*”

“Alright, then,” said David, “we have determined that we are expressions of Mother Nature, whatever that might be. We haven’t come to any realization of the exact reality of Mother Nature, but merely that, whatever she might be, we are given reality as her expressions. How we are generated is not important – only why we are generated. We have determined that we are generated because Mother Nature loves and, therefore, expresses herself necessarily by way of construction, or maybe *creation* – and we are simply manifestations of that love or creation.”

Belinda, looking a bit puzzled, commented. “That summarizes our morning discussion fairly well, My Love, but one thing bothers me. If we can be said to be expressions of Mother Nature, does it not follow that for this to be so, she has to exist as an expression herself? And if that’s the case, of what might she be an expression?”

“That is, indeed, a good question. It would seem that, since she is obviously being maintained in existence rather than being destroyed, she must be due to an expression of something else.”

“But, since we really don’t know the exact reality of Mother Nature,” responded Belinda, “how can we possibly know the expresser of which she is herself an expression?”

“I don’t know,” he answered, but let’s not tackle that problem until later, if at all.”

“I agree. We’ve covered enough for one morning session, especially since we started so late. I really think our quest is yielding a lot of fruit, though.”

“I think so, too,” he replied, “but it’s sad that more people don’t go on similar quests. ***Our minds are really very powerful, but few people use them to think things out for themselves. The riches of the mind are unfathomable and are rarely tapped to any appreciable degree.***”

“I agree, My Love,” she said. “Let me tap into some of your riches, if you do not mind, though not your riches of mind – if you know what I mean.”

Of course, David knew what Belinda had in mind – and without pause he let her pursue her pleasure because it was his pleasure too; and the world of the mind was suspended for awhile until they both knew one another as Nature designed them in body; and oh, how sweet they both agreed it is.

The Concept of Eternal Life

From the bedroom to the living room. They would continue their quest from the living room couch. Unless they were intending to go out into public traffic, they always stayed the same – fitted in their Natural garments. They simply saw no need to cover up the gifts of their Grand Expresser. The coffee pot in the kitchen was still hot – and Belinda refreshed their cups which they had brought with them from the bedroom.

Going over what they had discovered so far, David and Belinda ended their review with the unanswered question: if everything that is exists because it is an expression of something else, of what could Mother Nature, *Creation's Expresser*, be an expression?

After considering the question at some length, they came to the conclusion that the specific answer was apparently not within the reach of reason; however, rather than give up their quest or start all over again, they concluded that perhaps they'd find an answer to this puzzling question if they approached the subject from a completely opposite viewpoint. Belinda was rather doubtful about that angle of approach, but once again, she was game to try.

“What is at the other end of the spectrum?” she asked.

“Of what spectrum?”

“The spectrum of existence or expression or whatever, I guess.”

“I imagine the answer would be *the whole*,” David answered, after a moment's thought.

“The whole? The whole of what?”

“The whole of existence,” he replied. “You and I are part of the whole of existence. The other end of the spectrum, then, is *all existence* – or simply, *existence*. Existence takes in everything that is, without exception. This means that, since existence cannot limit its membership, and therefore cannot exclude anything that exists, it must be without limitation. In other words, it must be *infinite*.”

“So we know that existence must be infinite,” she responded. “What does that mean to us?”

“It means for one thing that, as expressions or products of existence, we must eventually trace ourselves to being expressions of this infinity we call *existence*. It seems to me that if we can understand our relationship as finite beings to the Infinite Being, we can come to know why that Infinity chooses to express us. Then we can know the reason for our existence.”

“Sounds reasonable enough. Go on.”

“I think that to determine our relationship to the Infinite as an expression of the Infinite, we'll need to determine what any expression does for its expresser.”

“That's seems right,” she agreed, pondering out loud. “If I express myself through a puppet I make or a portrait I paint, that expression could be called a *reflection* of me, could it not?”

“Yes.”

“And if I eat a meal or swim a lake, I’m also reflecting something about myself. In one case, I might be reflecting my ability to eat or my desire to eat; and in the other, I might be reflecting ability or desire, too, as well as enjoyment or any number of other things. Essentially, what I express reflects me in some way.”

“So you’re saying that an expression essentially reflects something about the expresser.” David thought a moment. “Would you also say that an expression adds something to the expresser?”

“Not necessarily, but I guess that would depend on what you mean by that. If you were to say that an expression changes the expresser insofar as there is something about her or him or it after the expression that wasn’t true before the expression, then you could probably say that the expression added something.

“However, at the same time,” she went on, “you could lose something because of an expression. For instance, the expression of sorrow could cause you to lose a tear at the same time it was adding a different mood to your life.”

“Maybe a better word would be *modification*,” he replied. “It could definitely be said that, to some extent, an expression, whether it adds or detracts, modifies or changes the expresser.”

“Yes, I think you’re right,” she agreed.

“Dealing with us in relation to existence, then,” he said, “you would have to say that existence, as our ultimate expresser, underwent a modification because of those expressions, and undergoes modification anytime and every time a new thing comes into being.”

“That would definitely seem to be the case,” she responded, “but it seems to me there’s a contradiction somewhere.”

“Oh? What might that be?”

“Did we not agree that existence cannot limit its membership and, therefore, is without limitation – or in other words, is infinite?”

“Maybe *infinite* is another bad choice of words; but, yes, we did agree.”

“I think *infinite* is, indeed, another bad choice, simply because existence is limited to what is. I mean, it can’t take in what will be – or even what was. It can only take in what is now.”

“Are you suggesting the existence of an *Absolute Infinite Being* that cannot be limited, even by the past or future?” he asked.

“Yes, I am; or at least I’m saying that existence, defined as *all that is*, can’t possibly be that absolute infinity since it is definitely limited to the now.”

“Alright. For the sake of argument, let’s assume that position. If there is no such thing as an *Absolute Infinite Being*, then the contrary is true: there only exists finite beings. To my understanding, if something is finite, it is necessarily limited; and, if it’s limited, it is therefore dependent for its very existence upon something else; and if it’s dependent upon something else and not completely self-sustaining, it must have had a beginning.”

“I agree so far,” she said. “Continue.”

“If everything finite has a beginning, wherefrom could the finite world ultimately come? It can’t come from itself, or else it would be self-sustaining, which, by its very nature, it is not. It can’t come from another finite world, since we’re discussing the ultimate in finite existence, and you can’t go farther back than that. So, My Dear, to

whom or what must the ultimate finite existence, which, by its very nature, must have had a beginning, owe its existence?"

"As you have so cogently illustrated," responded Belinda, "the answer to that question cannot possibly be another finite existence, since no finite existence can meet the necessary condition of ultimately being its own cause."

"Exactly!" he chimed. "Does that not prove the need to acknowledge an *Absolute Infinity*?"

"Yes, I guess it does; but we still don't know what the existence of an *Absolute Being* means to us."

"That we have yet to establish," he replied.

"So, let's establish it if we can."

"Alright," he said. "We know that, because the finite world exists, it does so because it is an expression of the *Absolute Infinite Being*. Therefore, we, as part of that limited finite existence, must be reflections of that Being."

"And, as a positive reflection or expression, we must somehow add to the character or glory or something of the Infinite," commented Belinda. "Yet, that seems to be contradictory. If something is without the ability to be limited, then it must also be without the ability to change, because change, by its very nature, suggests limitation."

"I'm not sure I follow you."

"Look," she explained. "Does not change or modification suggest to you the notion of a beginning and an end?"

"Yes," he replied, "as a matter of fact, it does; and I think I can see what you are getting at. You're saying that because, by definition, an Infinite Being is without beginning and is eternally self-sustaining, it could not possibly undergo change in any way. The objection is that to do so would be to impose limits on the infinity – and thereby destroy it of its infinite character."

"Correct!" she said. "Furthermore, the Infinite Being could not be involved with time because time is an effect of change. How, then, does the finite world have meaning if it is not an expression of the Infinite?"

"I think we have to agree," David replied, "that no matter how unreasonable it might seem, the finite world, because it is comprised of beginnings, must have had a start, and that it must ultimately have come from the Infinite. I think there must be some explanation why the Infinite Being expressed and expresses us, the finite world."

"You know, Honey, it would almost seem that, in order to give one apparent contradiction an explanation, we would have to suggest another apparent contradiction."

"And what might that other contradiction be?" he asked.

"Have you ever heard of a *finite-infinite being*?"

"A what?"

"A finite-infinite being."

"That, indeed, is a super-duper contradiction! You want to know if, in other words, there could be such a thing as a *changing changeless being*. Clearly, that is an absurdity."

"It seems to me," she explained, "that, in order for there to be a relationship between the Infinite and the finite, such an apparent absurdity is necessary. You might say that, in order to establish communication between the Infinite and the finite, a mediator containing something from both worlds should necessarily be injected into the picture."

How it would be possible for an infinity to empty itself of its absolute character, so to speak, and take upon itself finite imperfection – or at least, limitation – is beyond any explanation I can give. Yet, there can be no other act that could establish finite-infinite communication and thereby give meaning to the finite world as a mysterious expression of the Infinite.”

“You think that, because of this necessary mediator,” he said, “the finite world could reflect something about the Infinite Being that produced it? That, indeed, is a very profound suggestion. As you know, a man named *Jesus* claimed such an absurdity a long time ago.”

“It would seem,” she replied, “that if Christ is, in fact, our necessary mediator, the accepted explanation of his existence does not at all do him justice. If my thoughts are valid, he would have had to be far more than just a redeemer saving man from error. He would have had to exist primarily as a communication link between the Infinite and the finite, of which man is but a single member. Secondarily only, could he have existed in the role of redeemer and exemplar.”

“Maybe so,” he responded. “It’s almost overwhelming to think about a concept such as an Infinite-finite being, or *God-man*, as we would normally express the idea. However, what I consider to be equally impressive is that, if we are right in our reasoning, Christianity is as much a philosophy as it is a faith. I’m not saying that it has ceased to be a matter of faith, but simply that it has become more than a thing of faith, with reason and understanding dictating the meaning of existence, rather than merely the blind acceptance of the word of another.”

“If it’s true that Christianity should be accepted more because it is logical and reasonable that believable and revealed,” Belinda replied, “could you not say that Christianity should be more a matter of philosophy and understanding than a matter of faith and acceptance?”

“You must not have been listening. I did say that I think Christianity should be considered a philosophy.”

“I’m not arguing that point. I know you said that, but you did not say *just* that. You said that Christianity should be considered as much a matter of philosophy as a matter of faith. I’m saying that it should be considered more a matter of philosophy than a matter of faith.

“Only those things not explicable by reason, but nevertheless accepted as true,” she continued, “should be considered articles of faith. For instance, the fact that an incarnation – which is normally the word used to define God’s becoming man – took place or had to take place is a matter of logical deduction – and therefore, of reason. The manner in which this act can take place defies reason – and, therefore, that properly belongs as an article of faith.

“The absolute necessity of a *God-man* dictates more to us than the *how* of his *God-man-ship* – and therefore, our acceptance of Christ is more a matter of reason than of faith. Is that not true?”

“Maybe, but I’ve got to think about that for awhile. You’re saying that if I accept Christ because of the idea of a necessary *God-man* or *Infinite-finite* being, rather than because Christ asks me to accept him, my acceptance is reasonable – and, therefore, basically a matter of philosophy.”

“Exactly!”

“And if I accept the idea of Christ philosophically rather than faithfully, my acceptance of the dictums of conduct set down by Christ is also philosophical and not at all a matter of faith.”

“Right again.”

“On that basis, you would claim that Christianity can be more of a philosophy than a faith.”

“Yes,” she replied. “That’s right. In a way, and pardon my heresy, faith is not important. The only matters relegated to faith are the **hows**, not the **whys**; and the **hows** make little difference anyway.”

“To a point,” he responded, “I would agree with you, but I do believe you are going too far. I think faith in Christ very definitely has a place.”

“Alright, Father David,” she quipped, “tell my why.”

“We may be able to determine the necessity of a **God-man**,” he replied, “but how do we know that, as a matter of fact, he has come or is here? How can we tell that **Jesus Christ** was definitely the **God-man** unless we accept that as true because of the word or witness of another? We are not able to deduce any historical event, including the coming of Christ. We accept history because of someone else’s witness, not our own – and, therefore, the knowledge that **Jesus Christ** is the necessary mediator must be because history bears it out and, as such, our acceptance of that can only be a matter of faith, not philosophy.”

“I see what you mean. The specific acceptance of Christ as necessary mediator over anyone else is not deducible through the process of reason alone – and, therefore, such specific acceptance cannot be a matter of philosophy. I hadn’t thought of it in quite that way.”

“Faith,” David emphasized, “is very important because acceptance of **Jesus Christ** as necessary mediator is very important.”

“But is it really?” questioned Belinda. “Why is it so important that we have knowledge of the particular existence of the necessary mediator? Could it not be enough to simply realize that to give us meaning, there must be a necessary mediator, whoever that might be? If we can deduce his necessary existence, could we not deduce our necessary conduct to comply with our reason for being?”

“That may well be so,” he admitted. “We’ll have to explore both sides. However, I’m willing to bet that the philosophical and the faithful aspects could complement each other. Faith by itself could be satisfactory, and so could philosophy or understanding, but the two together could be the ideal.”

“Honey, before we tackle that idea, let’s try to determine, by reason alone, what human conduct should be.”

“That may prove to be some order,” he said, “but what have we got to lose?”

“We’ve determined that the nature of the Infinite is simply to exist, and that it would be impossible for the Infinite not to exist, or to effect non-existence.”

“Agreed.”

“You might say that the Infinite wants existence, and anything that would counter that wish would necessarily be contrary to that wish or act – and could be considered improper conduct, or conduct not in accord with existence or with the Infinite. As we said before, the act of creating or constructing or making something is an act of love, whereas the act of destruction or negation of existence, so to speak, is an act of hate.

Therefore, to be in accord with our reason for being, we should cooperate with the act of the Infinite – or simply, love.”

David thought for a moment. “Anything that is not in accord with the nature of the Infinite, which is existence, would be considered improper conduct, then? Is that your position?”

“Yes, it is,” Belinda responded. “That may be over-simplification, but does it not illustrate, by the use of reason alone, what proper conduct should be?”

“I might agree that it may validly determine the essence of good behavior, but so what? **Your argument does not demonstrate a preference for virtue or good conduct. What difference would it make if I choose to violate the rules of good behavior?** I don’t think reason alone provides me with enough incentive to act in accord with the Infinite.”

“Maybe not,” she replied, “but would you agree if reason can explain the basis for unhappiness, reason could also dictate the basis for happiness?”

“Yes, I think I’d agree with that, although I don’t see how such a discussion would tie in with our study.”

“Come now, David! You don’t really think that happiness is irrelevant, do you?”

“I didn’t say that,” he replied. “It’s just that happiness is not objective. Happiness is simply being comfortable, and different people seek comfort – and therefore, happiness – in different ways. Happiness is not something you can dissect. It’s like, to each, his own. Certainly, what might make you happy may thoroughly irritate me – and vice versa.”

“Happiness in general could be determined to have somewhat of a specific nature, though,” argued Belinda. “You said it yourself. Happiness is comfort; and if that is so, unhappiness must be discomfort.”

“Alright,” he said, “I’ll play your game. What can we say is the nature of comfort?”

“Being at ease with a specific situation,” she replied, “or being disposed to accept or enjoy a specific circumstance or reality.”

“And, if you are not so disposed, you’ll experience discomfort or unhappiness? Is that what you are saying?”

“Yes, it is,” she replied, “but what is more important is that if you’re indisposed to a given circumstance, you can’t but be frustrated in any attempt to identify with it.”

“Would you mind explaining what you mean by that?”

“Not at all,” she responded. “Let me give you an example. Let’s say that you have a dislike for a certain food, although you know that by eating this distasteful item you will benefit with better health. You realize then, theoretically at least, that it would be to your advantage to eat the item in spite of your dislike for it.

“Your indisposition, or close-mindedness, toward eating the item may cause you to react in two possible ways. You may flatly refuse to eat it – and, therefore, feel frustrated that you will not benefit from its potential; or you may choose to eat it and experience frustration only momentarily from the taste while waiting to benefit from its effects. Either way, you’ll be more or less frustrated because of your discomfort.

“The wise man will choose to eat the item,” Belinda continued, “and, if he practices this act regularly, he may eventually overcome his dislike for the item and completely erase his previous frustration – turning an uncomfortable action into a comfortable or happy situation. Do you understand my argument?”

“Yes, I think I do,” he replied. “You are saying that **reason dictates that the basis for happiness is the lack of frustration; and, therefore, the basis for unhappiness is frustration. If you’re frustrated, you are naturally unhappy.** Consequently, if you want to be happy with something, you have to overcome any frustration related to it. That’s fine as an explanation for happiness; however, how does this relate to reason alone providing incentive to act in accord with the Infinite?”

“As long as one is aware of the Infinite,” she responded, “not to act in accord with it would simply make one live a frustrated – and, therefore, unhappy life. If you realize you need the Infinite to make any meaning out of your life, but then fail to act in accord with it, you can’t lead anything but a frustrated existence. Reason alone can tell us this.

“The way I see it,” she continued, “life is like taking medicine. I may not like the taste of some healthful potion, and if I choose to refuse to accept the initial discomfort of taking it, I may never attain the good health it might effect either. Reason would tell me that knowing the need of the medicine but not taking it would be much worse than accepting the initial discomfort for the promise of lasting health afterward. Is that not so?”

“As a general rule, yes,” he replied, “however, one exception would be that it might be more worthwhile to refuse needed medicine because of the initial discomfort than to take it – if you knew that either way, your life expectancy is short. For instance, a man who knows that he is to die shortly of cancer would be better off not to undergo an operation for a hernia. It simply wouldn’t be worth it.”

“I’d agree with that,” she responded, “although I don’t see what that has to do with anything.”

“Let me assure you, it has a lot to do with it,” he replied. “Specifically, I’m arguing that a man may be better off finding his own choice world of happiness, even if that means acting contrary to the wishes of the Infinite, simply because life is too short to care about how one finds happiness – just as long as he finds it. Acting in accord with the Infinite might be validly compared to undergoing an operation for a hernia in spite of imminent death from cancer. If death ends it all, why care about how you find happiness before death? Acting in accord with the Infinite could then not only be useless, but also foolish. **Why waste away a life trying to be good if it’s more fun to be bad?** Do you think reason alone can provide an answer for that?”

“Yes, I do,” she answered. “*Reason could prove that approach to be the approach of a fool – merely by proving that life is not terminal, but rather immortal. Death does not end it all. It merely provides a transition from one mode of consciousness to another mode of the same.*”

“You don’t mean to tell me that you think reason can also prove that life is immortal?”

“Yes, I certainly do.”

“Now, that, indeed, should prove interesting!” he said. “Let’s hear it.”

“Don’t you think, Honey, that death could not come to something having merely one vital process or function, but only to something that has many vital processes – that is, having a vital process that is interdependent among many other processes? Know what I mean?”

“No, can’t say that I do,” he answered.

“Let me give you an example,” she explained. “The function of the heart would have no meaning as a vital process for life if there were no vessels or arteries, which are

certainly other vital processes for that same life. And the vessels would have no meaning if it weren't for the flesh to which they give form."

"I'll grant you that," he responded.

"If one vital process ceased, then the whole unit of which the ceased function is a part would cease as well – or in other words, it would die. What I mean to prove by this," she continued, "is that in order for a thing to die, it would necessarily have to have parts or functions – of which one is interrupted. The heart is a necessary part or function of human life as we know it; and if the heart is interrupted in its vital process, death will result to that life."

"I follow you there," he said.

"If death can only come to something with a composite of functions," she argued, "it would be correct to say, then, that death is impossible in regard to a non-composite existence. If something is not made up of functions, but rather is its own function, it would be incapable of breaking down – since it is already as far down as it can go, existing as it is as a simple unit. If it can't be broken down or divided, it can't undergo death or cease to exist as the simple unit it is."

"Maybe so," he agreed, "but so what? You're still not out of the woods in proving that life is immortal. Granted, simple existence is incapable of normal death, and is, except for possible annihilation, immortal. My Dear, you have not proved to me that there is anything about human life that is simple – and thus, incapable of death. It seems to me that, on the contrary, the human being is very much a complex unit – and, as such, cannot possibly be capable of immortality. As a matter of indisputable fact, we must die and do die."

"*As human beings, yes, we do die,*" she replied, "*but that does not necessarily mean that everything about us dies. Maybe one of our parts or functions is a simple existence – and, therefore, cannot sustain death. If so, then even though as human beings we are not immortal, something about us might be.*"

"I'll go along with that," he responded, "however, I fail to see what part of us could be defined as simple and incapable of death."

"Some people would call the part in question a *soul*," she explained, "although I think I would choose to call it a *consciousness*."

"Our consciousness is immortal, you say?" he questioned. "Right off hand, I'd say that isn't so, merely because our consciousness is entirely a product of our brain; and, if the brain dies, so also must that which is dependent upon it."

"*But is our consciousness solely dependent upon our brain?*" she asked. "Might not somewhat the opposite be true? *Maybe the brain is dependent upon the consciousness.*"

"I hope you can support that theory with reason," he replied.

"Answer me this," she said. "Can a complex thing produce or effect a simple thing?"

"Why not?"

"It seems to me, David," she replied, "that anything produced by a complex thing must also be complex or comprised of parts. The only tools that a wholly complex thing has are also complex in themselves – and, therefore, anything produced by us as complex human beings must also be complex."

"So?"

"*How do you explain the existence of ideas?*" she asked. "Or don't you think that ideas are simple realities?"

“Are they?”

“I think so,” she replied. “For everything that exists of which we’re conscious, we attach a particular notion; and even though the subject matter may be complex, the idea we form from it is simple. For instance, if we have a salad set before us, it exists as a particular unity or identity to which we attach our notion of **salad**. Long after that salad has been digested, and after it has lost its original identity, the notion of *salad* still exists. That notion is simple – and, as such, once produced, it is irreversible.”

“Let us back up a moment,” he said. “You can’t tell me that salad is simple. It is comprised of various ingredients that compose it – and is very much a complex thing.”

“I didn’t say that a salad is a simple existence – only that the *notion* of salad is. The notion or idea of *salad* is the indivisible thing. Notions bear the test of simple realities by virtue of the fact that, once formed, they are indestructible. Long after the complex item has passed out of existence, the notion produced by the mind in relation to it still lingers. A salad is corruptible, but a *salad notion* is not.”

“I guess I can’t disagree with you there,” he responded, “but go on. What does that prove?”

“*Wholly complex things can only produce complex products,*” she explained, “yet, clearly, to my mind at least, *the human being produces simple products in the form of the notions it expresses. Therefore, there must be something essential about the human being – and maybe all intellectual life – that is simple, since it produces simple products.*”

“If that’s the case,” she went on, “*there must then be something about the human being that’s immortal because of that simple existence. In effect, that which is responsible for producing notions or ideas must be immortal. In other words, our minds, not our brains, which only work in conjunction with our minds, are immortal – since, in fact, they are responsible for the notions we produce.*”

“You may be right,” he conceded. “If your argument is correct, after the brain and the mind have ceased producing notions, and the brain has died, the mind may still hold those notions in reserve. **The brain may die, but the mind, as simple, may live on.** It is certainly an intriguing thought. I’m impressed, My Love. Apparently, in some inexplicable way, the mind, even though simple, must cooperate with the brain in producing notions – and, as such, before the brain is deceased, it had better be storing good notions, so to speak, because after death, it is going to have to live with them.”

“Exactly! *The Infinite would have us love,*” she continued, “*because that is its nature; yet, we often choose to violate our reason for being – and hate or destroy simply for the sake of destruction. The disposition that we condition ourselves to at the time of death, reason would say, is the disposition that we will live with forever after death – or at least until we might change that disposition through another incarnation. That means, if we know we should act in accord with the Infinite, but don’t, we’ll be frustrated until we do, knowing we are violating the meaning of our existence.*”

“*If that frustration would last only until death, it might be more worthwhile to choose a way of irresponsibility; however, knowing that the frustration we create will be at least virtually without end, it would clearly be foolish to die insisting on our own way if that way is contrary to the Infinite and the real purpose of life. Since, quite often, death comes unexpectedly – as Jesus would say, like a thief in the night – the wise man will live according to the known wishes of his maker so that death will catch*”

him in a positive state of mind. If that isn't reason enough to act in accord with the Infinite, I don't know what is."

"I see what you mean, My Dear One," David replied. "It would also stand to reason that one who, before death, is never conscious of the intended meaning of life, whether or not he fails to act in accord with love, would never attain the degree of happiness that one conscious of the meaning of life would. That is, of course, if the one aware of his meaning did, in fact, concur with the Infinite. By the same token, one not aware of his true meaning could not suffer the frustration that would a violator, aware of his meaning.

"In a sense," he went on, "**it could be validly argued that the hell we have in eternity would be due to the notions we instill in ourselves in this life.** After death, we would no longer be capable of attaining our notions by ourselves. Before death, we are the makers of our own destiny – with no one but ourselves to blame for failure. After death, we are no longer the makers of our own destiny, but must then live – or at least be conscious of – the destiny we created for ourselves when we had the chance."

"That's true," Belinda responded. "**Solely from the standpoint of reason, then, it can be seen that it is very important for us to develop now a good, loving disposition that we can take into eternity – or at least beyond death and perhaps into a subsequent incarnation. To wait until tomorrow would be the most foolish thing we could do, since there is no assurance that we will have a tomorrow with which to experiment.**

"It would be entirely correct, then," she continued, "to say that **the hell we have in eternity – or at least beyond death – is simply an extension of the hell we allowed before death. If we're not in hell here, we won't be in hell on the other side of mortal life either.**"

"I agree," David replied. "You know, Belinda, the concept of good disposition or good thoughts must clearly be **the** one thing that determines our achievement of heaven or hell. Psychologists have long advocated that the key to mental health, which is what we are really talking about when we talk about good disposition, is to think good thoughts. For such a simple way, there sure haven't been many who have actually succeeded in capturing the process and using it to its fullest degree."

"No, there haven't, Honey," she said, "although it's encouraging to me to know that, **in spite of living amidst confusion, I can scale the heights of the good life simply by a sort of positive meditation or concentration on the good things that are mine.**

"That, indeed, should be the number one goal of each of us," she continued, "to think good thoughts and not harbor negative ones that can only lead to despair and self-destruction. Clearly, the human mind cannot concentrate on opposing thoughts at the same time. So, since we have an inherent power of concentration, if we but use it, we can avoid any bad feelings and bad disposition simply by thinking good thoughts about ourselves and our world.

"Furthermore," she added, "**it's not possible to have good thoughts about something or someone and not want to love that something or comfort that someone. To love, then, is to be grateful and to enjoy what is loved.**"

"That's right," he said. "It seems to me that it's extremely important for us to use now, to the fullest extent possible, the gifts of our expresser, and practice gratitude without inhibition every hour, every minute, every second. To put our talents under a basket – as Jesus might say – on the pretext that they deter us from our end would be

tantamount to telling our *Infinite Father* that we don't appreciate His gifts – and that we have a better way to please Him.”

“That kind of pride is certainly a damning pride,” she agreed. “If we can cooperate in any way to help one another to experience his or her talents for loving and expressing hearty gratitude, we should feel obligated to do just that. To be shy about expressing true love – which is only giving to someone with whom you feel a bond – and then call it *modesty* as if it were some kind of virtue must be one of the biggest failures of mankind as a whole. Total acceptance of you as my spouse should mean that in whatever way you give yourself to me in matters of sincere love – or bonding – I should accept you without restrictions.”

“You know I agree with you there,” he replied.

“The same, of course, goes for you in accepting me in whatever manner I choose to give myself to you,” she continued.

“Sweetheart, that has, indeed, been my most pleasurable experience,” he retorted.

“As long as it is done for the honor and glory of the Infinite – or with gratitude to the Infinite in mind,” Belinda added. “Otherwise, it would be meaningless – or at least, less meaningful. If it is done solely for finite gratification, it can't be done for the Infinite – or at least with the Infinite in mind. If it isn't done at least with the Infinite in mind, I think it would lack in potential pleasure. *The more we bond with our entire world, the less we are isolated from it, and the greater our joy.*”

“No argument there, Belinda. It must be quite empty to mingle sensually feeling nothing by your act but a totally self-enclosed and so called *private* adventure. *To understand the real potential of the physical act of love, you simply must go beyond the incomplete world of just two participants and realize that all life is really bonded together because of all being within the same Infinity of fantastic existence.*”

“It's really too bad that more of us don't use our bodies – which are just part of that wonderful fantastic existence you just mentioned – to go beyond ourselves and link with all that is. I'm becoming more and more convinced, David, that *the most effective way of entering into the spiritual world of thanksgiving and appreciation is by embracing the wonderful impulses and sensations of our bodies – simply because we are all children of the Infinite.*”

“I like that idea, My Love,” beamed David, “and I believe it too! It is really quite comforting to see and know oneself as a *child of the Infinite.*” Patting his stomach, he added, “On that note, what do you say we take a break from our quest of the mind and satisfy some needs of the body?”

Belinda only smiled, while standing up and accepting David's invitation by extending her hand to his as if to say, *follow me to the kitchen.*

There, working together, they prepared for themselves a truly enjoyable meal. Regarding this as a genuinely special occasion, Belinda brought out the delicate lace tablecloth that had been given to them as a wedding gift by David's parents. They each assisted in setting the table, using their *special occasion china*, inherited by Belinda from her great grandparents. A candelabra centerpiece completed the festive table setting. They would enjoy this dinner in the warmth of candlelight and love.

The table-setting task complete, David and Belinda warmly embraced, complimenting each other on a job well done. By this time, aromas from the stove began to foretell the pleasure of the meal they were about to enjoy with heartfelt gratitude. It would not have

mattered what they prepared for themselves because the real meal they were enjoying was themselves. That was as it should be. They were in love – not only with themselves, but with the entire universe; and the entire universe was in love with them.

Physical love for David and Belinda, however, was not the complicated issue it is for so many. Even from the very beginning of their marriage with their initial wedding, though only eight years ago, they had committed themselves to each other, first as soul mates and then as body mates. They saw themselves as souls with two wonderful bodies, and not just as two bodies who just happened to have souls. Their primary concentration was their souls, not their bodies. They were very easy with their bodies, knowing they were only temporary, but it was primarily an ease with Nature and what is natural. ***David and Belinda saw themselves as one with Nature – and that was their greatest joy.***

There had been a song on the hit parade a few years back that asked the question: **Will you still love me when I'm 64?** David like to sing it to Belinda – and Belinda always answered, ***Of course, Old Man!*** as if anticipating David being an old man – and herself being an old lady. They were both in their thirties, not sixties, but they loved pretending they were in their sixties because they saw themselves growing old together; and they sensed that their sensual life would be pretty much the same for them in their sixties as it was for them in their thirties – that is easy and whatever course Nature was allowing for them.

Belinda told David that what she wanted most was just to be held by him – held and touched and cuddled and kissed – just as if they were already 64. Theirs was a truly simple partnership; and it lacked any stress because of their ease with one another. If either of them sensed any stress at all, they knew that was a sign they needed to correct their conduct. ***No Stress Allowed*** was their motto; and they figured that as long as they paid attention to that motto and that rule that when they were 64, it would still be the same wonderful love – two souls scampering through life – and embracing their two gifts of life with ease.

The Supernatural Trinity

After dinner, David and Belinda returned to the living room, eager to continue with their quest. Each brought along a fresh cup of coffee. There were lots of loose ends they wanted to tie together before the end of this day; but they were very satisfied with their progress so far.

Not at all satisfied that faith could be any real aid to this life, Belinda was hopeful that they would pursue that issue; however, David was convinced of the need for further discussion on the universals of *goodness, unity, and truth*. He had some ideas about their possible *supernatural* significance – or perhaps it would be better to call it *Infinite* significance since it really had to do with the Infinite which both David and Belinda were convinced is in everything, not necessarily *over* everything.

Arguing that further discussion of the **whats** in terms of *universals* of existence might suggest the true relationship between the **whats** and the *whys* of existence, he persuaded Belinda to delay discussion on the importance or significance of faith.

“Yesterday,” he began, “we determined the existence of a trinity of elements that must be characteristic of any thing in existence. I can’t but wonder if that same trinity can be ultimately significant in explaining the nature of the source of all existence – the all-encompassing *Infinite Reality* we call *God*. Like anything else, God must have the trinity of elements to be what it is, even though it must be *Absolute Infinity*. In other words, it must have the **goods** or *goodness* necessary to be what it is, and having that, it must consequently possess a specific *unity* – and those elements being matters of fact, it must then be *true* in its totality.

“Could it be possible,” he continued “that the so-called *Three Persons* in one *Infinite Being* can, indeed, be the elements of *goodness, unity, and truth* – and that these three elements in their infinite forms can be aligned with what many of the Christian faithful call the *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*?”

“That’s certainly an interesting thought,” she responded, quite enthused by the idea. “Maybe by analyzing what a person is we can come to some sound judgment as to the validity of such a speculation. Are the terms *person* and *element* interchangeable in the case at point?”

“What is a good definition of *person*, do you think?”

“We are distinguished as persons because we are different from the rest of the animal world,” she answered.

“What makes us different?”

“The power to understand the world around us rather than merely react to it and its various stimuli.”

“And the power to understand is a function of what?”

“I suppose a function of the soul or mind,” she replied. “By way of the mind, we gain knowledge, and, consequently – understanding.”

“Then you would say that a person is anything that can know – and therefore, understand?”

“Yes. Don’t you agree?”

“I think that’s about it as we think of *person*,” he replied.

“Alright, then,” she said, “all we have to determine is whether *Infinite Goodness*, *Unity*, and *Truth* have the power of knowledge.”

“That’s true,” he replied. “Let me ask you this question: did we not prove that the *Infinite Being* must encompass all that is?”

“Yes, we did.”

“And is not *knowledge* itself an existent?”

“I’m not sure, but for the sake of argument, let me say, yes.”

“Then, if the Infinite encompasses knowledge as an existent – though *Infinite Knowledge* – it must also possess the power to know.”

“It would seem so,” she said.

“Since the Infinite must be simple because it must be changeless,” he argued, “*Goodness*, then, as an element of the Infinite must also be simple. Being simple, *Goodness* must also be the Infinite. The *Infinite Being*, as we have said, knows – and, therefore, *Goodness* is properly a person.”

“That seems reasonable,” she replied. “What about the other two – *Unity* and *Truth*?”

“Essentially, the same logic would apply to them,” he said. “To be Infinite, they must both be simple – and being simple, they must individually be indivisible in the infinity.”

“But, if they are each individually complete as the *Infinite Being*, we would have to say that there are three equal infinite beings, not just one,” commented Belinda, “however, as we have demonstrated, there can only be one infinity. How do you explain that?”

“I think you’re distinguishing among the persons of the Infinite according to physical limitation,” he answered, “which is clearly impossible since the Infinite must go beyond the physical, even though it embraces the physical.”

“I suppose I am falling into that trap, since it is almost impossible for us to think except in physical, finite, terms,” she replied. “Is there no explanation as to why there are not three infinities? If so, what?”

“*The distinction could be as Thomas of Aquinas thought back in the 13th Century: a distinction of origin or relation, rather than substance.* All of the three persons must be the same, substantially,” David explained. “Otherwise, you would have to say there are three infinities, since there would be three different substances. We know that there can’t be three infinities. So the difference can’t be a substantial one. Only in the *order of origin* – virtually speaking only – or in the *order of relation* – can the three persons reflect definite distinction.”

“I think you are playing some mind games, David, as your friend, Thomas of Aquinas, did, but what could possibly be the difference in origin?”

“No difference in actuality, My Dear – only difference in what might be termed *virtuality*. Your point is well taken, however, in that it probably doesn’t really mean as much as it might seem. God is still only **ONE** – regardless of so-called *virtual parts*. But virtually speaking only – or as Thomas of Aquinas might argue – from a point of view of *order of origin*, can *Goodness*, as we have defined it, originate from *Unity*?”

“No, certainly not,” she replied. “A thing can’t be what it is before it has all it needs, so to speak.”

“Can either *Goodness* or *Unity* originate from *Truth*?”

“Once again, no,” she said. “A thing can’t reflect a total fact of existence before it has what it needs – and consequently, is what it is.”

“Clearly, then, there is a distinction – though only virtual – among the persons that can be traced to origin or relation,” he replied. “Even though each *Virtual Person of God* exists for all eternity as the Infinite, their differing relation among themselves in a way imposes upon them, distinction in personality. *Goodness* must be the first principle, since without it, neither the persons of *Unity* or *Truth* could exist.

“*Unity*, as son or product of *Goodness*, must exist as a prime procession of *Goodness*. *Truth*, as a reflection of all that is, must exist as a fully *Infinite Fact of Existence* – as a further expression of *Goodness* and *Unity*. Because of the different relationships, one to another, and because *Infinite Knowledge* belongs to all three, there can be said to be *Three Personalities* in the *One Infinity*.”

“Again, though I know the distinction is only virtual and not actual, I must say I’m impressed, David. That is quite a story; and I suppose I could even call it brilliant – absolutely brilliant!”

“Well, I’m glad you so approve,” David retorted.

“Your story also explains why different functions can be attributed to the various persons of the *Divine Trinity*. For example, it would properly belong to the *Father* – or *Goodness* – to serve as the first principle of all creation. Furthermore, it seems only reasonable that it would be within the province of the *Son* – or *Unity* – to unify all that is sent into creation. And it would make sense, too, that the *Holy Spirit* – or *Truth* – should declare that all that has been created is a fact of existence – or is true.”

David added. “In actuality, God creates – not the *Father God*. God unifies – not the *Son God*; and God is truth – not the *Holy Spirit God*. I tend to agree with you, though, Belinda. I am really not sure it really means much in actuality, but I can see some use to it in terms of making us more aware of the entire *Divinity* of God. If it helps to split God into persons to better define *Divine Activities*, then I guess it’s OK.”

“Yes, I agree, David,” Belinda replied. “It sure doesn’t do any harm to think of God as three persons and address each person for that person’s assignments, so to speak. Knowing the truth of our existence in terms of knowing we have to be emanations of God – or if you wish, *God the Father* – lets us share more personally in the *Divine Life*. Knowing all creation is *united* within One God is useful in making us aware that we are all *sons of God*. That’s inspiring too. Since God is *Truth*. By having the truth, we share in the *Holy Spirit* – which is God.”

“I like that, Belinda!” David exclaimed. “Furthermore, I think we’re now in a better position to understand the true relationship between the *whats* and *whys* of existence. You have already said it, but creation, it could be said, is nothing more than a mysterious reflection of the Infinite – from which it proceeds. Like the Infinite, anything in creation must possess the trinity of elements: goodness, unity, and truth.

“God, then, must be reflected through all that is; and everything, in possessing their own goods, unity, and truth, must be, as it were, tiny reflections of the Infinite. Essentially, that must be the reason for the universals in creation – to reflect the persons of the Infinite.”

“What a beautiful thought that is!” exclaimed Belinda. “And it is not difficult to understand.”

“No, it isn’t,” David replied. “I find it quite exciting, too, that in both the Creator and the created, the central element is that of unity. In creation, goods flow into unities and truth flows from unities. In the *Creator*, the *Father* generates the *Son* – and the *Holy Spirit* is an expression of that birth.

“Intellectually, it satisfies me to know that in all things, infinite and finite, the central theme must be one of unity, which is to say, among other things, that Christ – as the center of God – must also be the center of our lives. Through him alone we can communicate with the Infinite Father, so to speak.”

“I think all of this merely adds to my opinion that Christianity is actually more a matter of understanding and philosophy or logic than belief or faith,” commented Belinda.

“Since you are so insistent upon that point, let’s discuss it for awhile. I still say that, even though our reason tells us a lot about ourselves and where we should be going – or how we should be conducting our lives – faith is needed to give us a better understanding of the *God-man*, who, in fact, is a definite historical character. How can we know about the definite existence of this man of men unless we accept him on faith?”

“Honey, are you using the term *faith*,” she asked “as something causing us to accept Christ because of some supernatural light helping us to experience him, or are you using it meaning a kind of historical proof that causes us to believe?”

“I’m using faith in a natural sense, in terms of believing because of the proof or testimony of history, as you say – or in other words, believing because of tradition.”

“Do you consider it sound to believe in the witness of another?” she asked. “How could you know that his witness is true?”

“In regard to proposed articles of faith that offer to set definite doctrine, we can’t know a witness is true unless that article of faith has successfully withstood a valid challenge. At least, that is how I see it.”

“And what is a valid challenge?”

“What do you think?” countered David.

“You’re the one making the point,” Belinda responded. “You tell me.”

“Alright, I think it would be sound to say that a valid challenge would entail a proposal of a viable alternative – that is, an alternative to a given article of faith that not only claims to deny the article, but offers an acceptable explanation of its own about the issue in question.”

“Sounds convincing.”

“Does it? Why don’t you try it out, then?” David challenged.

“Just like that, huh?”

“Sure. It can’t do any harm, can it?”

“No, I guess not.”

“You go ahead, *Lady of the World*, and I’ll do my best to play the devil’s advocate.”

“Alright, I will. The doctrine of faith that I’m going to challenge is that God became man only because man sinned.”

“I should have guessed!” David retorted. “Well, here’s your chance.”

“Alright, Sweetheart,” she said. “Has it not been commonly held among Christians since the time of Christ that God would not have had to become man if man had never sinned?”

“That seems to be so.”

“And have we not concluded from reason that God, as the Infinite Being, would have had to become man whether or not man sinned?” she probed further.

“Yes,” he responded, “however, in my role of devil’s advocate, let me say that there’s no factual basis for believing that he had to assume unto himself the finite world by becoming man here on earth – man being defined merely as *unity of mind and matter*. Certainly, he could have done that anywhere else in the universe – and we would have still been granted a communication line to the Infinite, even though we may not have been aware of his incarnation.”

“You think, then,” she added, “that the God-man could have manifested himself through some finite medium at another time and place?”

“That’s right.”

“I guess that is certainly possible,” she said.

“So, you see, the article of faith that declares that God would not have had to become man if man had not sinned is not unbelievable – that is, if you’re talking about his becoming man here on earth. So, it looks like your challenge to that idea has not succeeded. Nice try, though, Dear.

“To put it simply,” he continued, “God would not have had to manifest Himself through Christ if man had not sinned, because, theoretically at least, man would still have been in a state of original purity and would not have needed the example of Christ.”

“So much for that challenge for now,” conceded Belinda, “but let me ask you, David, do you think that in the end, the reason God did become man on earth was to provide mankind an example?”

“Yes, I think that’s exactly the reason Christ, as God-man, came as he did. Taking on all our weaknesses, he could show us how to love and to what extent we should love. In brief, he taught us by his example what we should be willing to do to prove our love for God and His children. Only because man sinned did mankind need an example by which to live.”

“I guess it does make sense that, in the end, Christ would not have had to set an example for us if we had not sinned,” commented Belinda. “Consequently, he would not have had to suffer and die. However, because we did sin, he chose to come as an example and show love. Thus, Christ had to die for our sins, or, if you prefer – because of our sins.”

“So, as you can see, My Lovely Wife, faith is necessary to know the historical Christ. There is nothing that reason alone can tell us about the fall of man and the actual coming of Christ. Without faith, we could not know that man ever existed in a state of original purity, free from physical and mental pain. Faith alone tells us this. The actual historical Christ cannot be known except through the eyes of faith, the eyes of believing, simply because of historical witness. We can only know him as he existed through traditional descriptions of him. Since an understanding of the traditional historical Christ is dependent upon the notion that man failed in his first moment of trial, Christianity is as much a matter of faith as it is a philosophical conclusion.”

“You’re probably right,” Belinda conceded again, “in saying that there’s simply no way we can know the historical Christ except that it be through the eyes of faith; however, I still maintain that an essential understanding of the historical Christ is not necessary – and, as far as this gal is concerned, it is of less importance than an essential understanding of the philosophical Christ, or Christ explained rationally. Reason can tell

me all I need to know to allow me to pursue the goal of a life of love. I'll admit that faith, or accepting the witness of history, is complementary, but in no way absolutely necessary."

"I'm in the same mold as you are, My Dear," said David, "but the opposite approach can be just as effective for some. I mean, faith and faithful knowledge in the historical Christ could allow people to live the life of love so necessary for what could be called *salvation*. Effectively, both faith and philosophy lead, in varying degrees, to a knowledge of God or the Infinite – and of mankind as related to the Infinite. Faith alone, in terms of believing because of historical witness, could be completely sufficient; however, a philosophical understanding would certainly be complimentary."

"Agreed, David, that faith can be OK for some, but it seems to me that the use of our intellectual talents to determine life's reasons and goals should be encouraged. As we suggested before we decided to go on our quest, it just doesn't seem reasonable that God would give us a light, then expect us to put that light out and follow someone else's light. The purpose of a light is to show the way – and the light of the normal mind has the power to show itself the way. Why would God give us that power if He intended that it be discarded in favor of some outside light?"

"For you and me, it wouldn't be reasonable," he replied, "however, for others, it might. We both feel that talents, no matter how seemingly insignificant, will honor their benefactor only if used. For us, it seems pure rationalization to say that God would be happy with us if we chose to give Him back his gifts undeveloped, perhaps because of a fear that use might result in misuse. That seems to us, not only idiotic, but downright ungrateful.

"When Brian is older and can manage it," he continued, "if I lend him a hundred dollars, I will expect him to use it – not stash it away for fear he might lose if he spends it. I think we should treat our gifts from God in the same way. He gave us hands to hold one another and to provide for one another. If we sit in a corner somewhere with our hands folded and not busy with life, what good are they?"

"I agree wholeheartedly," added Belinda. "But let me get on another track. Since my first challenge didn't succeed, I'd like to try again."

"I'm still game," David answered.

"A little while ago you mentioned that reason couldn't tell us anything about the fall of man. Since that time, I have had an idea in the back of my mind that I'd like to throw out. I'm going to challenge the idea of the fall of man completely – and try to prove to you that the doctrine of the fall of man is not only unlikely, but also contrary to reason."

David raised his brow, wondering where this one was leading to. "Go ahead," he said.

"To say that man fell in his first days is to imply that man was made to be tested. The only way that man's being created to be tested has any meaning is in the sense that man has to be judged as successful or not by the tester; however, as I see it, God cannot judge. Therefore, man was not created by God to be tested by Him."

"God can't judge, you say? How in heaven's name can you make a statement like that?"

"Look," explained Belinda, ***"it's an obvious concept when you think about it. God can't judge for two reasons: First, as Infinite, God must be independent of all; but to judge man, He would have to depend on man to pass judgment. Second, as Infinite, God must be in everything. Therefore, God could not judge that which He is in."***

“Wow, you are right!” David conceded. “What you are saying is that God is actually handcuffed, in a way, and cannot judge. I say again, Wow! As such, man need not fear the hand of God in anything because that hand is not outside of man, but inside of him. As we have talked about so many times before, perhaps the only thing we need to fear in regard to any judgment of us is our own self-image. What a pity it will be for those who don’t have a positive self-image. Eternity is a long time to be alone, hating yourself all the while.”

“Can any of us bear the thought?” remarked Belinda. “What a hell of a situation that would be! Pardon the pun.”

“It would be hell, alright,” agreed David. “Anyone who engenders a self-hate could live amidst thousands of could-be friends and not even know it, simply because he or she would be so wrapped in self-pity that all else would go unrecognized. I think that description of hell is about the best I can think of, Belinda. ***Hell is hating yourself!***”

“And, if you hate yourself, you simply can’t relate to anything outside yourself either,” added Belinda. “As the hub of your world, you would not have enough confidence to test the spokes leading from that world to the world around you. Since the spokes of the world around you are just as important as the hub, the fantastic beauty of God’s creation could never be experienced. In effect, the wheel of which you are a hub would simply have to wither and rot away like a ***discard in a junk yard.***”

“My, my! How poetic!” he amused. “But how right you are, Belinda! In all seriousness, it would almost sound better to have to face the judgment of God.”

“You know,” she went on, “there are a lot of people living their lives quite nonchalantly, expecting to meet a ***forgiving judge*** after they pass on. What a surprise they’re in for when they die and find no one waiting for them, not even a vengeful and exacting God. They’ll soon realize they are alone for eternity, and that, as mortals, their own bodies were their greatest treasures – treasures that many of them will have discarded – like junk in a junk yard, as I said before. Having to spend an eternity realizing you wasted your chance to appreciate your natural gifts must be absolutely excruciating.”

“***Excruciating*** is the word, alright,” he agreed. “Your challenge to the fall of man appears to stand, then, Belinda. Once again, cold, hard reason proves itself superior to what must be pure heresy and claimed as God’s truth to man.”

“There’s only one thing that could undo my logic,” Belinda replied.

“And what’s that?”

“We may have overlooked the role of Jesus as judge. Is it possible that, even though the persons of Goodness and Truth – or God the Father and God the Holy Spirit – can’t judge, perhaps the second person of God in his finite mode can judge. What about that?”

“That’s a possibility, I guess,” David conceded, “but reason would say that Jesus Christ, as God, could only be God’s servant, so to speak. So, he would probably not be involved with anything except to fulfill the will of his Father. Since God the Father’s nature is to love without judgment, it’s entirely reasonable that Jesus Christ would not judge either. Maybe he could judge as man; but as God, he would not.”

“I hope you are right, David. I’d hate to have to face my savior as my judge, so to speak.”

“Belinda, I really don’t think it would make any difference. As we have pointed out, it’s your own judgment that’s going to mean the most in the end – not the judgment of anyone else, including that of a Jesus Christ.”

“I’m comfortable with that,” she said. “When you think about it, the activity of judging is a very petty activity – and would hardly be proper for a secure personality. *We judge, that is reward or condemn, only because we feel it necessary to maintain some kind of order – whether on an individual, familial, or social level. God’s world is perfectly in order – and none of us could possibly encroach upon that order. Consequently, God would have no need to judge.*”

“That’s true,” replied her husband, “but even though we need not fear God in any of his Persons, insofar as judgment or condemnation is concerned, it’s particularly wonderful to realize that because of Jesus Christ, and only because of Jesus Christ as God-man, we’ve been given an opportunity to truly experience a personal relationship with God.”

“Isn’t it fantastic!” exclaimed Belinda. “Because God became man, man has the capability to communicate with God on a very human level – since God, in a very real sense, is human as well.”

“Absolutely unbelievable!” David echoed. “The only way we could possibly have communicated with God was for Him to come down to our level, because we certainly couldn’t have the power to elevate to Him. He had to come down to us – and He did. Consequently, we’re in a position to talk with Him, walk with Him, eat with Him, sleep with Him, love with Him. I hope you and I can truly succeed in developing our ability to converse with God in a very personal and fulfilling way – especially since we’ve been able to determine so much about it all.”

“Knowing what we know, it’s extremely doubtful we’ll fail,” Belinda remarked. “Our minds have allowed us to know God as most people have never known Him. I do believe that to realize our own divinity by association with Jesus Christ, the God-man, is to know a very special relationship with God. But speaking of personal relationships with God, how could those who lived before Jesus have ever succeeded in talking with God, so to speak?”

“They couldn’t have, Belinda – not until Jesus became man could men have conversed with God, as it were.”

“You know you are stepping on a lot of toes when you say that, David. How do you account for the talking with God that many of the leaders of the Jewish nation had? How do you account for the apparent validity of the **Old Testament** prophecies, foretelling that Christ would be born through their nation?”

“In making an accounting of **Old Testament** figures talking with God, let me answer your question by asking another. How do you distinguish between legend and historical fact? You know, there’s no actual proof that Moses ever existed. To my knowledge, he is not mentioned in the historical journals of any nation other than the old Jewish nation. And how about Joseph in Egypt? How come a figure of Joseph’s stature and influence in Egyptian history isn’t mentioned in any of their journals – and probably, legends? Don’t you think these are questions the rational man must have answers for?”

“If possible, yes,” replied his wife, “but what if there are no historical evidences of these men and figures like them? Do we just act like they’re nothing more than political contrivances?”

“Political contrivances?” That’s a good expression, Belinda. That may be quite accurate. Maybe that’s exactly what they were – and are. Every nation needs its heroic stories; and, perhaps, if a nation doesn’t have any noteworthy ones, it would be helpful to make up some for the sake of stimulating patriotism – like the stories we Americans blow up about George Washington in order to make him look almost superhuman in the eyes of our children.”

“Do you think that’s an answer for the legends of the Jewish nation?” she asked.

“I don’t know, anymore than anyone else does, Honey, but it’s as good an answer as I can think of. I hate to second-guess the legends of the **Old Testament** – or the **New Testament**, for that matter – but let me tell you, My Lovely Partner, I’d be a fool to blindly accept legends as unquestionably true when they affect me so much. After all, should I be fool enough to gamble that the **Old Testament** legends are factual when they supposedly have at least an indirect bearing on my eternity?”

“There are a lot of fools, as you call them, around,” she countered.

“Well, I’m not one of them, and I’m sure you aren’t either.”

“No, I’m certainly not. Like you, My Love, I’m not so naïve as to think that all legend is fact. I must have adequate proof. As you said, Dear, it’s our eternity that’s at stake; and that’s no small jewel.”

“You know, Belinda, it should be obvious to us that some of those old legends must be utter nonsense – for instance, the legend that has God slaying the enemies of the Jewish nation through Joshua. Our logic resoundingly illustrates that God can only love, not destroy in any way. How, then, could He have become so provoked that He could flatly decide not to love those who were called His enemies? And, as we have also illustrated, how could He have even judged a people as an enemy when, being Infinite, He had to be within the enemy? We have determined that God can’t judge, being within all. So, who is right? We – or the Jewish legends? I will stand with our conclusions, as they are much closer to the ideas of love and forgiveness proclaimed by Jesus.”

“I find it hard to believe that God’s giving Moses the Ten Commandments might be pure legend,” commented Belinda. “Why would the Jewish nation have claimed that He did?”

“You used the word before, Belinda – *political contrivance*. The Jewish leaders, like any other national leaders, could have needed some pretext to effect social order. No nation can exist without social order – and the **Ten Commandments** are mostly a logical, as well as somewhat universal, set of laws to effect social order. What orderly nation would allow one of its members to kill another member? What nation would allow its children to be disrespectful of their parents? What nation would allow one of its members to steal from another member and go unpunished? There simply isn’t a civilized nation in the world that can get by without such laws.

“As I see it, Sweetheart,” he added, “the **Ten Commandments** are logical – and, for the most part, absolutely necessary for social order. In other words, they can very well be a set of logical deductions, rather than extra-ordinary Divine commands.”

“Maybe most of them are,” Belinda agreed, “but how about the first commandment – *I am the Lord, thy God. Thou shalt not have strange Gods before me?* Surely, no other nation before Christ had such a law. Perhaps that indicates the entire **Ten Commandments** to be of Divine origin.”

“Belinda, **there is no such thing as a *strange god***. There is only **One God**, and the very idea that the Jews were given to believe that their god was a super god more powerful than all other gods indicates to me that its status is legendary, rather than factual. The god of the Jews is seen as competing with other gods on numerous occasions in **Old Testament** history. That’s to imply to me that the Jews mistakenly believed that other less powerful, and perhaps evil, gods exist. Such a false notion as that could hardly have been of Divine origin. The first commandment, then, could logically have been one of the national laws of the Jews of old because the Jews of the **Old Testament** saw their god as centrally important to their continued existence.”

“That’s heavy, David, and I’m not sure I accept it.”

“I struggle with it myself, Belinda, in spite of the apparent boldness of my argument. I’m only trying to find answers, as any rational being should. It’s just too important to do otherwise.”

“How about the various prophecies about a messiah – and his coming through the *house of David*, David? What accounting can we make of them if they don’t have historical validity?”

“Alright,” he answered, “let me speculate on that a little. Assuming that a nation has an idea that its god, as opposed to other nations’ gods, will bless it with a sort of super-king or *messiah*, would it not be reasonable to assume that such a kingship would eventually be inherited through traditional royal strains?”

“If a nation has the idea that its rulers are godly, inspired, yes. It stands to reason that such a nation would look forward to its messiah coming from royalty.”

“Was not David a Jewish king?”

“Yes, he was.”

“Then, accordingly,” this modern David continued, “a messiah would naturally come from the royalty of David, or, as the prophets said – *from the house of David*. So, such a notion is simply a logical deduction, assuming the notion of a messiah in the first place.”

“So, you’re saying that the prophecies that Jesus would come from the house of David were not necessarily of Divine origin. Could the fact that he came from the house of David be purely coincidental, then?”

“No, I don’t think it would be proper to say that God would be born as human on a purely coincidental basis.”

“Then, why did he choose to give credence to the false messianic notions of the Jews by being born of the house of David?”

“Maybe his being born of house of David is false legend, Belinda. I do not know he was born of the house of David. Those New Testament writers could have only been claiming such because it was expected that their messiah would be born of the house of David. Their claim of Jesus being born of the house of David may be based on fulfilling the prophecy rather than offering factual truth.”

“Are you suggesting that Jesus may have been a God-man, but not a Jewish messiah, David?”

“Yes, I guess I am. My view of Jesus is that he actually felt out of place among the Jews. I don’t see him as fitting in with the rigid structure of the **Old Testament** at all. So, how could he have been a fulfillment of that structure? I just don’t see it.”

“I guess neither did the Jews, David. You are not the only one who failed to see a connection between Jesus and the Jews. The Jews did not see that Jesus was their

messiah either – if we are to believe **New Testament** stories that offer that the Jews actually saw Jesus as a challenge to their tradition – not a fulfillment of it. But why would Jesus have recited messianic verses as he allegedly did if he wasn't claiming to be the Jewish messiah? Did he not thereby impose a certain validity on them by honoring them in that way?"

"First of all, Belinda, it may be false legend that he recited them at all, but just assuming that he did recite some of those verses, let me say this. People often recite verses without being literally identified with them. Recitation of messianic verse is no proof that he was claiming to be a messiah. The idea that Jesus may have quoted what he learned as a good citizen of Israel does not necessarily identify him in a literal sense with the subject of a prophecy.

David continued. "Let me illustrate with an example, Belinda. Do you remember a story by the English author, Charles Dickens, called *TALE OF TWO CITIES*?"

"Yes, I do."

"Remember, at the end of the story, the hero takes the place of his friend at the guillotine and goes to his death saying, *It is a far, far better thing that I do than I have ever done!*"

"That was certainly a very emotional ending, and I don't think I will ever forget it," she responded.

"Alright, for the sake of illustration, assume that you have the dubious opportunity to substitute your life for the life of a friend – and as you are standing there with your hands tied behind your back, and as you are thinking about the freedom your act is giving your friend, you say, with great feeling: *It is a far, far better thing that I do than I have ever done!*"

"That's a pretty dramatic illustration, David. You should have been an actor."

"Hopefully, I've made my point. In that situation you would say those words, first of all, because they were committed to memory – and secondly, because they express with feeling what you want to express. They are appropriate and expressive – and for that reason alone, you may use them. Literal identification with Charles Dickens' hero is not necessary. Is it? Likewise, Jesus could have quoted passages of Jewish tradition that were expressive to him, such as *I am a worm and no man*, signifying the weight of the world on his shoulders; and he could have quoted numerous other passages, but that is no proof that he identified with them on a literal basis."

"Very convincing argument, My Dear – very convincing! Let me ask you the obvious question that comes to mind. If the Jewish church of old cannot validly claim inspiration as a nation from the real Infinite God, can the church of the **New Testament** claim inspiration in its own stead either?"

"Belinda, the answer to that must be quite obvious, as you probably know. As one might say, let me count the ways. *First, would Jesus have discounted one set of laws just to establish another set of laws? It's absurd to think he would have. Really, the issue here is one of laws – and that is precisely what Jesus cried out against. He tried, with all his might, to correct the notion of the time that salvation can be a matter of legislation. Certainly, Jesus would not have insisted so fiercely on the rule of love as the only rule of guidance needed by man if it had been His intention to give a new institution the authority to legislate right and wrong.*

Secondly, the new church claims that its authority as the voice of God came as a result of its being transferred from the old Jewish church. As we have established, the old Jewish church had no Divine authority in the first place. So, how could its non-existent authority be transferred?

“And, thirdly, the only thing that can grant a permanent eternal happiness is a personal relationship with Jesus as Divine Mediator. It is utter nonsense to think that any organized social body can in any way have, as its intrinsic function, the promotion of a relationship that can only come from within – stressing once again, the importance of the rule of love from the heart or will, not a law of love. A law carries with it the implication that punishment will result if the law is broken. A rule simply serves as a road map – and the only consequence of violation is not getting there.”

Belinda let out a big sigh, drawing a deep breath in expression of her own weariness. “I’ll bet you’re getting weary, aren’t you, Sweetheart? You’ve really unwound in the last hour. Don’t you think it’s about time to slow down a bit?”

“I’m ready, Lady Love! I’m really ready!” David exclaimed. “But I think more than anything else, these discussions have helped me see what fools we’ve been for believing some of the stuff we’ve been handed down since we were toddling around in diapers.”

“Before we call it a night, David, if you don’t mind, I’d like to touch on more item.”

“I guess I could handle that,” he said.

“We’ve discussed faith in a natural sense in terms of believing because of historical witness. Perhaps we should discuss another aspect of faith – an indwelling of God in the soul.”

“Commonly called *the life of supernatural grace*, right?”

“Right. What do you think? Is it possible or rationally sound at all?”

“No, and I’ll tell you why,” David answered. “A life of faith of believing in God because of a special Divine presence in the soul, not interpreted as simple truth, is based on a totally illogical premise – that man was made to be tested.”

“So, we’re back to that again, huh?” remarked Belinda.

“That’s right,” he replied, “but this time, it’s my turn. The only way a life of supernatural grace has any meaning, Honey, is in man’s acting in only a given way in order to receive of the Divine life, so to speak. In other words, God, as the dispenser of supernatural grace, must depend on the meritorious activities of man in order to judge who gets it and who doesn’t. Need I say more?”

“No, you certainly don’t,” she responded. “*Because God, as Infinite, must be totally independent of man, He can’t judge. Therefore, God can’t give Himself to one and not to another, dependent upon the various candidates actions.*”

“That’s right, Sweetheart; and *even if it weren’t for the idea that God can’t judge us and therefore dispense His grace based on that judgment, there is the ever present idea we have discussed again and again that God is already in everything. So, it makes no sense that God would be present in some in some special indwelling way. The presence of God must be the same in all creatures. He must indwell, if you want to call it that, in everyone. So, how could one vessel have God in a different way than others?*”

“I agree, My Dear, but with that little item off my chest, I am ready to retire. Let me just rest my head against your chest, and close my eyes and relax for a bit. OK? Then I will fix us a little desert dish and we can go to bed.”

“Sounds good to me, My Love. Maybe you will hear my heart beating. It beats for you and me and Brian – and for all who believe in love. Our lives are so good because they are so divine.”

“Yes, they are,” she whispered. “I think I am in Heaven; and you, My Love, are my angel.”

Belinda smiled and closed her eyes, leaning as intended on her husband. Her right arm crossed over and her right hand found David’s left hand, resting on his thigh. Grasping the top of his hand, she squeezed it slightly, feeling a tear stream slowly down her face for the joy she was feeling. David shared her feeling – and a tear of his own found a track down his smiling face as well. Then there was one sound, as if only one breath was between them; and the two of them relaxed and dreamed – probably the same dream.

Jesus – The Greatest Believer

The night came and went – and it was Sunday. Having enjoyed a full night’s rest, David and Belinda greeted the day with a great deal of enthusiasm. Their significant discoveries and experiences of the day before would undoubtedly be recalled and valued for a long time to come.

Developing a relatively complete and reasonable explanation of life meant a lot to them; and they both felt they had succeeded to a remarkable degree in doing just that. This had been, indeed, a most fulfilling weekend, though they realized that this would not be the last weekend they would devote to a quest for the meaning of life. There would be more of this kind of pursuit and more mysteries researched and developed. This one was only a beginning; but it was a beginning of which they were both deeply proud.

Belinda’s coffee, as always, was totally refreshing; and David enjoyed numerous refills as they relaxed in the living room once again, reviewing their previous day’s findings. There were still many matters they wanted to cover, but there simply was not enough time remaining in the weekend to pursue much of it. Most of it would have to wait for another weekend of pursuit. Belinda, however, had one thing on her mind she was intent on getting settled.

“You know, David, basically, I think we have succeeded in unlocking many doors this weekend, but there is one concept that you are apparently very comfortable with that I am not – and I’d like to resolve my discomfort if I can.”

“And what is that?”

“Our understanding of Jesus as uniquely an Infinite-finite being. My mind simply has great difficulty in accepting such a notion, even though I’m the one who originally suggested it.”

“It’s a hard notion to accept, Honey. I’d be the first one to admit that, but it seems to me that ultimately, as hard as it is, the rational person has to accept some inexplicable conclusion in the end.”

“I’m not so sure.”

“Look, Belinda, think about it. *No matter which way you look at it, you end up with an apparent mystery or inexplicable conclusion. If you claim that everything is part of the Infinite, then it seems that the Infinite is comprised of parts – and that seems clearly impossible since, as we have argued, the Infinite, as perfect, must be simple and composed of only one thing – Goodness. If you claim that there are only finite beings, then ultimately the finite world must be its own source – which also seems impossible since finitude, by nature, implies limitation and dependency – and only an independent being can be its own source.*

“If you claim that there is an Infinite and a finite, the finite by itself could not possibly enhance the Infinite since the Infinite, by definition, is already perfect and incapable of further enhancement. Therefore, our finite existence would be meaningless – and that conclusion is totally unacceptable to both of us. Then, of course, there’s the explanation that currently I am leaning to which also tends to

violate all rational thought. There is an Infinite Being and a finite world and a bridge between the two that contains both.

“Jesus, as an Infinite-finite being,” he continued, “is as rationally inexplicable as any of the other arguments; but especially because history claims that such a being did, in fact, exist in the person of Jesus Christ, I think the Jesus argument is clearly the most acceptable of all.”

“David,” responded his wife, “you admit that the claim of an Infinite-finite being is mystery. Right?”

“Unfortunately, yes, though I wish it wasn’t.”

“If you’re willing to accept the least mysterious of mysteries, so to speak, how about considering another alternative that is but another mystery. *With Jesus, we are equal participants in the Sonship of God.*”

“I’ve already got my back against the wall,” David responded. “I guess I’d be a fool not to give you a chance to expound on your additional thought. Are you saying that it’s possible that Jesus was no more God than we are – that *we are all equally sons of God?*”

“I’m only conjecturing, as you know, but, yes, in a way, that’s the argument I would like to explore.”

“I’m all ears,” he responded.

“Consider the possibility that our souls are not only immortal, but eternal. I know – way out! But hear me out, please.”

“I’m not stopping you. Go on.”

“If somehow my soul existed prior to its current existence, and, depending on my soul’s level of achievement or degree of enlightenment, it experiences rebirths into different temples – is it not conceivable that, with each additional rebirth or incarnation, the being of me that resulted would be a continuation or a modification of its previous disposition?”

David grimaced. “You are going way past me on that one.”

“All I’m trying to do, David, is to consider an alternative Jesus explanation. If Jesus was not uniquely the Son of God, who was he? If historical tales are somewhat correct, he certainly was special in some way. He supposedly had some rather special powers – the power to heal, the power to read thoughts, the power to raise others and himself from the dead. How explain these powers if he was not of God?”

“And you think that the level of achievement or degree of enlightenment of Jesus’ soul may provide an answer. Is that correct?”

“Yes,” Belinda responded. “I’m considering that possibility. Suppose that the concept of migration of souls is correct, and, like any other being, Jesus had a previous existence. If psychic power depends on what might be termed *level of spirituality* due to a given soul’s level of enlightenment, maybe – just maybe – Jesus was special only because of his soul’s level of spirituality. Suppose his previous existence was that of a Greek Socrates, who was unbelievably brilliant – or a Jewish Isaiah, who was notably a very spiritual or enlightened person.

“If that is the case,” she continued, “it would explain why Jesus was smarter at the age of twelve than most people are at forty. It would also explain why he claimed existence before Abraham – or maybe he was Abraham; and maybe he was Socrates.”

“You accuse *me* of heavy thoughts, Sweetheart,” offered an amazed David, “but I have yet to suggest anything as intriguing as *that!* And yet, when you think about it, the

migration of souls concept is not new at all. Your Socrates was an outstanding believer in it. As I recall, he believed deeply that death is nothing more than a process of rebirth into another temple. Who is to say that is not so?"

"That's right, David. Who's to say? But you know, what leads me to believe along these lines that Jesus' special powers may be due to his psychic achievement rather than to his equality with God is that others have displayed similar powers, especially healing powers. It would seem that man, through a high degree of spirituality – for lack of a better explanation – can displace the material – and, therefore, displace in a given entity the element of illness, which is material related as well."

"Though I can't currently claim such power," replied David, "I can't say I disagree with you. It does make a lot of sense. The power of placement or *location*, whatever that happens to be, must, indeed, be the power that would allow a person to cure another, especially if that other truly had an illness due to a germ or a physical disability. It would stand to reason that if I had the power to locate or relocate material, as it were, then I would likely have the power to heal."

"That's sure an intriguing thought," agreed Belinda. "Perhaps if a person really knew his power to relocate physical existence, he could possibly relocate himself with the speed of thought. It could well be that if our souls migrate into higher existences, physically speaking, our destiny could be to gradually grow through our generations and regenerations to achieve such power."

"Jesus could have been a person who had regenerated to the point that he could call the shots, so to speak – maybe even so that he could be reborn in the same body. If that's so, his resurrection is explained in rational terms. Maybe it had nothing to do with God, per se, but only to do with Jesus himself."

"Are you suggesting, Belinda, that the resurrection of Jesus was in a way, natural, in that we all have the potential to do likewise?"

"That's right," she said. "When you think about it, *allegedly, Jesus did not restrict his power to himself. Supposedly he claimed that we could all do what he did and more. That leads me to believe that he came into his incarnation as Jesus so fully aware of himself and his real power that he knew others could achieve the same power if they really applied themselves in the same way he had learned to apply himself.*"

"Jesus was nothing more than a super-psychic? That is really hard for me to get a hold of!" exclaimed David.

"It's hard for me too, but *its just as acceptable a mystery as the notion that an Infinite Being can become finite*. I think I'll believe my way. For me, it's more convincing because my intellect can grasp the possibility, however, it is really hard for me to grasp onto an idea that has an Infinite Being becoming finite."

"To think that just last night we were so comfortable with Jesus being an Infinite-finite being," David mused. "My, how things change?"

"That's life, alright, My Favorite Husband – things change. *That which seemed an acceptable idea yesterday becomes an after thought when it has been replaced with a more reasonable explanation. I guess it's just the way we grow. We think. We make mistakes. We correct them.*"

"If we're wise, we correct our mistakes," David added, "but there are a lot of folks who never change – and just keep on with ideas that long ago seemed brilliant for their time, but have lost any sense with new discovery."

“Isn’t that the truth?” she agreed.

“If you are right about this migration of souls bit, Honey, we may be wrong in what we thought we determined before that there can be no growth after death. If souls do migrate or inhabit new temples or forms or bodies or whatever, after death, then they have a chance to grow and change. It could be said that with each successive birth, a soul would be given a new lease on life – and a new opportunity to find peace and happiness.”

“That’s a much more acceptable notion,” Belinda commented, “than the idea that souls remain idle after death and have no chance to change and grow. It’s really very exciting! Isn’t it?”

“If souls, in fact, migrate, yes, it is exciting,” David replied, “however, what does this conversation do to our notion that as a person lives, so will be his life after death? In your speculation, do you think that a person could have the power of self-determination after death or would we all, just and unjust, as it were, be up to the mercy of pure chance? Who knows? Maybe a Jesus could return in the body of a rabbit.”

“Perhaps, David, but the way I see it, that would probably not be the case. According to my logic, the greater a soul’s level of spirituality or sense of identity with the One, the greater its power of self-determination. Therefore, a person who dies without any feeling of identity with the Infinite would probably be without any chance of self-determination in the hereafter and may well end up inside a rabbit. If you happen to be one who was mean and vicious to his dog in life – look out, you may end up the dog of a mean and vicious master yourself.

“However, one highly identified with the Infinite and at peace because of it could possibly be completely in control and could even predict his or her return. Thus, it’s possible that a Jesus could be totally in control of his destiny, and, consequently, choose his temple of return, so to speak. As I said before, that may be an explanation for the alleged resurrection of Jesus – and more importantly, it indicates our own potential.”

“Furthermore,” said David, “if that’s true, once a person could have complete self-direction or determination, he or she would effectively never have to undergo death. Once a person possessed complete self-determination, he or she would exist, as it were, in a glorified state – nevermore to be subject to pain or death.”

“I have a feeling, David, that this here *Lady of the World* is going to have quite a few regenerations to go through before she begins to reach such a state.”

“You may be closer than you think, Sweetheart. Realizing you have the potential may be half the journey. I’ll certainly be interested in devoting a great deal of time in the future to exploring our hidden powers – however I suspect it is not based in power, but in peace. I suspect that the kind of power we are talking about cannot be attained by searching for power itself, but only by confiding in peace.”

“Why would you say that, David?”

“Because that has been my experience, Belinda. I have known far more security in my life by being peaceful than being powerful – and really, what we are talking about in ultimate power is ultimate security. Right?”

“Yes, I think that is so, My Dear One,” replied Belinda. “If it is about security, only peace can attain it because with power, there is always battling with other powers, thus negating any possibility of peace, but with peace there is security of soul. I, too, have known that.”

“Belinda, your offer of an alternative to a Divinity of Jesus suggests to me a very interesting thought. You started out by saying that souls may not only be immortal, but eternal – and that souls may migrate through various temples through death and rebirth. The amazing thing I see, if you are right, is that *if our souls are really eternal and not merely immortal, they can’t but belong to a single life principle that is God because only God is eternal.* Now, that is an intoxicating thought!”

“It just highlights the fact that we are all expressions of the *One*,” Belinda replied. “*I think that identification with the One has got to be our only end. Perhaps, Jesus, more than anyone else, must have realized that. Consequently, he may have had many extraordinary powers because of his enlightenment. When he said, I and the Father are One, he may not have meant as people took him to mean – and take him to mean – that he is equal to God, but rather that he simply was One with God as we all are. It’s that belief of his Oneness with God that must have somehow given him his extraordinary powers.*”

“If he really had such powers, Belinda, I’m sure you are right; however I am not so sure he had such powers. I just do not know because I have come to believe that those who wrote about him didn’t really know him. **They may have reported him doing all sort of extraordinary things because they thought it would be expected of a messiah.** I don’t know. I certainly do not believe the tales of his being a messiah – and that was the real core message of the gospels of the Bible. So, if I discount those tales, it is not so easy to believe any other tales, if you know what I mean.”

“Yes, My Dear, I know what you mean,” Belinda responded. “*Who knows the real story of Jesus?* Personally, though, I think that all of the tales speak of a resurrection. Maybe that is the real start of the tale of his life. Maybe no one paid much attention to Jesus until it seems he rose from the dead; and then there was a whole flurry of excitement and tall tales and half truths – and just plain lies – told about the man. Like you, Honey, I do not know either.”

“It seems that so many expect Jesus to return in power, however, Belinda. I don’t see that happening because I think those in peace will always remain in peace – and in the security of peace. I don’t doubt that Jesus will return – and he probably has returned many times already – but never in power. My Jesus will never reign like so many think one of God should.”

“Nor my Jesus, David. *My Jesus will be one like us and will always be one like us – and will never rule over others because that is not what souls of peace do. If only the world knew the real truth and stopped skipping after illusions of grandeur and started to embrace all existence as incapable of evil, then peace could happen.*”

“Yes, peace could happen, Belinda, just like it is happening here!”

“*Maybe it will someday, David! Maybe it will!*”

David & Belinda

The End

RUN WITH THE GAZELLE

(From my audio cassette album I call FEELING FREE)

(Also featured later in album called MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE)

Written Aug., 1980 (going home to Denver, Co. from Family Reunion in Powell, Wy.)

People search from left to right – to find a love that can be might
but more than often live in fright – and lose it in the breeze.

People want to find a friend – that won't leave them in the end,
find a way that Heaven sends – like an eagle to be free.

REFRAIN 1:

*And they clothe themselves in the country. They walk somber in the streets.
They live in the fear of Jesus – and they claim that fear is sweet.*

People have problems seeing themselves – and often try to hide themselves
and seldom come to know themselves when they have the chance.
People think they know the son because they think the Father's one
to make them so they need undone from a devil's trance. **Refrain 1.**

I'm sorry that I have to say – Immanuel wasn't known in his day.
In the name of Jesus, we've had to pay for our blindness to the end.
Immanuel came to set us free – but we nailed him to a tree,
and in a false name, claimed liberty, and chained him as our friend.

The time has come to release that bond – and recognize we're still not strong
in spite of bathing in his pond – for two thousand years.
We've changed the rules of Immanuel from love thy neighbor as thy self
to love the church or go to hell – and our rule is one of fear.

REFRAIN 2:

*I'll run naked in the country. I'll go quiet in the streets.
I'll live in the love of Immanuel – and I'll run with the gazelle.
I'll run naked in the country. I'll go quiet in the streets.
I'll live in the love of Immanuel – and I'll run with the gazelle.
I'll live in the love of Immanuel – and I'll run with the gazelle.*

(This song was also featured in **FEELING FREE**, including this final verse
that was not included in **MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE**)

Now, there's no sense to tell those – who Jesus has come to know
the meaning of my repose because they're blinded in his sight.
You all can do as you will – follow Jesus or Immanuel,
but don't complain when you see the bill for following the blind. **Refrain 2.**

THE SEVENTH RECORD

(11 Pages)

By
Francis William Bessler

--- A Spiritual Short Story ---

Originally written in 1980.
Revised slightly in 1987.
Revised slightly in 2005.

Copyright by
Francis William Bessler,
Laramie, Wyoming, U.S.A.
September, 2005

*Dedicated to old love
&
new beginning*

Introduction

Originally, I wrote this in 1980. It was intended as a gift for a friend. Kika is her name. We grew up together in the 1950s on neighboring farms outside of Powell, Wyoming. In 1975, I had written a philosophical novel I called *NEVER BE ASHAMED TO LOVE*, but was disappointed in my ending. For several years I had tried to find a suitable ending, but it had alluded me. I wanted my characters to find their souls in terms of come to understand the origins of their souls, but search as I did, I could not find the answers for which I sought. In my disappointment, Kika encouraged me to keep trying. It was the summer of 1980; and I was 38.

I told Kika that I had pretty much given up on writing a new ending for *NEVER BE ASHAMED TO LOVE*, but I would write one short story in her honor and then give up trying to write forever more. Thus, I penned *THE SEVENTH RECORD* that follows and sent the first copy to Kika. She called me and thanked me for my story and requested that I not stop trying to find the answers for which I sought and that I owed it to the world to share those answers when I did find them. I could tell she was crying too. I guess my little story touched her much more emotionally than I ever expected it could.

So blame it on Kika, I guess. Blame this little story about the love between an old man and his wife of many years on Kika; and blame all that I have written since on Kika. If it had not been for her encouragement in 1980, I may have given up searching for my answers about the soul and I may have given up writing.

I will always be grateful for Kika's encouragement as I am grateful for the significant encouragement I have received from quite a few in life – including my parents, my daughters, and a number of friends. Many friends have lent me some of their insight along the way, but most notably, one called Nancy. Early on, it was Nancy – a former neighbor in the 1970s, married to a good friend, Rich - who chatted with me about life and helped me evolve into the particular thinking person I have become.

Nancy was and is a lovely lady and ongoing friend. Emmett was like her in that he and I discussed the meaning of life constantly during the brief four years I knew Emmett. My friend died of a heart attack in 1985 at the age of 53, but his legacy in me lives on. I suppose it is possible to do it alone in this world, but it has not been my experience. I will not attempt to name the many who have helped me evolve into the me I am, but suffice it to say, there have been many; and Kika, Nancy and Emmett are among the many.

I have also had three wives along the way – to date – who have contributed to my total mindset. Dee, Pat, and Ann contributed mostly by resistance, however, as none of the three ever embraced my mindset of life being essentially divine and wholesome. It is hard to say how to deal with resistance; but I have dealt with it by leaving the resistant behind to honor life as they wish while taking another road that allows me to honor life as I wish as well. I have always felt that any two should respect one another and only try to change one another if change is desired. I married all three times that I did expecting greater agreement than I found, but since none of us wanted to change to accommodate

the other, it has been best, perhaps, that we thanked each other for the time spent together and then went along our separate ways. Who knows? As I write this, I am only 63. I am always open to an agreeable spouse. I have risked marriage three times in the past and have been engaged three additional times as well – eventually breaking the engagement before marriage would require divorce later on. Is there a seventh engagement possible? I'd say so – and maybe even a fourth marriage.

Anyway, this is a reproduction of an old story – with some minor revision of the original. When I wrote *THE SEVENTH RECORD* in 1980, I wanted to capture a sense of growing old, gracefully and naturally. I wanted to say that all life is blessed from our days as a baby through our passage to the next life, whatever that turns out to be.

I wanted to say that old age should be embraced and not rejected, as we so often do. I wanted to say that passion should be just as much a part of the lives of the old as it is for the young. I wanted to say that death is nothing to fear – that even as we enjoy the life we have in the body, we should not keep the thought of dying too distant because we are all going to go through the portal of death someday. It's natural – just as natural as living – and we should be comfortable with it. I wanted to capture some of my feelings about the beauty of Nature and about the ideal of embracing its processes.

So I wrote this little story to tell of my feelings about life. Through their actions and intimate conduct, Maggie and her old husband tell how death should be embraced – though hopefully I will leave you with a surprise at the end of my story. I think life is like that. When you least expect it, there's a nice surprise waiting to tear your heart out and make you realize how wonderful life is and how great it is to be alive.

After writing this story, it happened like Kika hoped it would. I would find the answers about the soul for which I sought and eventually write about that discovery in several efforts. *UNMASKING THE SOUL* analyzes the origin of the soul in essay form. I finished that effort in 2003, though I wrote an initial effort in 1989 or so. Eventually, I rewrote *NEVER BE ASHAMED TO LOVE* too, fitting it with a suitable end. The rewrite was finally completed just this year – 2005 – and the new title is *ALL'S WELL WITH THE WORLD*.

All of my written works – at least nine completed and maybe a few in process - feature very frank discussions about life. The stories, of which I have written four, including this short story, feature not only frank discussions about life, but also frank conduct within life. In a story, one can feature the ideal. In all of my stories, I try to feature the ideal as I see it. I believe that life is divine in that I believe that God is in it. Believing that life is divine, I also believe it is worthy as it is. How could it not be if God is in it? In my stories, I try to feature characters who discuss the divinity and wholesomeness of life and treat life as both divine and wholesome.

In the real world, I think lots of people claim that life is divine, but then they act like it is lacking. **It is like there is a disconnect between the thoughtful and the actual.** People “think” that life is divine and worthy as it is, but they often “act” like life is lacking and some aspects of it should be shunned. In all of my three novels and in the following short story, *I try to feature characters who connect the thoughtful and the actual.* In that, my characters may shock a bit because the standard is to refuse connecting the thoughtful with the actual. At least, that is how I see it.

Be that as it may, enjoy, if you will, my following little story about Maggie and the old man that has been her husband for a lot of years - facing the prospect of one going and the other staying behind. You might have a hankie ready, too. Unless you are one of those with a cold, cold heart, you might need one.

Thanks!

Francis William Bessler
September 22nd, 2005

THE SEVENTH RECORD

“Come here,” he said. “I’d like to talk.”

Her response was quick. “As soon as I get the pie out of the oven.”

“My, how that fresh pie of yours makes this lovely house even lovelier!”

Of course she heard him; and even after all their years together, it still pleased her.

“I’ve been thinking,” he started, after she reached his lounge chair in the living room.

“Yeah, I know,” she quipped. “Whenever you start to think, the white smoke billows up and makes me think another pope has been elected.”

“Ah, come on, Dear, that’s just the electricity of you around my hair. You are something, you know.”

“Sure, sure,” she said. “Next Tuesday you will be 82; and you act like you’re 32.”

“That’s what I want to talk to you about,” he responded. “I don’t want to, but I know I will – can’t help from doing it, shocking you, I mean.”

“What in Heaven’s name, Ole Man, are you talking about?”

“Look,” he said, speaking with warmth and compassion in his eyes and voice, “we have always been true to one another. Right? And we’ve respected each other?”

“For 43 years now,” she answered, expressing the pride of a queen who had just been crowned.

“Well,” he said, pausing a long moment before continuing, “let me just say it straight out like I have always done. We are getting old now, and, well, it’s not likely we will live a whole lot longer.”

“Now, you stop talking like that,” she bristled. “***I have you to know, Ole Man, that we could easily live another twenty years.***”

“But do we want to?” he asked, hesitatingly.

“Why wouldn’t we?” she responded, very curious as to the object of this strange conversation.

“I’d be the first one to want to hold onto life,” he replied, “but, you know, I think it would be really terrific to be able to welcome you on the other side.”

“I’d like that too,” she said, smiling warmly at the old dodger, “but that happens to be entirely out of our hands.”

“Maybe it doesn’t have to be,” he countered.

“Now, you listen hear, Ole Man, you’ve had some crazy ideas in this life, but you’re not suggesting . . . “ She had trouble saying the word, but finally came out with it, “. . . suicide?”

“No, not really. Well, actually maybe a little.”

“Have you gone plumb out of your mind?”

“No, Maggie, I haven’t. Let’s just say I have come to the conclusion we can’t get there from here.”

“What do you mean, can’t get there from here?”

“Well, I mean if I’m to welcome you, I can’t get there before you, to welcome you, I mean, unless I go before you.”

“That’s true enough.”

“Well, let’s get on with it,” he said.

The brow on her forehead lowered half way to her nose. “Get on with death!” she exclaimed.

“Yes,” he replied.

She didn’t know what to say. The old fellow before her had surprised her a lot in life, but never quite like this. “I don’t believe you,” she said, after a long pause.

“Look, Maggie,” he tried to explain, “it has always been my dream to be with you forever, in life and in death and afterwards. I figure it will be more assured that I can be with you at death and afterwards if I am there first. That way I can be there to welcome you.”

“That’s touching. It really is,” she answered, “but I think I just as soon have you here.”

“I’ll still be here,” he said, “at least in spirit. It’s just that I can be there too. Think about it. We’re old and we will be going soon; and if you go first, I won’t be there to welcome you like it’s been my dream to; and if we go together, we may get split up in the confusion. I need to be there first to make sure of what’s going on. I don’t want to lose you. I want to continue this love, you know.”

“Why do you think there will be confusion if we die together?”

“Of course I’m not sure, but like I said, I think we would stand a better chance of avoiding confusion if one of us is there first, to welcome the other, to show the other the way, so to speak, when the time comes. It’s been my dream to be the one waiting on the other side, that’s all.”

“And you wouldn’t think of letting it be me?” She knew he wouldn’t; for he had old fashioned ideas about the man taking care of the lady. So she knew his intent in this latest surprise of a long life of surprises, to die before her so he could serve her in death; and she knew there was no arguing. Like always, he would have his way. It was only a matter of how and when.

“You’re a fool, Ole Man,” she said. “I suppose you have it all figured out how you’re gonna go before me?”

“Maggie, My Love, you know me well.”

“Dare I ask how?”

“I think the best way would be a heart attack.”

His offering surprised her again. Would this man ever stop with the surprises? He was as healthy as any of their sixty year old friends and had never suffered the slightest of heart trouble.

“A heart attack?” she challenged. “You?”

“Why not,” he said. “I’m almost 82.”

“And I have just turned 76 and have had two heart attacks to your zero,” she responded. “I would be the one most likely to go that way.”

“But you’re not the one going. I am.”

“You stubborn old man. You don’t have to remind me; but tell me, you know I must be wondering. How are you, as healthy as you are, going to have a heart attack?”

“The body can take just so much, My Dear, no matter how healthy you are; and, well, my plan is to make mine take more than it can.”

“You have never believed in abusing the body,” she offered. “How are you going to take too much of anything without abusing yourself?”

“I guess I’m ready to make one small exception. I’m sure my body will forgive me for overdoing it, just once.”

“And what are you going to do? Pray tell, I don’t know if I want to hear.”

“You have to hear,” he responded, “because you are going to help me do it, if you will.”

“Oh my! Not only are you insisting on dying, but you’re asking me to help. Ole Man, you are really too much!”

“I can’t do it without you, Kid, I mean the way I plan it.”

“And that plan?”

“Remember when we first met, how I enjoyed dancing for exercise and how I would dance before you to the beat of a rhythmic band like *The Glenn Miller Band* or some good fiddler and how I’d dance at times until I’d drop in my tracks from exhaustion?”

“Yes, I do,” she replied. “You did truly enjoy that, didn’t you?”

“I sure did,” he said. “Well, I have it figured out that at 40 I could take that, but not at 81.”

“And so you plan to dance your way to a heart attack?” she exclaimed. “Not with me as your partner, I don’t think.”

“No. I’m not going to dance my way. I’m going to love my way; and you, My Dear, are going to be the lovee. I’m going to love you to death, Kid - my death, that is.”

“You can’t even get it up anymore, Ole Man. How are you going to love me to death?”

“No, not with that, Maggie – with my hands. I am going to exhaust myself giving you the best massage you’ve ever had.”

“How can it be my best when you plan to make it my last? We’ve always believed the best is yet to come.”

“Well, I guess we have to make another exception,” he stated, matter-of-factly. “We’ll have to make the last the best this time.”

“Dear, I have so much enjoyed your massages over the years, but I don’t think I could enjoy this one, with what you have in mind.”

“Don’t worry, Kiddo,” he said. “I’ll be gentle.”

“Now you know that’s not what I mean,” she stammered.

“Yeah, I know,” he said. “Look, I think we better get on with it – or I’m going to chicken out.”

“You mean right now?”

“I mean right now.”

“But . . .”

“Trust me, OK?” He spoke gently but firmly as he reached over to help her undress. In 43 years of marriage, there had never been a question of purity in this. Even with their children, now grandparents themselves, they acted the same. They had always dressed and undressed before them – and had often assisted each other in the process: *Brother Naked and Sister Nude!*

“You’re asking the impossible, Ole Man,” she said, glancing over his shoulders and catching the reflection of their natural outlines in the big mirror, “but I’ll try to be for you again as I’ve always been. Sir, I’m in love with you. I want you to know that.”

“I do,” he said. “I do.”

She held him close, moving her hands over his body like she had a million times before. Reaching over, she grabbed the bottle of baby oil on the mantle; and opening it, she poured a little on her shoulders and down her front side. The old man gracefully took the bottle from her and returned it to the mantle. Then, while still standing, he slid his gentle hands over her breasts and front side, spreading the baby oil smoothly over her; and then he repeated the action on her back.

Turning her around, his tongue met hers and became entangled for a moment; and then he reached for the bottle again. This time he poured some in his hands and applied it to her lower body, making sure as always that she was fully covered – except for those parts he wanted to kiss. The oil helped him glide over her body and prevented friction between hand and skin. Any masseur or masseuse knows the value.

“Let me make a **farewell drink**,” she told him.

“Not **farewell drink**,” he noted, “*until-we-meet-again drink*.”

She prepared her favorite drink, gin and tonic, and another for him. He was more partial to orange juice and vodka, although the orange juice contained an acid that caused him a bit of heart burn. Meanwhile, he took a sheet out of the linen closet and laid it on the floor. Maggie claimed she could wash the sheet easier than the carpet; and anyway, the bare carpet was less romantic. She liked the feel of the clean sheet under her when he massaged her – and occasionally on warm days, consented to sleep on the floor, totally relaxed after his affectionate care - with nothing but another sheet over them to keep her and her favorite masseur warm.

“I don’t like this, Ole Man!” she said. “I don’t want it! I don’t want to live alone! I can’t live alone! You’re asking too much!” She started to cry.

“I know,” he replied, “maybe too much indeed, considering it’s really a gamble in the first place. We don’t even know for sure that life in the spirit is immortal. Maybe we don’t exist after death.”

“Dear!” she exclaimed. “We have never had such doubts before.”

“I have never faced death before, My Love,” he replied. “I mean, it makes you think. Don’t get me wrong. I really do believe, but, you know, no belief carries with it one hundred percent assurance – or else it would be certain knowledge and would no longer be faith.”

“But you do still believe?” She wanted reassured.

“Absolutely!” he said. “Yes, I do believe.”

“In spite of it being a gamble?” She inquired further.

“A small gamble the way I see it,” he responded. “The chips are really stacked in our favor.”

The talk of Belief was very comforting; and she almost forgot the reality of what her husband was set on doing.

“Here’s to life!” he said, touching his glass to hers.

“And life after death,” she enjoined, her toast more a thought than a feeling. “Here’s to the love we have known and to the love we will always know.”

They came together and embraced; and he fondly lay her down and began. So many times he had done this, giving his wife what he called *the complete treatment – the total expression*. He straddled her now, his haggard but manly form over hers, as she lay on

her front side. She always began in this position and always ended face up. Often, she did him too; and he followed the same procedure.

Having closed her eyes, she was crying again, being aware that this insanity could turn into a nightmare; and yet she let him continue, saying to herself again and again, ***I do believe!*** She wanted to for sure; and in wanting to, perhaps she began to; but she would not deny him nor his courage to take his life and lay it down for her – or for them. How could she say ‘no’ to that kind of love? She knew she couldn’t.

Like it often happened, the old phonograph that played the old 33 1/3 records had been turned on – and seven of their favorite records had been selected. His plan was to massage his wife and hope that by the seventh record, his release would come. He put intensity in his movements even as he kept them graceful. Recently, he had not been able to last two records long, let alone seven. It was a reasonable plan – and exit.

Up and down were his movements, like the good masseur he was – or down and up. Down the outside of her back, gliding with the baby oil, and then over to her spine and up the middle, repeating the motion again and again. The blood flows that way. The old man had long been aware of that.

Go with the flow, he had always believed, in most everything you can. Don’t resist the natural – and don’t try to turn it in another direction. You’ll only end up frustrated and defeated in most cases. The blood of the body travels down the outside and up the inside. Go with the flow of the blood in the body – and any man could be a masseur.

Very often, the old man told his acquaintances that full body massage should be as common place as dinner plates, as simple as they are; however, they do take a lot of strength and effort and even dedication. Perhaps that’s why so few people give them; but this was one man who was dedicated, dedicated to giving his Maggie all she could want, ***the butterfly treatment***, he called it, claiming the form of a butterfly in his movements; and he would often call her his ***Lady Butterfly***.

He had spent the time of three records on her back side, massaging every part he could. Loving every minute as he worked to become exhausted, he took special care following her flesh downwards on her legs and smoothly up the inside to her buttocks, circling up and around and down again. He was tiring, but that was the program.

Hearing the third record ejecting, gently he turned her over and bent down and kissed her on her inviting mouth, making sure the kiss was as flowing as his hands, moist and full of depth. Her tears were evident and he struggled to continue. Heartbreak was not his wish.

This beautiful woman with her gentle body had loved him throughout their life together; and he was finding it difficult to say goodbye. Still, he continued. Again, the motion of a masseur, down the outside and up the inside. He was perspiring heavily and she could see he was getting close to the point of exhaustion. It takes so much strength to continue a body massage for even ten or fifteen minutes; and he had now passed the hour mark.

She looked at him now, almost without flinching; and she loved him and who she was too. Throughout the years, his attention had been guiding; and she knew that she had also guided him. It happens that way when two people flow in the same direction and live the same ideals.

Her breasts, so feminine and endearing to him, gave way to his attention and stood a little erect. Kissing her as he could where there was no baby oil, he followed her outline

with his hands, down the outside of her breasts, continuing down the outside of her slender legs, and over the toes, and up again on the inside of her legs. He could hardly move as he did so and his body ached with a pain he had rarely known.

Throughout the massage, from beginning to end, he would always include in his attention, his wife's virginity. He loved to call it that; and it pleased her as well. Her virginity was always a part of his massage. She, too, included his virginity.

It irritated him, not a little, that people would accuse a person of losing their virginity upon intercourse. From his way of seeing things, nothing could be further from the truth. Virginity means *purity*; and never in the course of true love, can intercourse absolve it. So they both enjoyed viewing their sex as their virginity. Perhaps Adam and Eve lost it; but they never did.

The fifth record had ejected and the sixth had begun. He wanted to rest, but knew he would defeat his purpose if he did. He was groaning a lot now, but neither spoke – as words would have interrupted what could not be spoken. Then the seventh record began. It was a Mozart record, or at least someone was playing a Mozart composition. Maggie loved the flute sound and could pick it out very easily, although she had never been very good at remembering names. She knew it was a Mozart composition, but that's all she knew; and he was too exhausted to be aware of anything around him. Perhaps, though, he sensed that the seventh record was playing. His breathing was harsh and loud; and yet it could hardly be heard above the music.

Drawing himself up beside his wife and laying his head down on her breasts, he knew he could go no more. His back was afire and he anticipated the pain in his chest was the heart attack he sought. He drew himself up and looking into the tear filled face of his Maggie, he whispered, *Goodbye, My Love!* Then he lowered his head and collapsed.

As the Mozart composition began to reach its climax, she prayed: *Father, take good care of him, you hear? He's the best. He's the most wonderful love I've known; and now he's there with you to wait for me; but I don't know what I am going to do without him.*

Her tears were quieter now; and she really didn't feel alone. He said that in spirit he would remain. Maybe that was the explanation. Mozart had finished. Silence took over - and then she heard an exciting sound – the low guttural tone of a familiar snore.

Startled by the sound, but amazed and gratified, she looked down at *Brother Naked*. “*Oh, my God!*” she cried. “*Oh, my God, you're still alive!*”

Her tears were now uncontrolled. She had been reborn at age 76; and in her excitement, she cried the more. “*I have you to know, Ole Man, we could easily live another twenty years!*”

THE END

FROM THE DARK INTO THE LIGHT

(50 Pages)

By
Francis William Bessler

--- A Spiritual Novel ---

Copyright by
Francis William Bessler,
Laramie, Wyoming, U.S.A.
September, 2005

PREFACE

This is a combination of two short philosophical/spiritual stories I wrote in 1980. I began with a story about a lady I named *Priscilla* – offering a tale around her. No need to offer the details because that may spoil the story to come. The title of that first story was ***THE WEDDING GARMENT***.

Then based upon questions that I felt needed resolved that were stimulated by the first story, I wrote a second story and introduced a questioner that I named *Lance*. The name of that story was ***BACKING SATAN INTO THE LIGHT***. My purpose was to attempt to clarify my own perspective of the meaning of life by virtue of having *Lance* question a bit of what *Priscilla* posed in the first story – and then offering *Priscilla* as having to resolve various confusions, felt by *Lance*. Again, I won't offer any details so as to not spoil any of the following story.

Chapters 1 through 4 and 6 of this current effort comprised the initial story – ***THE WEDDING GARMENT***. Chapter 5 of the current effort was Chapter 1 of the second story – ***BACKING SATAN INTO THE LIGHT***. Chapters 6 through 11 of the current effort represented Chapters 2 through 5 of the original second story offering *Lance* as questioner.

Outside of this noted minor rearrangement and a few minor changes, that which now comprises this combined current effort is often literally the texts of the first two works. In offering this story, I want to replicate the two stories told initially. I do not want to make any extreme changes so as to retain whatever integrity that was offered in 1980. As I produce this current full story in 2005, my perspective has changed a little from what it was in 1980, but I want *Priscilla* and *Lance* to remain as they were. Change does occur – and I have changed a little – but people are important for what they were too. It is almost like a form of respect for *Priscilla* and *Lance* that they remain mostly unchanged as I tell their stories in this current effort.

I am calling this consolidation effort ***FROM THE DARK INTO THE LIGHT*** because for me it has been that. It may not be that for anyone else, but for me, beginning somewhat in the dark and thinking my way through things, it has been almost like experiencing a dawn from a previous dark night. It is a lot like staying up for a night and watching a sunrise. I am not promising it will be like that for anyone else, but it has been that way for me. Thus I am calling it as I am.

That is not to say I would write it today just as I wrote it 1980, if I were writing it for the first time today. Oh, I can assure you, I would write it differently because I see things a bit differently today than I did then; but the basic message would be the same. I might slant things a little different, this way or that way, but the overall message would be the same.

And what message is that? ***Life is good as it is. Life is without evil because life is full of God. Evil happens, I think, when we fail to appreciate the Presence of God in all things; but life is essentially good as it is.*** The new *Priscilla* that I might present today might differ a bit on some detail or other, but the old and new *Priscilla* would be the same in the basic message that life is good as it is and that virtue is really only

accepting our goodness and living life fully because of it while refusing to impose our virtue on anyone.

Yes, I might write the story of *Priscilla* different today than I did in 1980 if I were writing that story for the first time; but I love the *Priscilla* of old too. One does not have to tell all in one story. I have written other spiritual stories too since 1980 – though only a couple. *Priscilla* and *Lance* are not the only story in town; but I hope you can take the message of integrity that they offer seriously and attempt to imitate the idea that each of us must make of his or her own life the fulfillment of his or her own dream.

Gently,

Francis William Bessler

Laramie, Wyoming

September 24th, 2005

**FROM THE DARK
INTO THE LIGHT**

Chapter 1

For thirty-eight years, he had been the pastor of the small church on 53rd Street, a church that he himself had founded and for which he had paid the down payment. Legally, it was in his name, although, in spirit, it belonged to his flock. For thirty-eight years, he had preached the *Word of God*, the Gospel of Jesus, the salvation of the Lord. ***“Come unto me all you who are labored and are burdened.”*** He had no idea how many times he had called upon his Lord and called upon his congregation to heed those same words; and certainly he believed them. At times he still cried when he delivered his sermons; and he thought his performance, though it was much more than that to him, caused his flock to keep coming.

Clutching his robe around him, he opened the door and looked out. His dog, Punch, came bounding up to him, wagging her tail and barking sharply. He reached down and fondly patted her on the head. ***“Where do you get all your happiness?”*** he asked. ***“Do you have the Lord in your heart too?”*** He hadn’t meant to startle himself, but he did. ***“Why indeed are you so happy?”*** he asked again, suspecting that the answer may not be acceptable. Punch merely looked up at him, cocked her head, barked again, and then took off racing around the yard.

The Reverend sat down on the small step outside his modest home, a house that was surrounded with trees and flowers and life – no matter which way you looked. At sixty-six, he was sincere, as he had been all his life. His late wife, Martha, and he had enjoyed a happy life until three years previous when his lady had been taken to Heaven to spend the rest of eternity with the Lord. He had almost forgotten how it had happened. Anyway, at the moment, it wasn’t important. He was caught up with the question he dared not try to answer before now. Why was Punch so happy? Why? Why? Why? He kept asking himself.

It almost doesn’t seem fair, he thought. Punch could be so happy while the whole world, far greater than this funny little creature, was mired in tragedy and despair and disease. Momentarily he challenged the doctrine: ***man is supposed to hurt to become purified in the Lord.*** His thoughts went back to Punch, still running and bounding and panting.

“Come here, Boy,” he said. He always called her ‘Boy,’ even though she was a girl; but regardless of title, she obeyed with the same enthusiasm as before she was called. Why couldn’t he get his parishioners to respond with equal enthusiasm for the *Word* he preached? His thoughts again wandered to the edge of heresy. Perhaps Punch had the key. Perhaps Punch would make the better pastor of the two of them.

Looking up, he saw the car approaching the fence alongside the front side walk. It would be nice to see his grandkids again. Martha and he had seventeen of them, but only these three lived close enough to make visits easy. Grampa was the first in line to be hugged, but Punch was their more exciting interest; and the three pursued Punch like she was one of them.

“Hi, Dad!” she said, as she reached over and kissed him tenderly. “It’s so good to see you out here in your bathrobe. In fact, it’s a real joy. Mark said to say hi. He’ll come over later to mow the lawn. Is the coffee ready?”

“Coming right up,” he replied. “You want it here or in the house?”

“I think I’d like to sit out here with you awhile, Dad, if you don’t mind.”

“Not at all,” he responded. “I’ll be right back.”

Priscilla sat down on a front step and felt good in doing so. Like usual, she wore jeans. She didn’t like them tight, though; for neither she nor Mark enjoyed wearing underwear anymore than necessary; and tight pants for her was the same as wearing panties. She liked to stay loose and was very fond of her looseness; although she would be the first to admit that her motivation was far more spiritual than physical. Some call it freedom. She called it a feeling of blessedness.

On this Saturday morning she did not stay alone for long, as her three young ones came to show off before her and Grampa. Davy tried to do cartwheels and fell flat on his stomach. Blaming Punch for tripping him, he retreated to the back yard to tend to his wounded pride with Punch loyally at his heels.

Dawn and Marie picked some marigolds and offered them to Priscilla. “Well, thank you,” she said. “My, how pretty!”

“Could you get the door for me, Dawn?” Grampa had his hands full, three glasses of orange juice and two hot cups of coffee.

“Davy, you want some juice?” Priscilla shouted.

“I’ll be right there,” was the response; and less than half a minute later, Punch and he came running.

“Thank you,” Davy said, as he grabbed his glass; and the girls echoed his politeness.

“Is it OK if I ask him now, Mom?” Marie was spawning as a teenager and she felt it was her right to be the one to ask.

“Sure, Honey,” was the reply.

“Grampa, we’re going to camp out next weekend – and we were hoping you could join us.”

“Now, that sounds inviting,” he responded. “Give me a day or two to think it over. OK?”

“It would be so much more fun with you, Grampa,” added Dawn. “Please?”

“Well, my dear, I would sure like to, but you know I’m a preacher and I have Sunday responsibilities. It would all depend upon my finding someone to fill in for me.”

“We understand, Grampa. Certainly we know that. Would it be hard to find someone?” Priscilla was as eager as the kids.

“Thanks for the juice, Grampa.” Davy was ready to go back to the demanding exercise of playing with Punch.

“You’re welcome, Boy,” was the response.

“Why don’t you girls find something too?” suggested Priscilla as she motioned as if to point to some imaginary place in the distance. “Grampa and I would like to be alone for awhile. OK?”

“OK, Mom. Come on, Dawn, let’s go check out Connie if it’s not too early for her. It probably isn’t, though, cause more than likely she’s watching cartoons.” Connie was the girl next door; and they often played together. Dawn did not hesitate as she handed Mom her empty glass and ran after her older sister.

“Dad, I can tell there’s something wrong. What is it?” Priscilla had captured the pensive mood of her father; and she was eager to find out his state of mind.

“Nothing’s wrong, Dear, nothing’s wrong – but I guess you found me thinking this morning.”

“What do you mean, this morning, Dad? You tell me when you haven’t done a lot of that.”

“Oh, I don’t know, Sweetheart, maybe not enough.”

“Why, what are you thinking about anyway?” Priscilla was no closer to the truth than the moment before.

“Prissy?”

“Yes, Dad.”

“Why is Punch so happy?”

“Punch?” she questioned. “Your dog, Punch?”

“Yes, my dog, Punch.”

“Why not?” was her reply. This was not like Dad to concern himself with matters like this. Usually his conversation was about the kids or the congregation or the weather or Mark, anything but Punch.

“I’m confused,” he admitted. “We’re supposed to be happy. We’re supposed to be contented and grateful; and yet, I’m willing to bet you, Prissy, that this morning the only one contented and grateful on this whole block was Punch. What does she have that we don’t? I’m serious now. I really want to know.”

“Well, Dad, you have kind of caught me off guard. I, I really don’t know what to say.”

“Oh, I think you do, Prissy. You are more like Punch than anyone I know.”

“Well, thanks,” she quipped. “Should I lick your face?”

“No! Just tell me what I want to know.” He was insistent and refused to be sidetracked. “You know I am a preacher and I know all the pat answers and my congregation keeps coming and coming. Yet, none of them is even half as contented with his lot as Punch. Again, Sweetheart, what does she have that we don’t?”

“She doesn’t have what you just said you have, Dad. She doesn’t have confusion.”

“Confusion? Boy, that’s true,” he responded.

“But neither does she have the power to think, Dad. I would rather be confused and have the power to think than to be think-less and thank-full like Punch.”

“You always did have a way with words,” he responded. “Think-less and thank-full?” The Reverend wasn’t sure. “Is it better to be think-full and thank-less than think-less and thank-full?” He was caught up with this play with words.

“Now, come on, Dad, there’s nothing wrong with being think-full, as you call it, and thank-full too.”

“No, there isn’t, is there?” he replied. “That’s what you are. You have more than most of us. You’re thank-full as Punch and thoughtful as a human being should be.”

“Well, I insist on knowing my own mind, if that’s what you mean. To be honest, and that’s what you’re asking, isn’t it, I can’t say that any of your congregation could stand on their own two feet if they didn’t have someone to preach to them every Sunday.”

“You’re probably right,” he said. “You know, Prissy, I can’t think of anything more tragic; and I am really beginning to question my usefulness, any preacher’s usefulness.”

Perhaps we confuse more than we clarify. Maybe Punch is ahead of us, not behind us, because she can't be confused with ideas."

"I don't think that's it, Dad." Priscilla was very much an idea person, even though as much so a person of strong will. She believed in ideas; and she believed we are here on earth to find them, to discover them. The problem as she saw it is that mankind as a whole is scared of ideas, scared of new ways, scared of maybe getting lost while searching for the truth. She tried to explain. "I think Punch is ahead of us, as you say, Dad, and not behind us, not because she can't be confused with ideas, but rather because each day is a new adventure for her. She is merely caught up with her new adventure of every day. That's what makes her happy."

"But she does the same thing, day after day," countered her father. "Why doesn't she get bored?"

"Would you if you weren't in need of more dimensions in life, Dad?"

"What do you mean?"

"I think Punch can be satisfied because she's not in need of the world outside these fences that surround your yard. She can take it or leave it. She can be happy inside a fence or outside of it. Now, if men were dogs, they could be satisfied inside of fences, but we're not. To treat us like dogs is to do a great disservice to us. What makes Punch happy can not possibly make us happy."

"You think I treat my parish like dogs?" he asked, somewhat upset at the thought.

"Or like sheep," she responded. "You treat a man like a sheep or a dog, same difference, he will act like one and he'll never come to know he's a man and not a dog or a sheep. Sheep and dogs can still be themselves with fences and dictators. Man cannot."

"Priscilla!"

"It's true, Dad. At least I think it is."

"But what about the forces of darkness?"

"We're not dogs, Dad. We're not sheep. Let us be human. Take away the fences. We can handle it."

The Reverend was hurt. Could it be he was the reason that men are like sheep and not like the image and likeness of God? Could it be the shepherd shouldn't be a shepherd? Could it be? "You puzzle me," he said, after pondering his crisis for a moment. "But even if you're right, what can I do about it now?"

"Maybe if you feel I'm right at this time next week, you can stop preaching, Dad. You won't find an argument with Mark or the kids, you know. They are hoping you can join us on our camping trip." She said this half in jest; for she certainly did not intend to suggest that he should give up his way of life.

He thought for a moment. "I hate to say it, but I have to admit that I am inclined to agree with you," he sighed. "Maybe it's true that by letting my sheep keep coming week after week, they're not getting stronger – just more dependent. I am supposed to be in the business of saving souls, of helping people fly; and all I'm doing is keeping them in their nest."

"Now, Dad, don't be too hard on yourself. You're as great an entertainer as the best of them, you know." This was no surprise. For years, Priscilla had called preachers primarily entertainers and often raised the ire of her father for her candidness.

"Entertainers!" he exclaimed. "Yeah, that's what we are. You've been right all along. Only we don't have the guts or clarity of mind to admit it. We fool ourselves into

believing our voices will bring redemption to others; and all the time, we are just claiming a spotlight.”

“Dad!”

“Don’t Dad me,” he said. “You know you are very convincing.”

“I have gone off at the mouth a lot, Dad. You know that, but I’ll not hear of your talking like this.” Priscilla was both surprised at this change of heart and worried a little too.

“Oh, you won’t, huh?” he countered. “Well, for your information, this is one entertainer who has spent his last day on stage. I’m no good for them, Prissy. You know that. I’m only prolonging their weakness by prolonging their dependence on someone outside themselves. They have the **BIBLE**. Let them find their own truth!”

“But, Dad, you need them as much as they need you.”

“That’s a reason to continue entertaining, Girl? Hardly! I mean it, Prissy. I founded this church and I will also close its doors.”

“How soon do you plan on doing that?” she asked, still a bit unbelieving.

“I told you before, Prissy; and I meant it before. I have preached my last sermon. Maybe Punch should give the next sermon, the last sermon. To be happy is to be yourself. That could be her theme. Or how about you?” The Reverend startled Priscilla.

“Me? You’re kidding! I haven’t been to church for years!”

“That’s precisely why it should be you. You have more to offer than anyone I know, besides Punch of course.” He chuckled a little, and then once again, became serious. “You’re independent. You’re strong. You’re convicted and convincing. You’re in love. You’re happy. Surely, someone like you should be the one to truly and properly close the temple doors.”

“You’re really serious, aren’t you?” Priscilla was both impressed and frightened at the same time. The thought that her father trusted her was a bit overwhelming, considering their disagreements of the past. The thought of standing in a pulpit terrified her a little; and the thought that her father was even serious was somewhat surprising, although the shock of his sudden decision had already worn off.

“Dad, I can’t . . .”

“Oh, yes, you can; and you are. You owe it to all of us.” He promptly rose, halting further discussion, and retreated indoors.

Dumbfounded, Priscilla sat there. She couldn’t be a preacher. She was a preacher’s daughter, yes, but that was not being a preacher. She’d be about as much at home preaching from her father’s pulpit as a cat in a bathtub. “Damn!” she thought, and lowly muttered the same while creasing her fingers over her perplexed eyebrows. What would she say?

“What can I say?” she shouted to her father through the screen door.

“That’s up to you, Sweetheart; but I trust the way you have always criticized prepared sermons that you’ll choose to speak from the heart.”

Now that she was faced with having to talk without a crutch, her father’s reminding her of her past mind was not welcome.

Chapter 2

“Mark, I can’t make up my mind about what to wear tomorrow.” Priscilla was searching through her closet and coming up with blanks.

“You certainly have enough to pick from,” was his reply, as he poked his head out of the bathroom. “I am going to take a shower and after that I’ll help you pick out something. Alright?”

“OK,” she responded, “but it’s got to be something appropriate.” She began pushing her dresses aside as she rejected each one. The blue gingham was really very pretty, too pretty, she thought. The pink and blue floor length one kept her gaze for a moment. No, she thought to herself, too formal. The green sundress was too short; and the strapless red was too bright – and perhaps a bit too risqué.

Then her eyes caught a glimpse of her wedding dress, shoved clear over to the edge of her closet. She hadn’t put on much weight since the first time she wore it sixteen years ago. Maybe she could still fit into it. Soon the notion became a challenge; and she quickly disrobed for the trial.

“Mom, are you trying on your old wedding dress?” Marie had been watching her mother through the open door of the bedroom.

“I thought you were asleep by now,” was her reply. “It’s almost ten o’clock. What are you doing still awake?”

“I couldn’t sleep, Mom. I guess I’m too excited about your giving the sermon tomorrow.”

“Well, since you’re still awake, you might as well come in and help me try this thing on.” Priscilla did not need any help, but it gave her an opportunity to be friends again with her daughter; and she was thankful for the chance.

Soon Marie was standing in front of her mother, ready to be her assistant and play the judge. Both mother and daughter were without apparel; and together, they made a beautiful scene. All three of Mark and Priscilla’s kids were as fond of their naturalness as their parents were of their own. Seldom did any of this family wear pajamas to bed.

Marie had lately started her stretch toward adulthood; and after the initial embarrassment, had become very comfortable with the whole process. This was a unique family in that even the normally private processes were shared. Priscilla was largely responsible; for her nature and her love of it was a force that refused to let her keep anything to herself. Consequently, her own self comfort had become contagious; and her excitement was now shared by all, from Mark to Davy.

Priscilla was stepping into the wedding gown when Mark appeared with towel draped over his shoulders and his hands moving his tooth-brush vigorously up and down. “I didn’t know you were getting married,” he joked. “Who’s the lucky man?”

“It won’t be you,” she giggled. “You’re too hairy and I like my love smooth like this one here.” Reacting to the fond embrace of her mother, Marie was ready to say, ‘I do.’

“God, it’s been a long time!” Mark was eager to see his wife in the wedding gown. “Come on, what are you waiting for? Let’s get that thing on. I think I’m falling in love all over again.”

Priscilla had stopped to hug Marie and had let the wedding gown slip to the floor. She reached down and picked it up and slowly slipped her arms into the sleeves. The white collar fit snug to her neck; and Marie zipped up the back.

She looked into the mirror and made her decision. “You know, guys, I think I’m gonna wear this tomorrow.”

“Mom, you’re not serious?”

“I think I am.”

“What on earth for, Honey?”

“Because, Babe, I feel pure. This gown even makes me look that way. I want to leave Dad’s congregation with that same feeling. So, why not wear my wedding dress? I think I’ll even make that my theme, I mean something to do with a wedding. It’s really a glorious thing, right?”

“At least ours was,” Mark agreed. “If you’ll let me kiss the bride tomorrow, I’ll have no objections.”

“Why wait for then?” she said, as she threw herself at her naked husband. Mark’s body responded against the whiteness of his wife’s apparel. Marie noticed and smiled at her father.

“She did the same thing sixteen years ago, Marie. Would you believe it! When she puts on that white gown, I go crazy!” He made gestures like he were a beast and noises like one as well.

Marie joined in; and together she and Priscilla threw Mark on the floor and were tickling him. His laughter rang with enthusiasm; and Priscilla forgot for a moment about the dress. However, recognizing that she was wrestling in her wedding gown, she halted her activity and quickly took it off.

“Keep him down, Marie, until I get this thing off.” Then she resumed the posture of before and the laughter returned.

“What are you guys doing anyway?” Dawn and Davy were standing over them.

“Look who’s still awake, Priscilla. Join us if you want you two little bumpkins,” he said, as he waved for them to pile in. Dawn and Davy responded gleefully to their father’s invitation; and now it was Priscilla who was the one getting it. Five naked beings, tumbling and rolling and having a ball. This was ordinary activity for this family; and they never tired of it. Perhaps it was the *Punch* in them.

“Hey, I don’t know about any of you, but I have to get up and preach a sermon tomorrow.” Priscilla was ready to quit. She struggled to her feet and collapsed on the couch. “Let me catch my breath,” she said, “and then I’ll get us each a glass of pop and it’s off to bed with you.”

Mark decided to banter her a little bit. “Me too?”

“No, Mark, you can stay up and watch the late movie if you want,” she replied, as she chuckled and left for the kitchen.

While Priscilla was preparing the drinks, Mark offered an idle suggestion. “Hey, Preacher!” he taunted. “I think if you want to leave your Dad’s congregation with a feeling of purity, you should wear what you have on. That’s a whole lot purer than the wedding dress.” Mark did not intend his remarks to be taken seriously, but a seed had been planted that Priscilla would not easily let go.

“I wonder if I could really pull that off,” she said, as she offered the four of them their drinks.

Marie was eager to tell her sister. “Dawn, Mom’s gonna wear her wedding dress tomorrow!”

“Really?”

“Yeah, you are, aren’t you, Mom?”

“I’m seriously considering it. I’m not sure I’d have the courage when it came right down to it, though.”

Davy was puzzled. “Why would you wear a wedding dress, Mom, to give a sermon?”

“Your mother wants to leave a grand impression, Son. You should know your mother by now. There’s nothing usual about her.”

“But why a wedding dress? I don’t get it.”

“Sweetheart, it’s either that or this: that white wedding dress or this natural nakedness,” Priscilla said, as she motioned to her body. “How would you like your mom to stand naked in front of all those people?” But Priscilla was becoming more serious with every remark.

“Mark, would you stand by me if I did?”

“Did what? Go naked?”

“Yes. I’m not saying I will or even that I want to. I’m just asking, will you stand by me if I should choose to do so?”

“I think you do want to, don’t you? Sure,” he replied, nodding his approval.

“Thank you, Mark. Thanks to all of you. I love you all so much!” Her voice was breaking with emotion. “I couldn’t do it without you very well. You know that, don’t you?” She embraced her three little adults warmly while her bigger adult companion looked on.

“We love you too, Mom. I’d be nervous, but if you want, I’ll take mine off too.” Dawn comforted her mother; and Priscilla started to weep.

Her thoughts were beginning to jell now. The *wedding gown* and the *nakedness*. Both had to play a part in her sermon tomorrow. Somehow, she had to tell her secret, their secret, through these two things. Somehow, she had to find a way to tell it like she felt it, without compromise. Her family was with her, even Dawn and Davy, who had at best only a slight understanding of their mother’s principles; but Priscilla didn’t worry at all about their lack of understanding at this time in their lives. They would soon enough; and that was all the comfort she needed to follow through the next day.

Chapter 3

Looking at his watch, the Reverend noticed it was almost 9:55, just five minutes to go before he would break the news to what would certainly be a shocked congregation. Priscilla had called him and told him of her plans. He argued at first, but later realized he had given her the green light to handle her chore the best she knew how.

Unlike usual, he had not stood at the entrance of his church to greet his parishioners. He wasn't sure why. He just didn't feel like doing it. Maybe it was because he was upset with himself for the burden he was giving his daughter.

Not normally an impulsive person, he had acted impulsively in his decision to close what he referred to as the temple. He was so sure it was the thing to do when he was sitting on the steps with Priscilla yesterday. Now he wasn't; and if he had not given the responsibility to Priscilla, he would have probably treated the day as just another Sunday in a sequence of many normal Sundays to come. Perhaps he knew that; or at least sensed it; and that's why he had delegated the responsibility to his daughter.

Priscilla always came through. She was dependable and as unbendable as the oak tree in his back yard; but he hadn't counted on her imagination.

Sharply at ten, the organ began; and the choir in the loft at the back of the church sang out loudly:

*Precious Lord, take my hand. Lead me on. Help me stand.
I am tired. I am weak. I am worn.
Through the storm, through the night, lead me on to the light.
Take my hand, Precious Lord, lead me home.*

Priscilla sat with her family in the front pew. Strangely, she was not afraid. If she had been alone, she probably would have been, but she had her family; and she knew she could flop and they'd still be there, comrades all. But family support or not, Priscilla would have still gone through with it, simply because she believed in her principles; and it was her principles that convicted her and gave her command of her soul.

Davy was a little disappointed that he had not been granted the privilege of sitting by his mother. The girls sat adjacent to her; and he had to settle for the left of his father. He wished a little that Dad was the one to give the sermon. He wouldn't have felt as much the outsider he was feeling now if that were the case. Still, he felt deeply proud of Mom.

The first hymn had ended and now the whole congregation was bid by Grampa to stand and sing, ***I LOVE TO TELL THE STORY***. Priscilla used to know it from days when she was a regular and maybe she could remember the words; but she doubted that her family would. So, she stayed silent as the congregation raised their voices in song:

*I love to tell the story of unseen things above,
Of Jesus and His glory, of Jesus and His love.
I love to tell the story because I know 'tis true.
It satisfies my longing as nothing else can do.*

“We have with us today some special guests.” The hymns had ended and Grampa was speaking. “I am especially honored that our guests are none other than my daughter, Priscilla, and her family.” The Reverend had almost forgotten the opening prayer and the readings from the scriptures. He knew it was no ordinary Sunday, even if no one else did. He caught himself in time. “Before we continue, let us remember the Lord in prayer. Let us bow our heads.

“Oh, Lord, we come before you as weaklings wanting to be made strong. We know in your grace we can.” He could go no further.

Normally, he would have gone on with this prayer for several minutes and then would have read from the scriptures – but not today. He sensed he was the weakling of his prayer because he wanted to be. He wanted them to be. It gave him a sense of importance. He had wanted their dependence; and they had remained his children. He knew he could no longer want that and he knew he could not continue with words he could no longer feel.

He was put out with himself that he had not realized what he was doing before now. Why couldn't Punch have lived thirty-five years ago? Why wasn't her message revealed to him before now? The Reverend was unhappy with himself – yet insistent to get on with the process of restoring God's children to Him by letting them go free; but he was grateful he did not have to come up with the words.

“Friends,” he said, extending his arms out in his familiar good shepherd gesture, “I spoke before of our guests. Well, my daughter is more than that today. I have asked and she has accepted to say a few words about a very important event in the life of this church.” Without any further preparation, he motioned for his daughter to take over. “Priscilla, would you, please?”

Caught by surprise, Priscilla rose as her father bid. She hadn't expected it to be so sudden; and she fully expected her father to announce the closing himself. The crowd was before her as she walked up to her father, standing next to the podium; and they embraced as father and daughter. Not certain at all of what she would say and how she would handle it, she preferred to start at the podium. It would at least provide her some support to lean on and maybe even something to hide behind for a moment or two.

Many of the ladies in the congregation realized for the first time that Priscilla had on a wedding dress. Expecting her to make some statement about this very important event the Reverend spoke of, they mostly assumed her strange dress had something to do with that. She was a very pretty lady, always had been; but many of them thought and spoke between themselves that she was too wild and free. She had admitted to some of them that she didn't wear underclothes and that she loved to weed the garden naked. *Imagine that!*

Priscilla was a girl with a reputation, an ill one; and had it not been for her father's legally owning the church property, there may have been movements initiated years ago to ask him to leave. Not having any power to do anything about it, they chose to ignore Priscilla.

Before Martha died, Priscilla had been a good regular member of the First Congregational Church on 53rd Street. What they didn't know was that it was her mother's slow, painful death that in the end set the daughter free.

Priscilla had been having doubts about some elements of her faith when her mother had taken ill; and she was sure her mother's illness was due to her lack of faith. Throughout her mother's illness, she fought the guilt complex; though she never once gave up her love of God and her love for the precious gift of life. Her mother had held onto life long enough for Priscilla to realize that she was allowing herself to be bothered by evil spirits, who falsely accused her of treachery.

Upon recognition that the cause of her depression was from without and not from God, Who she felt to be loving and forgiving rather than vengeful and suppressing, she quietly had taken command of her soul and whispered to the evil spirits that they had been found out. They were no more. For the first time in months, she was able to sleep soundly. It was on that same night that her mother yielded and gave up her fight. Before falling asleep, Priscilla had asked for the same, that her mother be spared further suffering.

Priscilla often wondered if the events of that night may have actually happened in reverse. Maybe her mother had passed into the world of spirit at eight in the evening and was the comforter who had come to her in the night; yet her body wasn't pronounced dead until two the next morning. Perhaps her mother's spirit was even present on this occasion. Regardless, Priscilla was truly free.

Chapter 4

Searching the faces of the congregation, Priscilla could tell the suspense was there; and she knew that because it was, it was right for her to be here. It was so apparent that these people had so little in their lives that they had to depend upon this church on 53rd Street to offer them solace. Hopefully, she could start to change that.

“My father loves you all,” she began, with an emotional tone in her voice. “I love you too. You are aware, many of you are at least, of my candidness. So, let me continue with the reputation.

“This will be the last service of its kind to ever be held here in this church.” The old man, bent over in the back pew, bolted upright. As usual, he had been attending service because he had nothing better to do; and he really enjoyed the friendliness of many of these good people after church service. It was, in fact, his reason for coming. In that moment, he felt forsaken.

“Dad considers himself lowly and unable to set you free himself,” she continued, “and that’s why he asked that I be the one to do that. He recognizes that only the free can truly dispense freedom; and he knows that he’s not any more free than most of you; but he’d like to be; and in that, perhaps, he’s a little ahead. On the other hand, I am free; and so I can talk to you about it.

“I’m not going to pretend to be anything more than I am. I would not have anything to gain by that; and certainly, you wouldn’t either. It has been said that the truth sets us free. That may be true to some degree, but in my life, I have achieved freedom only after I have willed it. That would say that it’s will and not truth that sets us free.

“The question is, do you have the will to be free?” She hesitated a moment before continuing, allowing each of her listeners the time to answer the question for themselves. Doubtless, most of them couldn’t answer the question before them and were likely asking another: is it right to be free?

“Do you have the will to be free?” she repeated. “You all have to answer that for yourself. No one else can do it for you. You can choose freedom or imprisonment, whichever you want. It’s your choice, but my father has decided that he will no longer be party to your imprisonment. If you choose to be imprisoned by another rule and another church, that’s your choice, but perhaps it’s no accident that the free shall seek the free and the bound will seek the bound.”

Her father was impressed. Priscilla was coming through again.

Fully aware that she had their attention, and maybe even their respect, as temporary as it might be, Priscilla moved from behind the podium to stand in front of them. “Many have talked of freedom,” she continued, “but few know what it is. What is it really? It’s the will to enjoy. At least that’s what it is for me. It’s not the truth of enjoyment. Oh, I know truth helps – and I too seek it. I always have and I always will, but the real key to being free is having the will to be something.

“The key to becoming someone is to want it first and then to will it. Will is more than want in that want is a desire; and will is the action to realize it. Lots of us want

happiness, but few of us really will it. Few of us really go after it. My father suspects that many of you don't will for yourselves what you want in life; and that's why he's going to take away his church, which he now views as an obstacle to your finding, not truth, but the way of happiness in your own lives.

"The truth alone does not set you free. I'm here to tell you. Truth may support the process, but the will sets you free. The will is the cake and the truth is the frosting, not the other way around. Think about your lives before you go to find another church. Is that what you truly want? Make sure it is before you do it. Think about what you want as your commitment; and then go after it.

"I am not here to command your commitment. I can only suggest. Your commitment is your own; and your commitment will become your wedding. That's why I wore this wedding dress today, because it is a symbol of will, the will any of us must have to live in freedom. It's commitment, too, but that doesn't take away from the freedom.

"You must choose your wedding. I have chosen mine. Oh sure, I am wed to Mark and my family; but the wedding I am speaking of is far greater than that; and for me, it's the greater wedding that makes the lesser wedding possible.

"My real wedding garment is under this wedding dress. It's not the wedding dress itself. I have no shame for the garment underneath, as I view it as a gift of God; and who in his right mind can be ashamed of a gift? I did not make it. God did. I'm only using it; and to be anything less than openly grateful is to be less than what I should be. We are all the same in body – for the most part. It's the soul in us that varies mostly. You cannot see my soul. It's invisible and it's mine; and even if I wanted to, I couldn't share my soul with any except with those who are like me – in terms of sharing a common perception.

"It's because of the wide variety of souls out there in the world that I cannot do this everywhere; but to make a point, I will to share with you all today my real wedding garment." She motioned to Marie to assist her.

The crowd had come to know Priscilla; and it was not surprised at what she would do next. **Poor thing! The devil was responsible!** Here in their own church, Satan was at work. So, many of them thought. Priscilla claimed no shame. They had been warned about that. A soul can be hardened beyond the point of retrieval.

Awaiting her cue, Marie had been ready since the service began. She was extremely proud she could be part of this jubilation, perhaps the only real jubilation happening at this hour in all the many services being held. She couldn't help but have unsteady hands as she tried to find the zipper head hidden beneath the collar of her mother's wedding dress.

The crowd grew tenser as Marie fumbled for the zipper. Maybe Priscilla should have said something while waiting to be disrobed, but she didn't. The silence was somewhat disturbing. Finally Marie stopped shaking enough to catch hold of the zipper head; and the rest was easy. The gown slipped off; and it was apparent that Priscilla had no use for panties.

Standing proudly naked in Mother Nature's beautiful gift, she took the wedding dress and tossed it into the middle of the stage. Priscilla and Marie looked one another in the eyes before Marie returned to her seat. Marie had tears in her eyes, tears of joy and gratitude, not tears of shame or embarrassment; and she whispered, "Mom, we love you."

The congregation sat in awe, in unbelieving awe. No one left, though Priscilla suspected that many would tell the tale differently at dinner time that evening. Many of them glanced to their pastor, sitting quietly up on the right hand side of the stage, hoping this had been a surprise to him and hoping he would put a halt to this outrage. The Reverend was aware of their petition, but he paid them no attention.

Again, Priscilla had triumphed. Again, she did not feel embarrassed, nor was she afraid in any way of continuing with her action. “This is my real *Wedding Garment*,” she said, as she cupped her hands and put them over her breasts, “and this and this and this and this.” Moving from breasts to thighs to legs and up to the face, she touched her body. Just standing naked wouldn’t have been enough. She had to show that extra dimension of her will; but she willed to go no further.

“This is what I’m wedded to, this beautiful thing we call our body. I have stripped today to show you I really have no bodily shame. I am not telling you that you shouldn’t, though. Again, that’s up to you to decide. Just don’t let anyone decide it for you. You must choose your shame as I have chosen mine. I would have been ashamed not to do what I have done. For me to have finished this talk without disrobing would have been shameful because it would have been an expression of shame, a shame that I do not have; for shame is nothing more than doing what you feel you shouldn’t or not doing what you feel you should.

“I cannot decide your shame anymore than I can decide your will. What I have done is not an example of general conduct. Rather it is only an example of private will.”

Viewing his wife from his privileged position, Mark loved her all the more. He felt proud she was sharing her gift to him with others only because it was her decision to do so. He had lost nothing; and his gain was immense; for her purity was also his own.

“I’d like to talk just a little about someone I have come to know because I first had the will to find him: my father.” Pointing to her father, she added, “I suppose you think I am talking about Dad over there, but that is not who I am talking about. I am talking about a father in spirit. I love my Dad, but I am my father. That’s one beautiful truth I have found in life, but I couldn’t have found it if I hadn’t willed it in the first place. My will set me free to find my identity. It was not the truth of my father that first set me free, but my will to find him.

“However, in finding my father, I also found yours. My father and I are one like your fathers and you are one; but contrary to what I believed earlier in life, our fathers are not one. It’s a belief I have, and I’m not telling you it should be yours, but I believe we all have one two-fold birth – one of the flesh and one of the spirit or soul. Mom and Dad provide the flesh, but an individual spirit – or maybe spirits - provide the soul. Both the flesh and the spirit exist independent of each other; and the one in no way depends upon the other for its individual existence. The soul uses the body, but has its own life.

“Like the body comes forth from another flesh, the soul comes forth from another soul; and each of us has a different soul for a father just like we each have different bodily parents. Otherwise, we would all be born the same, have the same feelings, the same disposition, the same awareness. Clearly we don’t have the same disposition, the same feelings, the same awareness. So, clearly we are born of different feelings or of souls having different feelings.

“Now the spirit or soul from whom I come passes on all his or her or its attitudinal traits. Whatever he or she or it is, I become; and I am given birth to satisfy something in

my parent spirit. The very reason I exist is to be an expression of my father; and being his expression, he gives me an identity that never dies. So, to find my father, all I need to do is look at me; for all the attitudinal traits that are in him have been born in me. Truly, my father and I are one as you and yours are one.

“Keep in mind, however, that when I say ‘father,’ that can be interchanged with ‘mother’. I referenced ‘father’ just to keep my offering simple, but my soul can come just as much from a mother soul as a father soul. In my case, since I am a woman, it would probably be better to say that I am a reflection of my mother. But that’s not important. It is not an issue of sex. It’s simply an issue of soulful origin in general. In general, my spiritual soulful parent and I are one, just as you and your spiritual soulful parent are one.”

Priscilla could tell they did not want to hear this now. The body they could relate to, the spirit they could not; and yet they would have claimed they were in the spirit and Priscilla, with her nakedness, obsessed with the body. Marie was interested and so was Mark, but Dawn and Davy were become anxious to get on with the days activities outside the church; and their fidgeting was obvious.

Knowing it was a gamble that might lose her audience, Priscilla decided to touch on one more concept before going back to comment further on her *Wedding Garment*. “I don’t know, but I believe,” she said, “that what I cannot gain for my parent spirit in this life will have to be gained by those to whom I will give spirit birth. That’s one reason I must do the best I can in this life in whatever I will to do. If I don’t, my children in spirit will have to do what I didn’t. It is for me to pave the way for them. My responsibility is not only to my parent spirit, but to my future children spirits as well. It becomes my responsibility to make a world here that I should want to send my spirit children to.

“I think it is very possible that my own soul can choose to be born again in this world, but given that my soul may give birth to children souls who come in my place, it only makes sense to make straight the way, as it were, for my children souls by doing the best I can to leave them a good world in which to enter. Even if I should be the one to reenter – and again, I personally believe that is likely – the best thing I can do for the future me is to get the current me right. I will have to inherit the world I leave behind. Who wants to inherit a mess? But if it’s a mess I leave, then it will be a mess I will inherit.

“Regardless of all the details, none of which any of us know for sure, and about all of which all of us are guessing, in my view of things, you have to decide for your parent spirit and I have to decide for mine. That is why I exist as a soul – to give pleasure or expression to my parent spirit. I am bound and determined to make the most out of this experience; and I am willing to enjoy my life. This is my will as it is my parent spirit’s will; but you are free if you want to be. If it’s not your parent spirit’s will, you can make it be. If your parent spirit did not have the vision to be correct in his or her or its life, you can have; and you can share that vision with him or her or it.

“There’s nothing magic about it. It’s just an act of the will. You have the power to redeem, as it were, not only yourself, but your parent spirit as well; and that’s all because you and he or she or it are one. At least until one of you cuts the other off, you are each other’s interest.

“Keep in mind, these are only my personal beliefs. I am not saying they should be yours. I don’t wish to bore you with my beliefs,” she commented, as she stepped down from the stage – slowly moving toward her family, sitting in the front pew. “I do love

you as my father loves you; and I only want what you should will for yourselves. I'm here in the flesh, but it's my soul that makes me move. My soul wills that I restrict myself to my family. I have no desire to be shared physically by anyone other Mark and Marie and Dawn and Davy."

Standing directly in front of her loved ones, she deliberately embraced and kissed each one of them, one by one. Then she returned to the stage.

Again, there were silent accusations from the crowd. *Was she agreeing to incest? Would she dare to claim as right her kids making love to her? Why wasn't she clearer as to what she meant?* Priscilla had no intentions of being so. Her relationship with her children was too an act of will for her as was everything else. It was more than a concept. It was a movement; and it needed no definition or apology.

"I am lucky," she said, as she reached center stage. "I have been blessed, or is it that my will has blessed me? Mark and I are compatible in will; or else we would not stand a chance together. I would divorce him and set him free to find one who is compatible in will with him. Two people living together cannot live in peace going in different directions.

"So, as you leave here today in a few minutes, think about your direction; and be sure of your acquaintances before you make them companions. Hitch-hikers are of no use to anyone.

"Talking of hitch-hikers, be aware of spirit hitch-hikers. There are many spirits who want to be parent spirits for one reason or another and can't be or don't choose to be. Perhaps there are no bodies available for use. Not having a body to use for the reason they want, perhaps they have to resort to hitch-hiking. Leastwise, reason might dictate the same. So, they might hang around you and use your body until they have a body of their own.

"What that does for us who are in the body is that we have to constantly be on the alert for the presence of spirits alien to our direction and our will. These little hitch-hikers can get to you and try to make your will their own. The best way to avoid being the agent of another's will is to have a strong will yourself. Wouldn't you agree? Hitch-hiker souls have us at a disadvantage because we can't see them; and we may not know they are around. That's when they can most use us.

"And they have used us too, so much in fact that they have completely deceived us for their own benefit. The world has been their captive because they have instilled in us a fear that we need an outside force to redeem us from our lost ways. All that has been needed is the will to act grateful. That would make us peaceful and not afraid.

"Be aware they deal in fear; for fear is the best way they can keep us in suspense and tense and angry; and that's the only way they can use us for hitch-hiking. Mostly, they love to make us afraid of ourselves, to make us suspect our natures, to keep us in fear of ourselves. That's why they don't want us to get used to our natures and recognize them for what they are – temples of natural blessedness through which we can learn to act grateful and be redeemed if necessary. That's why they don't want us to love nakedness; and that's one reason that I have become naked while they look away. Almost literally, they can't stand the brightness.

"If you're going to defeat them, you just simply can't give in to their ways. Unlike Adam and Eve in the garden, who paid attention to voices outside of them, you must ignore them while keeping your soul in peace through acts and dispositions of gratitude.

If you feel that what I say is true, I bid you to go home and look at your bodies as you are now looking at mine. Be grateful! It's a fantastic gift! Don't abuse it by ignoring it. Rather abuse the spirit who would have you ignore it by ignoring it.

"Angry spirits love angry spirits. Peaceful spirits do not need others to make them complete. Therefore, if a spirit is a hitch-hiker, more than likely it is an angry spirit. If you are angry, you will only attract them. You wouldn't be angry if you felt complete. Anger stems from a feeling of incompleteness. If you feel incomplete, then you are essentially leaving yourself open to being completed by another; and that is opening the door to a hitch-hiker spirit. Given an opening, what hitch-hiker spirit is going to turn down an invitation? Accordingly, to keep hitch-hiker spirits out of your life, don't be angry. Anger, as an expression of sensing a state of incompleteness, is the main highway by which hitch-hiker spirits can enter and use your life.

"If you find yourself possessed or bothered by an angry spirit, and you recognize it, for Heaven's sake, don't try to exorcise it with more anger. You won't succeed because your new anger will retain him or her or it. When you exorcise or dismiss an angry spirit, say it quietly and calmly in sympathy and forgiveness. Don't cry in anger, 'I command you in the name of the living God to go to Hell!' If you do, that's precisely where you will both end."

Priscilla paused, searching the faces of her audience, before continuing. "Who are you? It's time you asked that question; and it's time you answered it. I have told you who I am. I am the sum of my beliefs; and my beliefs make up my commitment. My commitment is my *Wedding Garment*.

"Jesus said, no one can get into Paradise without a wedding garment. Well, essentially, that's what he said – though that Paradise was a wedding feast. Jesus was comparing a wedding feast with Paradise. So it's the same thing. But what did he mean by that? I think I have demonstrated here today what I think he meant. We must all be committed to something to become saved as individuals as it were. I am what I believe. My belief – or beliefs – give me identity and dress me with a *Wedding Garment*.

"You know what I believe. I believe principally in three things: the purity of nature as the host of my soul, the parent soul-child soul spiritual identity, and the ongoing of life. These three things make up my commitment; and these three things make up my *Wedding Garment*.

"Do you want to reach Paradise? Do you have on a wedding garment? Your commitment does not have to be mine, but you do need a commitment to avoid being controlled by another's will. You do need a belief. You do need a *Wedding Garment*.

"My belief will do you no good. You cannot enter Paradise on my coattails anymore than you can enter Paradise on the coattails of anyone else, including those of Jesus. I cannot do it for you. Jesus cannot do it for you. You must decide your own will or be the decision of someone else. You must go your own way.

"My father is closing this church because it pretends that you can reach Paradise and fulfillment on the coattails of someone else, namely of Jesus. The hitch-hiker spirits have done well to keep us convinced of that; but I'm here to tell you, it won't work.

"Find your own way. If it be the way of Jesus, fine. I too have found his way; but even if it not be in the name of Jesus and it be deserving of your commitment as a way to avoid being caught up as the commitment of another, it may prove a worthy *Wedding Garment*. If your belief is belief in needing another to make you complete, however, that

is not a belief that can amount to a wedding garment. To be free of others, you can't depend on them. That's not to say you can't enjoy others. It is only to say that enjoyment includes them, but doesn't depend upon them. You must stand alone to be dressed in a *Wedding Garment*. Jesus said, I would rather you be hot or cold than lukewarm, or something close to that. I am sure you know better than I the exact quote. So, I say to you, be hot, be cold, but be strong."

The audience was stunned. This is what it had been waiting for. This was the blasphemy they needed to condemn her; and yet none of them had any defense.

Priscilla was the only one naked in the entire assembly; and yet she alone could be certain of a *Wedding Garment*. Even Mark had yet to match the fervor of her will, the degree of her commitment, the loveliness of her *Wedding Garment*.

"I love you all," she said, "but I must go so that you can come, come to your own realization of life, that is. Thank you for letting me be part of your day. Don't be afraid of going outside the fence to find where you belong, to find who you are, to find who you want to become. The choice is yours. Don't let it be that of another; or you may never be fit with your own *Wedding Garment*. For my father, I say, Good-bye and Good Luck!"

The murmur of the crowd began slowly and grew rapidly as they filed out. For many, it was like the end of the world: a naked renegade had convicted them of trying to enter the wedding feast without a wedding garment. A mere child had pointed out their anonymity. A loose woman had preached about commitment. Perhaps if there had been a Calvary, there would have been another crucifixion. Priscilla was glad there wasn't.

Chapter 5

Lance and Jill were stunned – but for different reasons. In her sermon, Priscilla had stood naked before them and accused them of nakedness. Jill had felt like the shady and shoddy *DOLLY’S PALACE* from downtown had been transplanted in her church; and she felt outraged. As far as she was concerned, *Dolly’s Dancing Dillies* may have just as well paraded before her and her children. And Lance? What about Lance?

Jill believed in family, almost to the expense of everything else. Family to her was the pinnacle of earth’s finest treasures. In that way, she was like Priscilla; however, she differed dramatically with Priscilla in that Priscilla did not put family above individual worthiness.

With Jill, nothing was more important than family; and if she was truly honest about it, that would have included the God she praised morning, noon, and night. God was a convenience and a convenient addition to her needed family as well as a belief. Without the *Giant Image* – or *Image of a Giant* – with outstretched palm for one hand and righteous club in the other, she would have never been able to rule her life and those over whom the *Giant* had given her charge.

Often at night before falling asleep, she focused her thoughts, not on the lovable man beside her, but on her fantasy of seeing herself being bid by the *Gentle Giant* with outstretched palm to come to Him. “*Come to me, my faithful one,*” she hears him say. “*Come and share my blessings!*” Yet where are her children in this fantasy? They are not there, even as they are the reason she has made it home.

It was the moment Priscilla came down to hug her family in her natural *Wedding Garment* that Lance began his conversion. He had glanced over to catch the scowl on his wife’s face and her reprimand for his thoughts. Quickly he had wiped the smile off his face and had sat at attention – like a private having been corrected by his sergeant. Jill would have accepted his response for any other kind of admonition, but not for this one; for the last thing she wanted was for her bodyguard to attend to the business in front of him. She promptly spilled the contents of her purse, as if by accident, on the floor, hoping her efforts would further distract her husband from the naked scandal in front.

Lance did not take the bait, as he was already taking charge; however when Priscilla first slipped out of her wedding dress to stand naked before them and proceeded to talk of her beliefs, he had reacted like the others with surprise and disbelief. His wife was one who scolded him for taking a bath without closing the door; and now she was being affronted, not by a naked man, but a naked lady. Lance felt a little bit of justice.

By the time Priscilla turned her affection to her family, her seed had already started to take hold. Jill had good reason to worry and to feel challenged. Lance had been listening; and little did he know it then, but he would never be the same again.

After the service, Jill rapidly gathered the contents of her spilled purse and dragged her four children out of the church, admonishing Lance to follow. Lance was more interested in Priscilla and her willingly attendant children as she proceeded to dress. He was still stunned; and he felt an unnerving shame for his own timidity.

He had long sensed that God couldn't be the *Jealous Judge* his Jill believed, but he had not been able to put his thoughts into a belief like Priscilla had. He wanted to go to the front and congratulate Priscilla, but he lacked the courage to resist his angry wife's cold twitch of the head, signaling him to follow as bid. After a moment's hesitation, he responded and tagged after his family, looking back several times as he sauntered out. Priscilla noticed his interest as being more than lustful. A lady can tell those things. She smiled, formed an OK sign with her thumb and index finger and held it up for Lance to see. Lance was embarrassed that Priscilla had noticed his interest; and he wiped his hand across his mouth for something to do, pretending he had an itch that needed attention.

Chapter 6

The five of them were going home; but Priscilla was concerned for her father and had asked Mark to drive around so as to be able to ask him if he wanted a ride home. The church was only six blocks from his house; and he always walked; but Priscilla thought that maybe he would like a ride as an excuse to be rescued.

“Grampa, want a ride?”

The Reverend knew his daughter and he was thankful for her concern, but he also knew what he had to do. Turning away from his upset parishioners, ready to throw him into the lion’s den, he just winked and said so only his daughter could hear, “***I can handle it, Prissy. I can handle it.***”

As they drove away, Priscilla glanced back and noticed a new sign had been placed to the side of the church. Her father had surprised her with his quick action; and she wondered how he had acted that fast. He had told her he intended to turn the church into a community service building; but she had no idea he would act with such haste.

The old sign was already gone. It had read:

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Peter Guestly, Pastor.

Closed, except on Sundays

The new sign simply said:

OPEN!

Chapter 7

“Jill, do you love me?” Normally he would have routinely said, “I love you, Jill,” before saying Good Night.

Jill was a bit startled by the question. His asking if she loved him rather than telling her he did almost challenged her. She was uneasy. “What do you mean, do I love you?” she finally responded.

“Do you love me?” he said again. “I can’t put it any plainer than that. Do you?”

“Why? Do you think I don’t?” she replied, puzzled by the implication she might not.

“I don’t really know,” he said. “I know I love you, but I am not so certain of your love for me.” Lance turned over in bed and looked her directly in the eyes.

“After ten years of marriage, you dare ask me that? If you don’t know by now, then you have a problem.”

“I have a problem?” he responded, with authority in his voice. “I don’t think I have a problem. You do if you can’t answer it.”

“What are you talking about? I can answer it,” she replied, a little furiously.

“Certainly, I love you. Now, are you satisfied?”

“Should I be?”

“Lance, I don’t know what’s got into you, but I am tired. I want to go to sleep. It’s been a long day. That damned preacher’s daughter carrying on like she was God’s own and now you askin me foolish questions.”

“I’m sorry, Jill, but I am not so sure Priscilla isn’t, as you call it, God’s own.”

“Of course she is,” she replied, correcting herself in midstream. “We all are, but some of us have let the devil in; and I think Priscilla is one of those.”

“Judge not, lest you be judged,” Lance responded, irritating his pajama wife the more.

“Lance, turn out the lights. I’m not in the mood to talk anymore. I want to go to sleep.”

“Are you angry?” he asked.

“Dammit, Lance, you know I am. Now turn out the lights and let’s go to sleep.”

“Don’t let the sun go down on your anger,” he quoted. “I think we better talk this thing out. Tomorrow may be too late.”

“What do you mean, too late? Too late for what?”

“Maybe tomorrow won’t come,” he replied. “What would happen if you died in the night? You’d die in your anger.”

“Now that’s not likely. You know that. Anyway, not all anger is bad. Some anger is justified.”

“Priscilla wouldn’t agree.” His mention of Priscilla added fuel to the fire.

“God-dammit, Lance! Don’t you bring up that bitch again! Do you hear?”

“Why didn’t you leave if you didn’t like what she was saying?” That, too, was dangerous territory; and Jill became angrier.

“I don’t know,” she answered. “I couldn’t. I think that woman put a spell over all of us. None of us left; and yet, none of us agreed with her either.”

“Make that one of us,” he responded, startling Jill.

Neither Lance nor Jill spoke for a moment. Then Jill exploded. “That figures! Lance, I’m worried about you. You’re always trying to justify your going naked, willy nilly; and now that devil’s daughter stands up there so brazenly and bold and tells you it’s God’s wish – and you believe it.”

“She didn’t claim it’s God’s wish,” Lance corrected quickly. “In fact, she made it clear that what she did was her will and had nothing to do with God.”

“God-damned atheist! That’s what she is!”

“That’s totally unfair, Jill. Priscilla and Mark are not atheists. They just believe that God makes us good in the first place without need of further grace. No, Jill, they are not atheists. They are theists in the first degree, I think. They don’t disgrace God by believing He made their natures in need of redemption.”

“That’s what the devils want us to believe,” she replied, “that we don’t need redemption.”

“Priscilla would say it’s the devils who want us to believe we need redemption – just the other way around from what you say,” he countered.

“Priscilla, Priscilla, Priscilla!” Jill angrily retorted. “If you want to believe Priscilla over the **Word of God**, then Dammit, go sleep with Priscilla. I can’t believe one woman could be allowed to divide us like she has. I love you, Lance. Please get that devil out of your mind. Don’t let her destroy you like that.”

“I’d rather be destroyed now, so I can have time to rebuild,” he responded, “than to find out after death that the way of redemption is the way of the devil.”

“Lance!” Jill exclaimed. “Do you know what you’re saying? You’re letting that whore make you believe that God’s ways are really the devil’s ways. I hope that God doesn’t strike you dead tonight!”

“First of all, Jill, Priscilla is not a whore. Secondly, she isn’t making me believe anything; and thirdly, maybe the devil is so smart that he has actually convinced us his ways are God’s own to keep us his prisoners. Maybe the so called **Word of God** is nothing but poetic misleading of the devil, posing as God.”

Jill was crying. She felt honest hurt for what Lance was saying. She couldn’t see the possibility that two thousand years could have elapsed with mankind believing its practices for the love of God were actually clever misleading of what are called devils. She resisted the idea and would not accept it. She had too much to lose. Even if Lance was right in his conjecture, the shock would be too much to bear.

“Lance, Honey, please don’t talk like that. Don’t gamble with your life like that. Don’t gamble with mine. Don’t gamble with the lives of the children.”

“Jill, I can understand your feeling hurt by what I am suggesting; but you know, I think I have to find out.”

“Find out what?”

“If the **Word of God** is really the **Word of God**.”

“Oh, Honey! How are you going to do that?”

“I don’t know, but I have got to find out. I owe it to you and the children, as well as to myself. Do you realize that if the devil is behind the **Word of God**, what that means? Do you realize what fools we are if he is?”

“Lance,” she replied, in her growing desperation, “you cannot challenge the **Word of God**. No one has ever been able to do that.”

“Maybe no one has ever really tried. I take that back. Maybe some who have challenged it have been burned at the stake by a loving God,” he replied sarcastically. “That tends to dissuade the best of us.”

“I can’t take anymore of this talk, Lance.”

“Are you still angry?”

She was subdued a bit now, as all this talk had begun to really exhaust her, but she was still angry. “Yes, I am. I can’t help it. I’m very angry, especially at Reverend Guestly for allowing his daughter to do what she did. How many other lives will be threatened like yours because of her? Yes, you bet I’m angry.”

“Maybe I owe my eruption to her,” he agreed, “but I have long doubted a lot of things I haven’t had the wit or will to challenge.”

“And now because of her, you will challenge them and probably end up in Hell,” she responded.

“Yes, somehow Jill, I’ll challenge them; but I hope I don’t end up in Hell; however maybe if I don’t, I will. Ever think of that?”

“I can’t think anymore about anything. Please turn out the lights.”

Lance reached over and flipped the switch before giving his Jill a goodnight kiss. Jill snuggled up to him, perhaps hoping she could sensually distract him from his heresy. He wanted to have sex; but under the circumstance, he didn’t feel right in playing with the division between him and his wife. Ordinarily, she wouldn’t have wanted it; and he knew her likely intention. His response was a whisper, “*Good Night, Jill.*”

Chapter 8

Jill was standing in front of a kindly-looking, grey-bearded *Giant*. Lance was directly behind.

“Jill, my precious child, you had many failings in life, but you accepted my *Son* as your personal savior; and so, in spite of those failings, I give you eternal life.”

Turning toward Lance, Jill blew him a kiss and said, “Goodbye, Love.” Then seven men and seven ladies, dressed in white, who had been standing by the *Giant’s* throne, came forth. Smiling, they led Jill away, passing out of sight behind a cloud to the right side of the throne.

“What’s this man’s name?” the *Giant* asked. “I do not remember my *Son’s* talking about a man of his description.” It had become Lance’s turn; and Lance was trembling.

A tall man, also dressed in white, came forth from the *Giant’s* left and said without hesitation, “I’m sorry, Father. I do not know him.”

“Are you sure, for the sentence is final?”

“Quite sure, Father,” was the answer.

“We must be absolutely sure,” came the response from the bearded *Giant*. “Get me **THE BOOK.**” Three eagles appeared with a huge book hitched to them, much like a wagon would be hitched to a team of horses. White strands of rope were attached to the body of the book and led to the team of eagles. Just at the point where they should have been attached to the birds, it appeared they disappeared. Lance wondered how that could be.

The eagles swooped down from the right side of the bearded *Giant*, sitting on his elevated throne, and made a pass around Lance as they entered from the *Giant’s* left side. Lance caught the gold lettering of the book as they flew by: **BOOK OF THE SAVED.**

Having passed directly in front of the *Giant*, the eagles somehow came to a complete stop in front of the *Giant’s Son*, without even the slightest fluttering of their wings to keep them in air. The *Son* of the *Giant* spoke to Lance. “What is your name?”

Lance was almost too scared to speak, for he feared his name would not be found; but he managed a timid, “**Lance Jenkins, Sir.**” The son then proceeded to turn the pages from beginning to end.

“Father, it is not here.”

Turning towards Lance, the bearded *Giant* said in a stern voice that almost bellowed, “Your remaining days will be spent in total suffering because you denied me!” Then he bid several servants dressed in black to come and take Lance away. Lance balked and resisted their fierce attempts to lead him away.

“No! No! No! I won’t go!” he cried. Struggling, he repeated his words of defiance. “No! No! No!”

Then Lance awoke with a jump that should have awakened Jill, but somehow it didn’t. His resisting “No!” echoed in his mind; and he was covered with sweat. In that moment of terror, he almost willed himself to the *Son*; but quickly realizing his terror to be a dream, he settled back and tried to relax. He looked briefly towards the window and

thought he noticed a black winged creature fluttering in the curtain. Then he realized it had to be the ribbon that Jill tied in the middle, moving with the breeze.

Letting out a sigh of relief, Lance turned back the covers and got out of bed. Still, Jill did not stir. Momentarily, he sat on the edge before proceeding through the living room to the kitchen where he heated a cup of coffee in the trusty microwave.

“Your remaining days will be spent in total suffering!” The last words of the *Giant* haunted him. In fact, they still terrified him. And then he asked himself out loud: Could **He** really have sent me to Hell? What right did **He** have to do that? Could this dream be a look at reality beyond – or was it just a nightmare?

He was sitting in the living room now in his favorite chair. Jill always closed the curtains at night. He opened them thinking that the act may somehow open his mind too. The neighborhood was lit only by the street lamps. If there was a moon, Lance could not see it. He looked for it, though, almost as if it were a needed angel of comfort; but when he couldn't find it, he guessed it to be on the other side of the house.

Lance began to ask himself a series of questions. Who is this Giant or God that He has the right to send me to Hell, to make me suffer for the rest of time? How can I know that He can or cannot? Why must I be afraid of loving my life? Why would a God give me a life I should hate? Why is not my love sufficient for salvation? Why do I need Jesus? Who are devils? Why do they exist?

Priscilla said she believed devils to be hitch-hiker spirits. At the moment, that didn't mean anything to Lance. His attention went back to God. Who is God? What is God? God is forgiving. God is just. Correction: God is all forgiving. God is all just – not just forgiving and just, but all forgiving and all just. Lance had heard it a thousand times from those allegedly called of God. What did these terms mean anyway?

Forgiveness means release from debt, Lance thought. Justice means demanding that a debt be paid. If God is all forgiving, then He has to be all releasing; and no man need fear not paying his debt. If God is all just, then He has to be all demanding; and no forgiveness could be considered.

Lance said aloud, “It's ridiculous, absolutely ridiculous! It is said that God is all forgiving and all demanding at the same time. It can't be so. He must either be one or the other, but not both, if He is in fact all that character.”

Lance returned to his silent speculation. Could it be, then, that God is partially forgiving and partially just? Lance was sure it couldn't be so. Anything that could be defined of God has to be with the modifier, ***‘all’***. How could God be half this and half that? The very concept of ‘absolute,’ which God has to be, excludes the possibility. God has to be absolutely this or absolutely that, but He can't be some of this and some of that.

What is He, then, all forgiving or all just? Lance was becoming excited with his thoughts; and his hand jerked with the sudden surge of emotion, causing him to spill a little of his coffee on his pajamas. The sun was beginning to rise and Lance thought jubilantly, How fitting! He sensed he was about to emerge from the cloud of his confusion. He sensed he almost had a very important answer. He sensed he was about to find out something extremely important about God.

Is God all forgiving or all just? He has to be one or the other in spite of all the self-proclaimed evangelists throughout the world. Lance pondered further. It is reasonable to think that whatever God is, He had to be it from the very beginning. So, before there was

a creation and there was only a creator, what did an absolute being have to be – all forgiving or all just?

To forgive Himself, God would have to release Himself from a debt; but what debt could God have to Himself? His only debt had to be His very existence. God certainly couldn't annihilate Himself. Therefore, He couldn't forgive Himself of existence, so to speak. God, then, has to be self-demanding, demanding that He continue in existence if nothing else. God, then, has to be *Absolute Justice*.

Lance trembled at the thought. Christianity teaches that God is all forgiving; and he had just demonstrated to himself that such couldn't be so. God has to be all just, being that from the very beginning. God can't forgive. The thought struck Lance like a low blow to the midsection.

We have to pay our debts and be just, like God, or perhaps suffer perdition. Lance was not ready for this, as that implied Hell for failure. Christianity was right in its teaching of Hell and wrong in its teaching that God could forgive. What a bag of worms? thought Lance.

How about Jesus? Jesus supposedly claimed to be the Son of God; and yet allegedly he died to forgive sins. If Jesus was truly the Son of Absolute Justice, then he had to be all just and unable to forgive; but he did forgive. Therefore, he could not have been the Son of Absolute Justice. Another doctrine bites the dust, Lance suggested to himself.

In less than an hour, he brought to ruin two of the basic truths of traditional Christianity: that God is forgiving and that Jesus was the Son of God. What did that do to the doctrine of salvation through Jesus Christ? There was the possibility that Priscilla brought up that the father Jesus was speaking of was not God, but rather his personal spirit father. At the moment, that seemed the likeliest explanation, that the god Jesus was the son of was only a blessed spirit, not God Himself or Itself.

In any case, the forgiveness of Jesus can have no forgiving effect on me, Lance thought, as he continued his thought process. God must still be demanding and just, regardless of what Jesus did or did not do. So, the story was still a demanding God and not a forgiving One.

As just a short time before, Lance was jubilant because of his discovery, he was now edging toward depression. There seemed to be no hope. There could be no hope for forgiveness; but forgiveness from what? What have I done that I need forgiveness for?

I have doubted the story of Jesus in the past, he thought; but what can God demand of me for that failure since Jesus is now no longer His son? I have broken the Ten Commandments, he thought, again accusing himself of another violation; but was Moses anymore a prophet of God than Jesus was a son of God? Lance was sure there was a way to determine the truth.

God is all just. Moses spoke of justice to the exclusion of almost everything else. Therefore, Moses may be of God where Jesus could not have been. Moses was rigid and demanded strict attention to rules under the pain of death for some violations. Yes, it was possible that Moses and his rules could be of God.

Could that mean, then, that the Jews are right when they claim they are a favored nation under a just God? It seemed so. At least their claim of a just God seems right as the Christian forgiving God seems to be a lie. Judaism, it appeared, was pro-God; and Christianity in its lie, anti-God.

Fast concluding that the Jews may be right under Moses, Lance had backed himself into a corner. As it appeared now, there was no way out but strict adherence to a rigid set of rules handed down to man through Moses. Lance could hardly believe it. Judaism was right and Christianity, perhaps the lie of Satan. Impossible, he thought; and yet try as he might, he could not escape from his corner.

He had demonstrated that God has to be all justice and that Moses claimed and demonstrated himself to be a strict, just man. He realized the story was not yet complete. He was missing something he was sure; but the logical evidence tended to point in that direction – the law of the Jews may well be the law of God. Lance swallowed hard, as he had not expected this.

Chapter 9

Leaning against a tree in the city park, Lance was still totally bewildered. It was Columbus Day and he had been fortunate enough to have the day off from work; and he had spent a greater part of that day pondering his crisis of the Absolute Justice of God. Promising Jill that he would make it up to her later, he had left the house and had driven to the city park where he always received spiritual motivation and spiritual nutrition while ambling about in meditation. The normal quiet of the environment, often only broken by the sound of quacking ducks in the city park pond, lent itself to being able to concentrate on some thought at hand.

Lance was positive he had walked around the park twenty times or more; and it was well over a mile for each circuit. How could he resolve his dilemma? How could he know if he was right or wrong in his Jewish conclusions? *Who could he talk to?* Unfortunately, he did not know any Jews; and he was very reluctant to contact a synagogue.

Who was it that got him into this mess? Priscilla! Sure, she would be the most likely person of all, he thought. He glanced at his watch – 2:42. The day was fast passing on. Mark and he had gone bowling a couple of times years ago when Priscilla and Mark were still regular members of the First Congregational.

He liked Mark, but he had always been more impressed with Priscilla. Even back then, Priscilla carried herself like she knew of her importance; and now she had delivered a sermon that turned Lance around and upside down like nothing else he had ever heard.

Her choice of a topic to her unique delivery had impressed Lance. He admitted to himself, although he would never admit it to Jill, that he was indeed aroused sensually by Priscilla; however, he had always been aroused in that manner by her, but this was the first time he had seen her naked. Priscilla was beautiful in every way; and Lance told himself many times that he would have enjoyed leaping through the wheat field with her. She had that special something that automatically equated with nature; and Lance loved whatever it was. *God, he thought! How could he ever handle these sinful feelings if he had to become a Jew?*

Luckily, there were several phone booths in the park; and it didn't take him long to reach one. "Reverend Guestly, this is Lance Jenkins."

"Lance, how are you?"

"Fine, Reverend."

"What can I do for you?"

"If you don't mind, I'd like to talk to Priscilla."

"She's not here."

"I know. I was hoping you could give me her number." Pastor Guestly cooperated fully, knowing Lance as one of his more thoughtful parishioners. He had long felt a friendship with Lance that was more unspoken than open. He was sure of his character too, as he would never give his daughter's phone number to just anyone; and he was also sure that Priscilla wouldn't mind. Lance wrote it down on his palm.

"I suppose you want to talk to her about her sermon, huh?"

“That and some other things, I guess,” was Lance’s reply.

“I hope you find what you’re searching for.” Reverend Guestly was fully aware of Lance’s anxiety to get on with his phone call.

“I hope so too, Reverend. I’ll let you know. OK?”

“OK, Son. Talk to you later.”

“It was almost 3 o’clock now. Lance thought, I bet I’m too late for today; but he dialed her number anyway: 422-8802. Several rings and then the voice of a mature sounding lady, “Hello!”

“Priscilla, this is Lance Jenkins.”

“I’m sorry, Lance. I’m Marie. I’ll call Mom. Mom, remember Lance? He’s on the phone.”

“Tell him I’ll be right there, Marie.”

“She’ll be right with you.”

“OK,” Lance replied. He only wanted the truth; or at least that was his primary reason for calling; but as he waited, his nervousness made him suspect himself.

“I’m sorry, Lance. Are you still there?”

“Yes, I’m still here.”

“It’s really good to hear from you. It has been a lot of years since you have been over to the house.”

“Yeah, I know. I’m sorry, but Jill has kept me rather busy.”

“You don’t have to explain, Lance. I’m fully aware that Jill does not think a whole lot of me. Can I help you with something?”

“I hope so, Priscilla. I need to talk to someone about some thoughts of mine that are kind of tied into your sermon on Sunday. I feel a little awkward calling you like this, but . . .”

“Why, because I’m a woman?” she interrupted.

“I guess.”

“Well, if you don’t have a problem, I certainly don’t. Can you come over now? This evening I have to go to a P.T.A. meeting.”

“I was hoping you would have the time.”

“I do. Come on over. Mark will be here in a couple of hours. He’d like to see you too.”

“Fantastic!” Lance was genuinely pleased. Maybe his guardian angel hadn’t left him after all.

“Oh, Lance?”

“Yes, Priscilla?”

“We’re friends, aren’t we?”

“Yes,” he replied. “Certainly!”

“Then when you come, I’ll have on my *Wedding Garment*. See you shortly.”

Chapter 10

“I’m not sure, Lance. That’s interesting speculation. Let’s think about it in the back. OK?”

Priscilla and Lance had been discussing Lance’s dilemma for nearly twenty minutes. Lance was enjoying the company; but he was intent on finding the answer, or answers if that they be. Surprised a little at Priscilla’s suggestion to go outside, he was a bit disappointed. She seemed eager to interrupt their discussion; and he was not at all sure he should take the chance. What if he were seen with Priscilla in her *Wedding Garment*; and could he trust himself with his naked friend?

“Come on, Lance. Don’t worry. The children are out back. They’ll protect us.” Priscilla was very aware of at least part of the reason for Lance’s reluctance; and she didn’t give him any time to think about his indecision as she grabbed him by the arm and pulled him toward the screen door leading to the back yard. “The neighbors know I love the natural and they have gotten used to it. Now, if it’s that you don’t trust yourself, I’d suggest that you take off your covering too.”

“My covering?” Lance remarked in a state of amazement. “Are you serious?”

“Do what’s comfortable, Lance; but I always feel much more protected in front of innocent children if I’m not trying to hide anything. And be honest, Lance, with the kids playing within eyesight, you’ll be safe from yourself and me because even if I should have a desire, I wouldn’t do anything in front of the kids that they can’t handle. Know what I mean? Like I say, they are the best protection a lady could want.”

“You’re amazing!”

“Oh . . . no, just alert, Lance, just alert.”

“Who would have ever thought that children could be a grown-up’s best protection?”

“Then you agree?” she asked.

“Though I’m a fool in perhaps a fool’s paradise right now, I can’t argue with you. Thanks for the trust.”

“Thank the children,” she replied, “and God. Lance, people in general don’t understand my love for nakedness, but let me put it this way. I was born naked. I pray to God I’ll be allowed to die naked; and I’m going to take every opportunity to live naked – simply because that is the way I have been created; and who am I to challenge the offering of my Divine Benefactor? If I’m going to talk about God with a true friend, I just as soon be in God’s natural surroundings. I can think clearer that way.” She waved to the children; and the children acknowledged her attention and shouted greetings to Lance as well.

Lance felt awkward in undressing. He had not yet progressed to the stage of going without underwear as had Priscilla. His attention flicked back to Sunday when Priscilla undressed outside of her home environment too. There had been something magic about Priscilla having no panties on. When the wedding dress dropped to the floor, that was it. Priscilla did not have to go any further. She wasn’t wearing panties. She had been just a touch closer to being natural not having to strip herself of panties.

On the other hand, when Lance took off his pants, there was still underwear. It was like another layer of protection that Priscilla had not had. At that moment, Lance resolved to never wear underwear again. For the instant at hand, though, there was underwear. Lance slipped it off. Given his relative youthfulness, his manliness reacted to the freedom. Priscilla noticed and smiled. Of course she had seen it a thousand times in Mark. It was natural, all Godly and all Divine. Priscilla had no desire of having a second husband, however, and was willing with eagerness to get on with simple brotherhood. Feeling quite at ease and knowing immediately the borders of freedom that Priscilla was instilling with her ease, Lance sat down opposite Priscilla on the grass.

“You know, Lance, I didn’t know it in the house, but if there wasn’t an opposite to absolute justice, you’d have a point.”

“What do you mean?” Lance was grateful for the distraction.

“I mean we can’t stop with the top side of things in this discussion.”

“We can’t?”

“No. That’s forgetting the bottom end; and the bottom is as important as the top.”

“You have lost me,” he replied, with a wrinkle in his brow.

“Think about it, Lance. God is totally demanding, positive, everything that He is. Right?”

“Right.”

“Well, if God is everything, what is nothing?”

“Nothing is nothing,” he said.

“Or space,” she replied.

“So?” he responded.

“Space is the opposite of God. Space, in a way, is total forgiveness, as it is totally lacking in demands upon itself. Space is forgiveness as God is justice.”

“I guess you’re right, Priscilla. I hadn’t thought of it that way.”

“Who has?” she replied. “I wouldn’t have either if it hadn’t been for you bringing this whole discussion to light. Thank you for your revelation. Columbus Day should be a day for new discovery; and you have made this a beautiful October 12th.”

“October is suitable for this discussion, isn’t it?” Lance remarked. “Just when you think you have found life, you find you’ve been reaching for death, like summer turning into winter.”

“That’s for sure, Lance. We are such fools for not thinking things out better than we have. Anyway, assuming that space is total forgiveness, or total lack of demand, as God is total justice, let me see you try to relate to space.”

“I don’t follow you.”

“Well, you insisted on trying to relate to total justice and almost became a Jew in the process. Now, let me see you try to relate to space and perhaps become a Christian in the process.”

“Come again, Priscilla.” he replied.

“Let me say it this way, Lance. *God is to man as man is to space. Man can’t begin to reach total justice anymore than total forgiveness can reach out to man who is partial justice and partial forgiveness – or at least should be. That which is space or total forgiveness or total lack of demand to be something can’t possibly relate to some demand or some justice.*”

Lance was still puzzled. Priscilla tried to make herself clearer. “Look. *Something can no more become nothing than nothing can become something; and likewise, everything can no more become something than something can become everything.*”

“Huh? What are you driving at?”

“I’m saying that *man shouldn’t try to become absolute justice anymore than he should try to become absolute forgiveness. He’s in between; and he should be satisfied with that.*”

“But what about God in demanding justice from us?”

“God can’t require justice of us, Lance. He can only relate to totality and we are partiality, so to speak. In essence, God can no more relate to us than we can to Him. He’s outside of our dimension as we are outside of His. He can’t reach down to an individual something, which is us, anymore than we can reach up to Him. That means we need never fear His judgment or His justice.”

“You mean you think that God can’t even talk to man anymore than man can talk to God?”

“That’s right. It’s totally outside the realm of possibility. He can only reach towards everything; and we are only something. In a way, it’s very comforting. Isn’t it?”

“Yes, it is, Priscilla, if it’s really so.”

“Well, that’s a matter of opinion if it’s so or not, I guess, but from where I sit now and how I am thinking now, our conjecture seems to be leading us to these conclusions. It may be truly a mystery we will never be able to figure out. Without knowing how our souls came to be, we can know they are and will continue. *Man couldn’t go to nothing, even if he wanted to. It’s outside his dimension. He’s trapped into being something.* Man may die, but it’s only an illusion. His body continues as dirt and his soul as spirit. His body came from dirt and will return to dirt, or dust, as they say. His soul came from spirit and will return to spirit; but whatever, he doesn’t become nothing. It’s totally impossible for him to do that.”

Lance was filled with the inevitable question. “If it has not been God who has spoken with man, who is it?”

“I suppose at least in some cases, those hitch-hiker spirits I talked about on Sunday. Because of our ignorance of God, they think they can claim to be Him and we will have no recourse but to believe them. They work miracles; and we believe they are God because we think that only God can work miracles. The truth is, God is not one to work miracles, even if He wanted to, which I’m sure He doesn’t. In truth, God is not in the business of wanting or being able to want like human beings. For all practical purposes, God is simply in everything. *Being in everything, God cannot act as if He can go into things in which He is not. To work a miracle, He would have to reach into something He supposedly cures; but if He is already in it, how can he reach into it, as it were?* Pure and simple, God can’t work miracles in terms of individual cures in terms of put more of Himself into a situation than was present before that situation. It is a total misunderstanding of God that allows for God to be outside of us in the first place. *God can’t go into something in which He already is. Can He? So, if miracles are worked, it is something other than God which is working them.*”

Lance shook his head. “That takes some thinking,” he said, “but it does make some sense. I do think I need to meditate on that for a bit, but it is worth thinking about. Assuming you are right though, Priscilla, that one who is not God might perform some

cure and then claim it was God who is doing the cure, why would anyone want to claim he is God or claim to be speaking for Him?"

"To make us fellow travelers so they can catch a ride with us."

"But why?" Lance was not satisfied.

"I don't know why, Lance. I really don't. Now, that's open to speculation. In my talk on Sunday, I speculated it was to catch a ride with a body that is living because no other bodies are available for their own birth; or maybe they find an advantage in using others and wouldn't dwell in a body even if they had the chance. Who knows? But whatever their reason, they are not going to mess with this lady." In these last words, she was particularly emphatic, gesturing with definite, repeated hand movements.

"How can we keep them away?" Lance inquired.

"By staying away from what they are," she replied.

"And what are they, angry spirits?" Lance was recalling her Sunday sermon.

"Yes, but why are they angry?"

"You're asking me?" he said.

"Yes, why do we get angry?"

"We don't get our way, I guess."

"Either that – or we get it too much. Either way, we lack the most important character a soul between God and space, between justice and forgiveness, can have. We lack balance."

"You think balance is the answer? You mean, an equal share of forgiveness and justice?"

"Precisely. Let's just say the ideal is to relax between payments."

"I like that. It sounds right."

"It was there for the finding, Lance."

"Alright, Priscilla," he wanted to know, "if I act half just and half forgiving, or as you put it, I relax between payments, how is that going to keep the hitch-hiker spirits away?"

"It's as clear as the nose on your face, as clear as the . . . I was going to say, 'shoes on your feet,' but I forgot you are naked. I'll bet you forgot too, didn't you?"

"As a matter of fact, I did. How can you forget you are sitting with a beautiful naked lady? You're going to have to explain that one to me."

"I don't have to explain anything to you, Lance. Just accept it and enjoy it. It's the most beautiful thing in the world – and also the most maligned. It's called, *Innocence*. Thanks for sharing that *Innocence*, Lance; for you have blessed me greatly; and I will always love you for it."

Lance was embarrassed and glanced quickly at his genitals, as if to assure himself that they hadn't suddenly disappeared. All at once they became an obstacle to the feeling of *Innocence* he had known just a moment before. Priscilla noticed his feeling awkward.

"Did you find them still there?" she quipped, startling Lance momentarily.

Lance began to chuckle. "What are you laughing at?" she inquired, joining him in his laughter without knowing why.

"Me," he said. "I really look funny."

"Yeah, I guess you do a little bit," she agreed, "but that's alright. You're entitled to look a little funny if you want."

Lance was quickly overcome with a desire to take his funny looking torso and go dive into the kids' sandbox. "Do you think the kids will mind if I join them for a minute or

so?” he asked, not having any idea how Priscilla might react; however, he should have suspected agreement.

“Why not ask them?” she said, and then she corrected herself. “Na! Just go over and jump in. I’m sure they won’t mind. The shrubbery will hide you from the neighbors if you want, if you go on your hands and knees.”

Priscilla laughed heartily as she watched Lance scampering bare on his hands and knees across the lawn. Dawn and Davy joined with giggles of their own; and Lance fell over halfway to the sandbox, clutching his side in near pain as he rolled over in his own laughter. “God!” he exclaimed. “It’s great to be a kid again!” He decided he would forego the sandbox and quickly hurried back to Priscilla.

“What are you doing back here? I thought you were going to play in the sandbox.”

He laughed again. “Are you disappointed?”

She answered with a command. “Down on all fours again,” she said, as she pushed him down on the grass and climbed aboard. “Come on! Let’s go together!” Smacking him lightly on his behind, Priscilla rode horseback, or if you will, piggyback, across the lawn before Lance collapsed again in laughter with Priscilla square upon him. She rolled off and let him flop himself down on his back.

“This ole man is too weak to make it to the sandbox, Kids. Why don’t you bring it to him?”

“OK,” they said. Soon, two red buckets of sand were being dumped on Lance. Priscilla took some from the pile on his stomach and tossed some lightly into his hair – and too, another handful at his funniness. He responded with more laughter and made no attempt to get away.

“Come on, you weird looking creature,” she chuckled, “let’s get back to our discussion.”

“God!” he said. I enjoyed that! What were we talking about anyway?”

“The first thing that comes to mind is your *Innocence*,” she said. Turning toward the kids, she told them they could go back to what they were doing. Lance and Priscilla then began their treks on all fours, though separately this time, up to the front end of the lawn where they had been sitting. Their laughter was more mute now, but just as real. Lance was glad of the children’s presence; for it was confirmed that except for them, Lance may not have been free to play with Priscilla like he had. This was one smart lady, protected by her kids and blessed in her *Innocence*.

“Only with a friend, Lance. Don’t ever do that except among friends, except with people you trust.”

“I know,” he replied.

“It’s too bad we can’t do it with everyone, but until the human race recognizes that we are all equal in the same God, we can’t,” she continued. My children could not have protected me if you had a rapist mentality. Rapists are hitch-hikers, Lance; and they are, in turn, controlled by hitch-hiker spirits. Unfortunately, the world is full of rapists, of spirits that seize rather than share.”

“Yeah, I know,” he responded. Then he added, “Be careful, Priscilla. Please don’t get yourself raped.”

“As long as I remain on guard and go naked only with friends who respect the sanctity of life, I trust, Lance, that my providence will keep me safe.”

“And your children? What about them?”

“I teach them the same vigilance. They know not to trust strangers. They too will be protected as long as they stay with their own and don’t go wandering with their *Innocence*. It’s not easy, Lance, but it’s mandatory if we are ever to rescue this world from the hitch-hiker spirits. The alternative is to keep surrendering and to keep losing.”

“But how do we win, Priscilla? You say it’s with proper balance; but how is balance going to keep a hitch-hiker spirit away?”

“OK, Lance, it’s like this, anyway the way I see it. *A hitch-hiker spirit is out of balance, or rather, hitch-hiker spirits are out of balance; or they wouldn’t be interested in using what is not theirs to have. They are either too just and demanding or too forgiving and loose. The idea is to be equally demanding and forgiving. If we have balance, they can’t get in to use us. A soul of imbalance has to have another soul of imbalance for hitch-hiking purposes. One who is in the middle has no need for augmentation from a side.*”

“I guess that does make sense,” Lance remarked, as he stretched his body and intentionally tested his *Innocence* by brushing the sand off his genitals. “So, where does Satan figure in all of this?”

“I suspect Satan is legion. I suspect *Satan is souls of a given imbalance taken collectively*. Together, they can make quite an assault. It’s interesting, because our discussion points out that souls wanting to be like God and are too just and demanding are no better than souls determined to live loose, without direction or discipline. I doubt that souls of looseness or apathy would get along with souls of too much discipline at all. They probably hang separately.”

Lance hit upon what he thought was brilliant and was eager to share the thought. “Now, I can see. Judaism and Christianity are vehicles of Satan because each is too much of one thing or another. Judaism is too strict and judgmental; and Christianity is too forgiving or easy, at least when not hypocritical. Neither one strikes the ideal balance we should seek in our lives.”

“That’s right, Lance. You got it. I guess when I suspected there were termites in the foundation, I was right; but not until this afternoon did I know for sure why.”

“Where does Jesus fit into this?”

“Not as we have been led to see him,” she answered. “Satan has used him to pave the way for his hitch-hiking and taking control. Keep in mind, now, that I am using the term Satan in a figurative sense to specify any one or group of souls who have it in mind to control others. We have already proved that God can’t work miracles in terms that God is not a person that is outside of anything, but rather an *Absolute Everywhere*, so to speak. So, if God can’t work miracles because God can’t deal with individual things, that must mean that spirits seeking control over others must work those miracles. And when a cured person falls down and cries, ‘Thank you, Jesus! Thank you, Jesus! Thank you, Jesus!’ they have a beautiful subject for use. *There is nothing that a hitch-hiker spirit likes better than a spirit that yields*; and traditional Christianity teaches that we must yield to Jesus to be saved. How clever they are to have set us up, ripened for the picking. *Our salvation may well turn out to be our damnation because in yielding to powers outside ourselves and not using our own powers, we fail to grow. We fail to strengthen our own virtues.*”

“Speaking of Jesus, Lance, I think that he came into the world when the imbalance was far to the right or to the way of assumed godliness or justice. He tried to correct that

by throwing the scales over to the left; and he preached that which was necessary to correct the imbalance – forgiveness. *Jesus said he came, not to do away with the law and justice, but to perfect it in forgiveness. He was right. He did have the cure; but the too just Jews wanted his life for the life he was taking from them.*

“Thus, they had him executed to save their nation of justice; and Satan led the way. After the death of Jesus, Satan struck down a fellow demanding spirit, Saul of Tarsus, while claiming to be Jesus who Saul was persecuting. *Peter was also a demanding spirit, not a forgiving one; and so he was chosen to lead the new nation which at first was only a continuation of the old – too demanding and too strict and almost totally lacking in what Jesus preached: forgiveness.*

“From the 5th chapter of Acts in the **BIBLE**, Lance, witness when two new church members, Ananias and Sapphira, who had failed to pay their financial dues to the new church, were brought before Peter. Did Peter forgive as surely Jesus would have done? No! Peter filled them with fear, not forgiveness, and they fell dead at his feet, one after the other, for the fright Peter instilled in them. The iron hand of Satan, rather than the forgiving heart of Jesus, was already at work. *Do you think that Jesus would have approved of what Peter did? Hardly!*

“Now it’s interesting, Lance, that traditional Christianity suffers from too much strictness to too much looseness. One time the heavy or demanding side of Satan controls it or a faction thereof; and another time the loose side of Satan controls it – both different cults and strongly contrary to the ideal of balance. In fact, they probably use the same medium to challenge each other. They are indeed a house divided against itself; and as Jesus supposedly said, they cannot stand against a man of firm foundation, equally just and forgiving.”

“Wow!” Lance exclaimed.

“Yeah, Wow,” she responded. “Wow is right.”

“What about the scriptures, Priscilla? How can we explain them?” Lance was thinking of his earlier discussion with Jill when he conjectured the scriptures might be of the devil.

“You knew before you asked, didn’t you, Lance? The scriptures are generally based on the idea that God can speak to man – though admittedly through some prophet who has some kind of direct line to God. Now there have probably been spirits who have inspired the various scriptures, claiming to be of God; but as we have seen, they can’t be. The scriptures are no more written by God than Jesus was the Son of the Absolute Justice God.

“It’s interesting that people look at prophecy as a demonstration of God power. They don’t seem to realize that scriptural predictions coming true do not make them of God. Satan can plan and make things happen under the mask of God; but regardless of any prophecies telling of his supposed entrance, Jesus lived and died to prove a point – that forgiveness is just as important as justice.

“The scripture of Isaiah tells of a man to be born who would save the nation of Israel. That man was to be named *Immanuel* – which means *God With Us*. Jesus probably saw himself as being one to offer the message that God is with us, or more specifically, in us. He may have aptly chosen the name or nick name of *Immanuel* to reflect his message. It might get confusing, Lance, but try to bear with me. OK?”

“I’m listening,” he replied.

Priscilla continued. "Alright, God is without imbalance because He only has justice and is not offset with forgiveness. Now, *in a way, man can only become like God in terms of achieving balance by equal shares of justice and forgiveness.* So *Immanuel* lived to tell the truth that an ideal son of God, so to speak, has to have total balance; that his life reflected that total balance and as such, he was an ideal son of God. Now he wasn't the son of Absolute Justice, but rather the son of balance, which God is."

"And people confused his calling himself a son of God with being a son of Absolute Justice!" Lance exclaimed.

"Precisely," she answered. "*Immanuel* probably spoke of saving the nation from its sin, meaning he lived to point out the way to perfection; but he would have never claimed to be its savior in that his blood was a once for all thing and that others don't have to work out their own salvation or balance. 'I am a son of balance' is what he should have said. 'I am a son of God' is supposedly what he did say. Unfortunately, in all his wisdom, he didn't leave any evidence behind except his followers who totally misunderstood him and called him '*Jesus*' which means savior.

"And it's Jesus who lives in the church, not *Immanuel*," Priscilla continued. "Perhaps *Immanuel* did not do enough to dissuade his followers from believing he was their personal savior rather than his being the way of perfection; and consequently, he is at least indirectly responsible for the cults that have arisen using his name; or perhaps he was preparing the world for his justice in case the world chose to reject him, but let me keep that for later.

"For now, to add to his followers confusion, he probably spoke of being one with his father, who was not God nor the idea or action of perfect balance, but rather his own father spirit who gave him soulful birth like our spirit or soulful parents have given us soulful birth. His listeners probably confused his father God with his father soulful spirit.

"Peter, the fisherman, was probably a man of great remorse for his betrayal of his friend and then likely tried to justify himself by using the resurrection of Jesus, legendary or real, as the foundation of a new church. Unfortunately, he did not know the master and consequently misled rather than led. I doubt very much, Lance, that Judas - as the betrayer he is presented to be - ever lived. Peter was probably the betrayer in that he did not support his friend when his friend needed him. Remember? Allegedly, Peter ran out on Jesus when Jesus was being tried and probably did not return until after his friend's execution at the hands of the challenged Jews."

"Where do you get all of that?" Lance asked, completely enthralled with this version of Jesus.

"Ah, it's just speculation. It's not important. Whether I'm right or I'm wrong, who cares? The scriptures cannot be of God in terms of having God as their author; and all who inspire the divine lie have to be of Satan in terms of having an ulterior motive of control by virtue of their tale."

"So that's the way the devils have been keeping the world in the dark," Lance responded, "through the scriptures that pretend to be of God so that they can continue their domination through, of all things, the church? God, I am glad they are out of the shadows and into the light."

"So am I, Lance. So am I."

Chapter 11

Lance was eager to continue their discussion. “How about good spirits? Are unbalanced spirits or Satanic cults the only spirits who are down here with us?”

“No, certainly not, Lance. There has to exist balanced souls who have no interest in using other souls. Their only purpose is to aid them in their search for balance.”

“But how can we distinguish among them?”

“By a laying on of hands, I think, Lance.”

“What do you mean – a laying on of hands?”

“I mean an evil or unbalanced spirit wants control and, as such, will eventually try to overpower a living person – or slay them in the spirit, so to speak, according to the common vernacular. A balanced soul, however, is content to stay in the background, perhaps only influencing situations rather than controlling them. A balanced spirit above all realizes that a soul in aid has to achieve its own balance and cannot be given it from outside his or her person. Every soul must have its own *Wedding Garment*. Remember what I said on Sunday?”

“Yes, I do,” he replied, “but I fail to see how a balanced soul’s controlling out of love could go against that end.”

“You think if someone else catches the ball on the team for you and runs for the score, it’s your touchdown?”

“Yes, in a way.”

“The difference may be subtle, Lance, but I think it’s there. The only points that count in the end are the points you score, not what another scores for you. *The saints may block a bit for you, but they won’t run for you.*”

“And you believe that devils not only block, but take the ball away and make it look like your score?” Lance asked.

“Precisely; and that’s how you can tell the difference. *For the most part, you won’t know a saint is around, whereas a devil’s presence is a lot more obvious by virtue of overt control of a situation or person.*”

“Do you think that good spirits won’t even heal?” Lance was a little upset at the thought.

“They might in special cases, but ordinarily I don’t think so. If someone is crippled, it is for a reason; and to cure him or her by an outside force would not enhance a lesson, only detract from it. The devils may heal just to get souls they want to forget why they are lame. Maybe a soul is here to overcome a certain burden to gain spiritual strength. So what good is it if a devil takes away the burden? Does that make sense?”

“Perhaps not,” Lance responded, “but it’s hard for me to accept that God could want us lame.”

“God is not in question, Lance. He’s outside of the picture, although you can be sure the devils will do all they can to accuse you of blasphemy if you claim it. That is not in their favor for us to think that God is outside of the picture in terms of individual overt control.”

“So, should we try to communicate with our balanced friends in the spirit?” Lance questioned.

“By all means, Lance, by all means. We are part of a team; and we shouldn’t forget it. I trust my balanced friends will continue blocking for me; and it’s not for me to be ungrateful when they do. I talk to my father spirit or soul, though I can’t see him or her. I talk with my brothers in spirit. I even talk to God for my sake, though I know God is not a he to hear me. **God is a Presence** within me, not only a force outside of me. If it weren’t for His or Its existence, I wouldn’t even be a mystery. I do exist, though I am a mystery; and I think I should act grateful, not only to my personal father soul – or mother soul – but my wonderful All Justice God.”

“Then I’m right in believing you’re not an atheist?” Lance remarked.

“You sure are. ***I consider that God and I are partners, though I do not understand It or Him or Her; and It or She or He doesn’t understand me. Whoever said love requires understanding? I once did, but not anymore. Love is an act of the will, more than that of the mind perhaps; and I will to love God; and though He can’t hear me, I thank Him daily for what He has given – and is giving.***”

“And so will I, Priscilla” Lance responded. “It’s interesting. You know, this day has shown saints as sinners and sinners as saints. Those controlled by outside intervention, thought to be of Jesus and of God or Yahweh or Allah or whatever, are proven to be helped by devils; and those written off as lost because of independence from who we thought was God in whatever name we choose to label Him are actually more in line for salvation because their commitment is their own. Do you suppose that’s what Jesus meant when he said, ‘the first will be last and the last will be first’?”

“Perhaps,” Priscilla replied. “I have no way of knowing what Jesus meant by those words – or even that he spoke them. I can’t believe the scriptures, at least not all of them. They turn out to be at least partially inspired of the devils – or ones who want to control or rule others. Jesus was a beautiful man of great wisdom and virtue who has been misused and misquoted more than any man in history.”

“It’s a real shame that if what you say is true,” Lance remarked, “we can never know ***Immanuel*** or the real Jesus.”

“Leastwise not from a book we can’t,” she replied. “***Immanuel*** can not be found in a book – or in the ***power*** of a spirit that overcomes. Angel spirits, as opposed to devil spirits, know the importance of the ***Wedding Garment*** and would never presume to take over another’s life like a devil spirit would. There is little doubt in my mind, Lance, that on the day of Pentecost the attendant disciples of Jesus were overcome as claimed – but not by whom they thought. If it had been angel spirits, white doves would have appeared above their heads rather than tongues of fire – white doves of peace saying, ***Come, we will help you fly*** rather than flames of fire that said, ***Come, we will consume you in suffering.***”

“It is indeed too bad, Lance, that we can’t know the real Jesus through a book. It’s too bad the world did not recognize him. It did not; and does not. ***Immanuel*** – or the real Jesus – was not known, nor properly translated. Maybe he suspected he wouldn’t be and that’s why he insisted on speaking in parables. He may have suspected that people would reject him completely if he spoke plainly. Maybe his words would then have gone to the grave with him; but in speaking in a figurative way as he did, his teachings could live in

stories masked in truth. People would pass them on, not knowing for sure what they were saying.

“It is hard to know who Jesus was, but we can know his teachings through his parables. The walking Jesus who healed and rose Lazarus from the dead is a legend, perhaps the invention of well meaning men overcome by the force of devils who inspired their writings. ***Immanuel may not have healed at all.*** That wasn’t why he came. ***He came to teach the truth and show the way – the way of forgiveness, balanced with justice – or the way of effort balanced with ease – or the way of strong balanced with gentle.***

“It was ***Immanuel*** who lived before the crucifixion. It is often Jesus who lives after, but Jesus in this reference is not ***Immanuel***. Given that Jesus is seen as savior, as one who rescues us from having to do for ourselves, Jesus is Satan, masquerading as ***Immanuel***. **When we killed *Immanuel*, our reckoning became Jesus;** and it is Satan’s Jesus that slays believers in their spirits and prevents them from learning to fly on their own, prevents them from finding their own ***Wedding Garments***, prevents them from becoming saints. The dead Jesus, completely the opposite of the ***Living Immanuel***, has been leading us around by a ring in the nose.” Priscilla was showing hurt in her voice at the end, as she had honest compassion for the many souls following the blind.

“But why does the real Jesus allow it? I don’t understand that, Priscilla.”

“That’s a good question, Lance. I do not know, but I suspect it’s a little thing called ‘justice’. Remember? Jesus was for both forgiveness and justice – or law tendered with kindness.”

“You’re saying Jesus may be letting Satan use his name as a measure of justice?”

“That’s right, Lance. Now of course I don’t know for sure, but do you remember the parable of the vineyard that Jesus told? Did the father in that parable forgive those who took the life of his son?”

“No, I guess he didn’t; but you don’t normally align Jesus with justice.”

“Regardless, Lance, he was the son of both justice and forgiveness as a way of balance. He and his father or providence have forgiven the world for its treachery by not destroying it, which they may have had the power to do. They have received justice by letting the world find its own way, even though that means misusing the way they came to establish.”

“You’re saying, in a way, that the devils and their use of the name of Jesus and the church is our punishment for murdering ***Immanuel***?”

“That’s right. The father of Jesus sent the son into the world; and the world killed him. Would the law of justice permit us to go unpunished for that most miserable of crimes? What would you do, Lance, in the name of justice?”

“I don’t know, maybe the same,” Lance responded, “but whether it has been because of the allowance of Jesus or not, I’m more than a little angry, Priscilla, that Satan has been leading us around by a ring in our nose, as you so aptly put it. Pardon my saying it, but I want to take that ring and shove it up his intimidating ass.”

“Strong words, Lance, but I sympathize; however the best way to shove it up his intimidating ass is to bind him with our will to achieve balance, as we have today, and shove him into the sunlight of truth where he can’t help but cower and sag because of his own imbalance. There he can’t hurt us. He can only whimper from his own helplessness.”

“Maybe it sounds cruel, but perhaps it’s time he did a little whimpering after what he has done to us.”

“Perhaps it is,” she replied, “but still, for the most part, it’s our own fault.”

Lance continued. “Getting back to what we were talking about, Priscilla, I really find it hard to believe that Jesus, the prince of meekness, could have the stomach for deliberately allowing man to suffer in blindness and misdirection due to our rejection of him.”

“They minimized that part when they wrote his story, Lance; but it’s there as plain as can be in his parables. From the forgiving father who prepared a great feast for his son who returned after blowing his inheritance to the demanding father who required justice upon those who ravaged his vineyard and killed his son. It is clear through his parables that Jesus was for both justice and forgiveness; and so must we be if we are to be rightfully called *brothers of the Christ*.

“The fake Jesus would have us believe we should aspire to be like God and be masters of the universe, rather than masters in the universe. *Immanuel* taught we should be content to be like children, never aspiring to become greater than we are, to accept the *Innocence* of life – rather than accuse it of being dirty or filthy. *We are what we are. Let us appreciate ourselves in that light and not insist on acting above or below that dimension.*

“The bottom line is that man can not be like God, nor should he be like space and do nothing. The justice devils are hard and cruel and demanding in their imbalance; and if we be led by them and used by them, we too will become as they. The forgiveness devils are soft and easy in their imbalance and inspire us to believe our salvation is in them and in their lord, Jesus, the fake Jesus.

“The parables of Jesus have not given one indication that the real Jesus ever preached salvation through another. On the contrary, from the parable of the virgins to the parable of the talents, it is clear Jesus preached earning your own way, buying your own oil for your lamp of vigilance, investing your own talents. It is only in the narrative about the alleged activities of Jesus and in the writings after the gospels that there is ever sustained a doctrine of salvation through another. ***If Jesus believed that salvation is through another, even if that other is himself, he would have surely taught it through a parable. He did not.***

“Don’t you think that’s a little strange, Lance, that the accepted Master of Salvation never used a parable to teach salvation is through another? That, in itself, is a dead give away that Jesus never believed it. Don’t you think it also strange that not one of his parables ever taught that the whole human race suffered a loss of innocence due to the single violation of one set of parents? If that were true, Jesus would have also addressed that condition of humanity and then made sure it was included in the gospels; for it is the basis of our alleged need of redemption. The fact is, he did not. Leastwise, we have no evidence of it in his parables – the method he chose to teach.

“‘I am the vine, you are the branches.’ Jesus never gave that speech, Lance. Do you know how I know? I know because Matthew, Mark, and Luke all ignored it. Don’t you think a speech of such great significance would have been included in their narratives? How come it wasn’t? Was it forgotten by mistake, overlooked because of human frailty? Can you imagine the fundamental speech of Christianity being overlooked as unimportant?

“Or perhaps only John was present for the occasion. Even if that were true, impact of legend would have compelled them to remember it. Or was it not part of the legend when they wrote their gospels? Tell me, Lance, ***how come the greatest speech in the history of Christianity was not included in the narratives of Matthew, Mark, and Luke – who all wrote their gospels long before John?***

“And while you’re telling me that, kindly explain to me why the greatest miracle in the history of the world was omitted from their narratives as well. I mean, how often is a man raised from the dead, Lance?”

“***Can any reasonable person believe that three men can write narratives about the same life and simply overlook the greatest miracle of all time? How come only John writes of the raising of Lazarus from the dead?*** Didn’t the others think such an event was significant? Again, the impact of legend would have compelled them to include it, even if they didn’t witness it – unless, of course, that legend had not yet been devised.

“No, Lance, ***the greatest speech ever devised by man was never given; and the greatest miracle of all time was never performed. Immanuel would have never given such a speech; and he didn’t.*** However, the greatest falsehood ever imposed on man was born in those dark days following the crucifixion.

“People will say, ‘Priscilla, you have a devil.’ But I say to them: ***Prove to me and the world at large that I am in error. Don’t come to me with any miracle and claim that as proof of what Jesus taught. Show me through the parables he taught that I am wrong. Don’t come to me with any feeling of ecstasy and claim that as proof that Jesus lives in you. Show me through his parables that he is expected to live through you – or you through him.***”

“Do you mind if I say something, Priscilla?” Lance offered, as he finally found a place to jump in.

“I’m sorry, Lance. I guess I got carried away; but I’m sure you know now the depth of my conviction.”

“Yes, I sure do.”

“What did you want to say, Lance?”

“I love you, Priscilla.”

“Oh, is that so?” Mark was standing there in the back door. “Lance, is that you?”

Lance was embarrassed because of his last remark; but he recovered quickly. “Yes, it certainly is, Mark. I’m surprised you recognized me.”

“How could I not recognize an old friend? Gee, it’s good to see you! I must say I’m a little surprised you’re naked, though I would expect Priscilla to be; and, Lance, make that two of us. I love her too,” he said as he winked at him, an obvious allusion to Lance’s recent avowal of love. Mark reached over and warmly kissed his lovely wife and extended his hand to his friend.

Dawn and Davy came running from playing in the sandbox and jumped on Mark. Marie joined them as she brought out an overdue pitcher of lemonade and glasses for all.

“You’ll join us for dinner, won’t you, Lance?” Mark asked.

“Sure, it will be my pleasure.” He was thinking of his own family; and he hoped they would forgive his absence at home, but he would handle that when the time came. Knowing that Jill could not begin to understand his afternoon, he would keep the details a secret. He wanted to give his marriage another chance, but he suspected that he would never be accepted after this day.

Priscilla was holding up her glass and motioning for Lance to match hers for a toast. *“To the single greatest Columbus Day in my life!”* she said, to the clinking of the glass. *“And to the day we backed Satan out of business in our lives,”* Lance remarked. *“And into the light,”* she added. *“Shall we celebrate with a kiss?”* Lance inquired, anticipating her response. With the children and Mark looking on, Priscilla and Lance embraced in celebration; and tears of joy and triumph fell to the grass below.

INTO THE LIGHT

THE END!

ARTHRITIS – A Personal Conjecture

(A Skin Theory – 9 Pages)

By
Francis William Bessler,
Laramie, Wyoming.
Originally written in November, 1980
Rewritten, September, 2007

Preface

Hello! I wrote the following essay, speculating about arthritis, in 1980. Realizing that I am really uneducated about the body and may be conjecturing way off limits, I have been content to let my paper lie for over 27 years; and perhaps I should continue to let it “lie” because it may, in fact, lie about the condition known as *arthritis*; but it may also contain some truth too.

As it happened, a friend of mine, a lady by the name of **Debbie**, had *rheumatoid arthritis* back in 1980. That is what provided me the incentive to think about it in the first place. Shortly after I conducted my own *research* and developed my own theory as explained below, I moved to Atlanta, Georgia from where I had been living in Denver, Colorado. With that move, I lost track of the friend with *rheumatoid arthritis*; but the paper I wrote due to her condition has been stashed in what could be called a *silent file* since then. I did pass on my paper to **Debbie**, however, before moving to Atlanta. I do not recall if she had a response or not while I was still living in Denver; but I do know there was no further contact after I moved to Atlanta.

Perhaps it is because I never heard from **Debbie** after moving to Atlanta that I have been content to do nothing with my original paper; however, now another friend of mine, by the name of **Robin**, here in Laramie, Wyoming, has recently been diagnosed to have *rheumatoid arthritis*. That is prompting me to revisit the paper I wrote in 1980 and perhaps make it available to **Robin** – if that would interest her; and in retyping it for **Robin**, I am making it available to all.

In 1982, I did the same thing with cancer. Another friend became victim of cancer and that provided me incentive to think about it – much in the same way as I had thought about arthritis. My approach is to only define a condition lightly without doing any research as may have been conducted by so called *experts*, think about it on my own, develop a personal theory without any distractions from *experts* – and then check out the *experts*. The reason I approach a study in this way is to be able to research it with complete freshness – almost with complete ignorance – and then maybe see something that others may have overlooked.

I think all too often experts become entangled with too much explanation and it ends like the proverbial *can't see the forest for the trees* syndrome. So my approach is to not know about the forest before I start looking at one tree at a time. That is how I approached a personal study or speculation about *arthritis*; and it is also how I approached a personal study or speculation about *cancer*. I am not saying I am right in what I decided in either case. I am only willing to share my decided thoughts for what they are worth.

As another work deals with cancer – one I called *THE CLOSED TUNNEL THEORY OF CANCER* - this one offers my work on arthritis as I wrote it in 1980. On the very slight chance that I have something to offer, I am willing to share it. **Robin**, and everyone reading this, please take my views with a *kernel of salt*. That is to say, don't pay undue attention to them because of the considerable likelihood they really reflect error; but neither assume they are erroneous because another may object to my reasoning.

Objections are not always what they may be presented to be. I think one should always ask that one who objects should explain an objection – and one of the questions that should be answered is: *what do you have to lose if that to which you object is right?* It may well be that an objection is to prevent loss in a current, profitable, practice that is counting on ignorance.

Arthritis – A Skin Hole Theory

Originally Written - 1980

What is *arthritis*? Only lately have I become interested in it due to a friend of mine, **Debbie**, having to deal with the condition because of possessing it. It seems to me extremely strange that this late in man's history, apparently mankind does not know what it is. Originally, the Greeks thought that all pain is due to *inflammation*. Naturally, then, pain in the joints had to be due to inflammation in that area – or of that area. Thus was born the term, *arthritis*, which means *inflammation of the joints*.

We have since found out it is not necessarily inflammatory at all – and in many cases, it is just the opposite – *degenerative*. It is very often an *erosion of the joints*, not an inflammation of the joints. In this offering, I'd like to approach arthritis as if it is, in fact, a degenerative condition and not an inflammatory one; although I confess that inflammation may often coincide with the condition.

So what we really have for this discussion is not an *itis* or inflammation at all, but rather an erosion process between joints. The key, it seems to me, has got to be the location of the malady itself. Why are the joints affected for the most part and not the entire bone – or bones? Surely there must be a simple answer for that.

Why do the joints of one person wear out while the joints of another do not? More than likely, it is not due to bone composition; or surely medical research would have discovered that long ago. Apparently, then, bone composition is not an issue.

Striking out defective bone composition, what do we have left? Remember – we're dealing with a process of erosion or wearing out for no explicable reason. So let's ask the question, what could possibly cause good bone to wear away? The answer would have to be one thing and one thing alone – *friction*.

Why is there friction between some joints and not between others where bone composition is equal? Answer that and we may be a lot closer to the truth as to what is arthritis.

What causes any kind of rubbing friction? Dryness, right? Have you ever tried to start a fire by rubbing two wet sticks together? You can't because to create heat by rubbing two things together, those two things have to allow friction between them; and what happens when you do rub two wet sticks together? Neither will be worn down by the process because their wetness provides a lubrication that is responsible for preventing friction.

It seems rather obvious, then, that what must go on between joints that wear down rather than wear on must be dryness – and therefore, friction. Moving right along, the big question then becomes – *why are some joints dry and some joints wet?*

Once again, I take recourse to observation. What causes anything once wet to go dry? Just a little thing called *air*. Perhaps it's as simple as that. In the case of the arthritic, air gets in between joints. With the rest of us, air is prevented from entering. With the arthritic, air probably invades where it should not go and thus causes joints to go dry and be subjected to movement with friction. With friction, there is erosion – and with erosion, damaging destruction of otherwise healthy bone.

If it is true, however, that air invades in some cases and not in others, why? Assuming that the only way that air can invade is from the outside, what could possibly allow it? Simple answer – *holes*. That's right – holes in the skin that normally protect inner organs from air. But we all have holes in our skin. Right? Why, then, don't we all have air on our bones?

Well, perhaps in some cases, holes in the skin exhale while other holes inhale. Now if you inhale where you should exhale, air is going to go where it shouldn't. Right? So with the arthritic, holes in the skin inhale where they should be exhaling; or in other words, they take in where they should be giving out. Consequently, they take in or breathe in air when they should expire something. By failing to expire, they allow intake of air and that causes – or may cause – the joints to dry.

Now, in my case, I have an extremely oily body; and I would defy air to get in my oily pores to dry up my joints. Perhaps the arthritic lacks that agent in his or her skin that emits a fluid that would normally fill in some holes. Perhaps with a lack of fluid emitting from the inside out, some holes are left open and take in air when they should have been expelling some fluid. I am guessing, of course. It may not be that way at all.

Assuming I am right, however, I think it would be reasonable to believe that dryness through exposure to air can happen better where skin is stretched to open up holes. Upon bending any joint in the body, we would naturally stretch the skin; and where no expiration or expelling is occurring, opened minute holes in the skin could easily breathe in air. Consequently, inner area surrounding that stretched skin would be subjected to drying – and that means the joints which are particularly vulnerable because they often have no extra flesh around them to offer further protection from the open air. The joints, then, having dried, would lose their lubrication and move only with friction, one bone against another.

If this is the cause of the wearing process of the arthritic, then the prevention of the process would simply amount to plugging up the holes. That's all – just plugging holes that ought not be opened for intake of air; however the choice of a proper process should take serious consideration. More trouble than arthritis could be caused by plugging holes in a way that would prevent normal body exhaling (or perhaps better, *emitting*) functions.

Before we get into the proper solutions for plugging holes, however, let's examine the theory of dryness being the cause just a little further. Let's take up the question of the eyes of the arthritic. Often, *cataracts* form for these victims. Could the cause be the same?

What if we were never able to close our eyelids? Would not our eyes become dry where they now have some lubricant? What prevents the eyes from drying out? Glandular fluid which comes from eyelid movement. Right? But what if the eyelids couldn't move? That fluid might dry as film over the eyes. Perhaps.

Another perhaps. Perhaps it is not a lack of fluid that causes cataracts to form over the eyes, but rather a natural fluid that is allowed to dry; but, if so, why would it dry in some cases and not in others? Perhaps for the same reason that joints dry in some cases and not in others. The skin, protecting the eyes in sleep, by failure of movement, may encourage no new fluid; and the holes in the skin over the eyes could intake air and dry the membranes over the eyes. Over an extended period of time, dry fluid upon dry fluid could obscure vision. Presto – *cataracts* – and another possible support for *the skin hole theory of arthritis*.

Accordingly, arthritis left unchecked could eventually leave a victim completely crippled. In time, joints could become completely eroded and nerves, normally protected, could become exposed to the friction process. Eventually, in vulnerable areas of the body like the spinal column, which is stacked with one joint upon another, nerves could actually be severed and victims left paralyzed.

Arthritis then becomes far more than a condition of pain in the joints, but rather potentially a seriouscrippler and destroyer. If my *skin hole theory* is right, that crippling need never occur at all.

Arthritic Treatment

So, let's examine what's needed for the solution? How do we plug up the holes in the skin? Several ways are possible but basically there are two – internal and external.

The best way in my opinion is to honor Mother Nature and go with the natural process. Find out why arthritics lack glandular fluid in the skin and correct, if possible, with diet. My guess is that in a majority of cases finding and sticking to a proper diet is all that would be required. Less honorably, perhaps, normal glandular operations could be induced through drugs.

To aid, or if necessary, to substitute diet solutions, an arthritic should be advised to use external means as well. Perhaps frequent applications of an acceptable body oil would suffice. In addition to that, frequent joint movement to induce more fluid on the joints should be highly advisable, if not medically dictated. The reason for this should be obvious. The drying out process of arthritics, if that is their problem, would be greatly inhibited by frequent natural moistening.

Thus, arthritics should be encouraged to sleep for lesser periods than non-arthritics. They should get up and move around every few hours to induce the flow of more fluid to

prevent dryness between joints and consequent friction. The worse thing an arthritic could do would be to take frequent soap baths to eliminate whatever oil might be in the skin and sleep for long hours. More than likely, however, that is precisely what most arthritics would do to avoid pain. A hot tub may aid the moment; but the cleansing process without re-oiling could be very damaging.

Also, arthritics should be encouraged to sleep with their joints nestled into another person's flesh as much as possible. This would prevent exposure of joints to air by closing off the skin holes with solid flesh against them and would allow the arthritic to sleep longer periods if desired without having to get up and induce glandular secretion between joints by movement.

If a particular arthritic condition has gone on for an extended period, it may well be that the victim's glands have themselves dried and are therefore not capable of further secretion of normal fluids. In such a case, artificial means would have to be used to provide fluid between joints. Perhaps some deeply penetrating oily substance could be massaged into the arthritic's joint areas – or perhaps direct application by way of injection through a syringe could be appropriate. It might be entirely possible that only one injection would be needed if follow up care to close open skin holes is followed. It should go without saying that selection of an appropriate injection fluid should be determined with great care. For sure, the wrong substance could cause greater damage if the body is allergic to it.

How can you recover worn away bone? Other than by actually replacing it with some substitute, I doubt that such recovery is possible. The process of wearing between joints could be arrested perhaps, but maybe natural recovery of lost bone is unlikely, if not impossible. A victim's loss of limb usage might not be restorable; however, it is likely his or her pain could be greatly alleviated if nerve damage has not occurred.

If this *skin hole theory* of arthritis is correct, however, the ailment could be greatly prevented from crippling others in the future simply by addressing a few small details of care and prevention; and then, too, if the *skin hole theory* is right, the kinds of arthritis that are inflammatory are probably due to disease allowed entry in these same holes in the skin. Perhaps in the long run, most crippling diseases can be traced to that hole in the skin that allows the inner organs to be ravaged by disease because of the intake of germ or virus into the system. Perhaps unprotected skin (or skin whose holes input rather than emit) is the source of most of mankind's ills. Suppose?

For sure, I do not claim to have all the answers; and maybe it is true that this whole presentation is a simplistic look at a complex problem – or complex problems; but then maybe too, the problem and problems are not near as complex as we have made them. We human beings have a tendency, I think, of taking the long way around – and very often, the wrong way.

Thanks for listening.

POSTSCRIPT

When I undertook my study of arthritis, I was determined that the wrong approach would be to read about it in depth before actually conjecturing about it. Approaching it by not knowing anything about it left me free to think my own way and perhaps not be

sidetracked by opinions of so called *experts*. So, right or wrong, I read only an introduction to give me a feel for the naked basics; and I went on from there alone.

Once I had finished my own preliminary conjecture without the aid of medical research reports, however, I did, in fact, read a book on the subject by a Dr. Arthur Freese entitled: **HELP FOR YOUR ARTHRITIS AND RHEUMATISM**.

In that book, Dr. Freese, while acknowledging that science is still very much in the dark about arthritis, listed three basic theories that are considered by the experts as possible causes of *rheumatoid arthritis* – which is a progressive type of arthritis that has reached the destructive stage rather than stop at the irritation stage. Some arthritics do not experience decay or destruction of tissue; and some do. Those that do suffer destruction of tissue belong to the category of *rheumatoid arthritis*; although arthritis, rheumatoid or otherwise, is claimed to be complex and cannot be simplified.

I guess I would stand in disagreement with a position that holds that arthritis, though admittedly complex in that it attacks different body regions, can't be simplified to a single cause.

Before I proceed to comment further upon my thoughts, however, let me cite what Dr. Freese says are the three basic theories that exist about the progressive kind of arthritis – *rheumatoid arthritis*:

- 1) the infection theory,
- 2) the self-attack theory,
- 3) the infection-excessive reaction theory.

The *infection theory* holds that a virus or other infective agent causes destruction of what is called the *synovial membrane* that exists between joints; yet no virus has yet been isolated in spite of grave attempts to discover its existence. (Note: Perhaps since I first wrote this essay in 1980, a virus has been discovered. I doubt that, though. **FWB 9/19/2007**)

The *self-attack theory* holds that for some unknown reason the body destroys its own tissue, failing to recognize that it is not foreign to itself. When a foreign agent enters any area of the body, the body's defense mechanism reacts by, as it were, eating the foreign substance. This theory would hold that the body sees its own synovial membrane as foreign to itself and proceeds to destroy it. The big question here is, if this theory is true, why does the body tend to pick on the synovial membrane?

The *infection-excessive reaction theory* holds that a virus starts the process of destruction and the body's defense mechanism completes it by failing to stop when the virus is destroyed and continues to eat at its own tissue. In my opinion, this theory has the weaknesses of both of the other theories. It presupposes a virus that medical research can't find; and it allows the body to discriminate for no good reason.

So, there you have it – the three basic theories that try to explain the cause of progressive arthritis. Should the *skin hole theory* be added to that list of *plausible theories*? Certainly, in my opinion, it answers questions; but whether it answers them right is, of course, *the question*.

The number one question it answers is: *why is the synovial membrane between joints destroyed?* It's destroyed because it dries out from air invading from the holes in

the skin. It shrivels up, as it were; and it's not because a virus attacks it or the body attacks it. The air attacks it; and that's enough.

Now before I undertook my conjecture, I did not know about the *synovial membrane*; but with knowledge of its existence, my opinion is not altered. I thought that fluid is all there is between joints. So, I found out that besides fluid, there is the *synovial membrane* which acts as a cushion between joints and is for the most part, fluid itself. Like fluid, the *synovial membrane* could dry out too and cause the same problems.

From my research, I find that arthritic attacks *flare up* and sometimes go away for long periods of time. The *skin hole theory* provides an answer the other theories do not. The times of flare ups follow periods when skin holes input and remissions follow periods when skin holes emit – more or less. Unknown to an individual in question, this could be due to change in skin condition because of change in skin care habits or diet or a combination of both.

From my research, I find that inflammatory arthritic conditions happen frequently, thus reflecting swelling in areas affected. The *skin hole theory* provides an answer by suggesting that infection can enter by way of skin holes. Holes in the skin would not limit themselves to air alone. Would they? In many cases, in fact, it would be logical to speculate that air would dry out membranes and fluids as well introduce inflammatory disease specimens.

One more illustration, if I may, and this one from personal experience. When I was 33, my doctor told me that if I didn't get the holes in my eardrums plugged, I may not see the age of 40. (Note: As of this rewrite, I will be turning 66 in Dec., 2007. ***FWB 9/19/2007***) You see, those holes, which I had experienced for a long time, were causing me to get strep throat several times a year. Strep throat weakens the heart. Consequently, if I continued to allow strep into my system, I would probably experience heart disease and eventually, heart failure.

Not looking forward to an early death, I had an ear specialist in Denver patch the holes; and no more strep has been experienced. This whole experience tends to confirm that holes in the skin can cause disease; for the eardrums are certainly a membrane of skin that protect the inner ear which leads to other areas like canals and passages in the nose and throat. Infective agents can and do enter the system via a hole in the membrane of the eardrum and proceed to infect the nasal and throat passages - and eventually even the heart, more than likely via the blood stream. Once again, however, a hole in an external organ of the body appears to be a great part of the problem.

Be that as it may, according to what might be called the *skin hole theory*, arthritis would essentially be a consequence of unprotected skin. Bone joints are more affected because bone joints are more susceptible due to a greater degree of unprotected skin. ***Unprotected skin is basically skin that is too dry, by failing to emit body fluids and thereby leaving skin holes open and inviting to outside elements.***

It is logical that arthritis could start and proceed at a fairly constant rate; and then, out of the blue, subside. The *skin hole theory* would support this circumstance due to a known or unknown alteration of skin condition. The other basic theories would have great difficulty in trying to resolve this and many other arthritic circumstances.

If the body is eating itself, why does it suddenly stop? And if a virus has eaten away at tissue and proved to be the aggressor, why would the tables be suddenly turned with bodily defenses suspending further virus progress? These are questions the other theories can't answer which the *skin hole theory* can.

A Cod Liver Oil Bath?

Perhaps everyone is different in what makes his or her skin oily and protected or dry and unprotected – regarding how all that affects the joints. I have to watch that I don't have an excessive oil problem. Others, perhaps arthritics included, have to watch to avoid excessive dryness.

Commenting further on the need of body oil, after completing the first part of this essay and sending it to my mother, she sent me an advertisement she had found in some magazine that told that a certain doctor by name of **Dale Alexander** could cure arthritis with a prescribed dose of cod liver oil – though I don't think the advertisement detailed the manner of dosage – internally by ingestion or externally by application to the outer body. Supposedly, severely crippled *rheumatoid arthritics* have been cured with this miracle prescription of his. Regardless of any *secret* prescription in degree, however, is it any wonder that his *miracle cure* is an *oil*?

It would not surprise me, though, that **Dr. Alexander's** prescription amounts to taking cod liver oil externally rather than internally, applying it directly to the joint areas via the skin, perhaps allowing some penetration into the joint areas. Mind you, this is only a thought, but even if it's not his precise formula, who knows? It might work. All you arthritics out there, why don't you take an occasional bath in cod liver oil? I'm half kidding, of course – but only half. Such a bath may indeed be wonderful.

Anyway, to conclude this rather different discussion, my *skin hole theory* is simple – as my solution, in principle, is simple. I am not a quack; and I have no medical background; and I don't pretend otherwise. Neither am I an opportunist, seeking to sell some *magic potion* – allegedly of some *secret* content but which is really only *cod liver oil*. I am simply one compassionate person concerned about alleviating the suffering of millions of arthritic victims.

There are answers, even if I have not found them; and I don't think they are to be found in a test tube containing some complex of rearranged chemicals or some such. Life is as wonderful as it is perhaps simple. We may cause ourselves a whole lot of difficulty, dissension, and distress by insisting that our lives are more complex than they are. Of course, I could be wrong; but wouldn't it be rather nice if I'm right?

Again, thanks for listening!

Francis William Bessler

**ARTHRITIS –
A Personal Conjecture**

The End

LOOK YONDER (a Poem)

Written Jan. 24, 1981

(while looking at some pictures, including one of my youngest daughter at age of 2, with clouds in the background – and another of birds flying in front of the sun.)

Look yonder – there – just beyond the cloud.
Can you see it? Does it make you feel as proud
as you can be because it shows the way
for us to go and where perhaps should start the gray?

Look yonder – there – just beyond the child's head
where clouds of white and skies of blue melt in shreds
and make it look like life should be
a mixture of sorrow and joy and fight and peace.

Look yonder – can you see just beyond the ray of light -
three birds flying, with two in front and the other close behind?
It seems they have burst forth from the light from which they came;
and yet as three are one, none are quite the same.

Look yonder – as the sun is going down –
the reflection upon the water, the silence of the sound.
Why is it that we insist on being apart from this
and carry on as strangers in this possible land of bliss?

Look yonder – the time is near when you will have no eyes to see –
when your soul will leave your body and your death will end your dream.
The time is now to command your fate and choose who you will be.
The choice is yours to start right now the beginning of eternity.

CLOSED TUNNEL THEORY OF CANCER

(13 Pages)

By Francis William Bessler
Laramie, Wyoming, U.S.A

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Revised a bit in 1990
Lately revised and transcribed to Microsoft Word
in August of 2003
Most recently revised again in October, 2003.

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Laramie, Wyoming, U.S.A.
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Introduction:

Several decades ago, Father Flannagan of the famed *Boy's Town* in Nebraska said, "*There's no such thing as a bad boy.*" He could have added, a bad boy is a good boy reacting to a bad situation. Resolve the bad situation and you've resolved the bad boy. Basically, this was Father Flannagan's approach to resolving juvenile delinquency. With this very brief essay, I'd like to propose a variation of that approach to juvenile delinquency and apply it to the body: *There's no such thing as a bad body cell.* Using this approach, I intend to offer a redefinition of an old body malady known as *cancer*.

As I do so, however, be it known that I do so only as a layman with an idea. I am not a doctor and am in no way qualified to offer advice. My ideas are strictly conceptual in nature and are not based on any factual research or medical evidence known to me. My arguments are basically logical arguments of a somewhat philosophical nature applied to a physiological matter. Of course I think they are valid arguments, regardless of any personal scientific understanding or lack thereof. Otherwise, I would not take the time nor the trouble to relate them.

Why I Am On The Case

Before we get on with it, though, perhaps it would be interesting to know how I even started speculating on such a thing as *cancer*. All ideas have their start someplace. In the case of the idea I will present in this essay, it started on Stone Mountain, a few miles from Atlanta, Ga. It was a cold early morning in Feb. in 1982 and at around 7 A.M. I was coming down the mountain. I had been hiking and was wearing little, knowing as I do that a body in action generates its own heat. Half way down the mountain, I encountered a very heavily dressed couple going up. There I was with just a little covering and there they were dressed like Eskimos. The contrast was rather stark, to say the least.

Neither of us knew what to say for a moment, as each of us was caught off balance by the other. They did not expect one lightly clad and I did not expect anyone to be hiking on a cold morning as I was. To break the ice, pardon the pun, I remarked: *Aren't you guys about to burn up?* I thought it was kind of funny, but they scowled at me and went on their way.

As I proceeded down the mountain, however, I began to take my off-the-cuff quip seriously. Perhaps it was true that they in their heavy clothes were almost literally "*burning up.*" As strange as it might seem, maybe I was the far wiser of the three of us by not overprotecting myself and overheating myself. As it happened, I had just learned of the unexpected and quick death of my dentist who had been an exercise nut. This guy would run in his sweat clothes to the dental office. The thought occurred to me that maybe both he and the two of my encounter on the mountain had been guilty of overheating the body while thinking they were promoting good health.

Since my dentist friend had just died of cancer, I asked myself – *could there be a connection between cancer and overheating or overprotecting the body?* By the time I reached the bottom of Stone Mountain, I was eager to pursue the idea. Immediately, I checked out several books on cancer and even bought a few. I was determined to play

like a detective and chase a lead that might end in apprehending a “*culprit*” called *cancer*. Keep in mind that, like Father Flannagan, I have no enemies in life – only friends. *In researching cancer, I was really trying to get to know a friend.*

As I pursued what I thought might be a lead, however, it soon became apparent to me that a whole herd of detectives have been following what they consider their own lead – or leads. As it is, our leads are different. Almost all of the detectives already trying to track down the cause of cancer have been convinced of one suspect. Unbelievably, I found myself taking aim at another suspect. The problem is that all the other detectives on this case have degrees classifying them as “*experts*” whereas I have no degree nor even any official education on the matter I am trying to resolve.

Initially, then, of course, *I should be considered the dunce of all the detectives on the case of cancer*. Indeed, I may well be that dunce; but on the other hand, maybe I can lend something to the search for a killer that the others cannot simply because I started out trying to pursue a different evidence. *In following a different evidence, I may also be tracking to a different suspect. In brief, the evidence I think I found is “overheating the body.”* None of the other traditional detectives on the case have uncovered this lead that might turn into evidence. Thus, Detective Francis William Bessler, previously uneducated and still unheralded, may find something relevant in the case of tracking down the killer (and friend) called *cancer* that all other detectives have missed. I admit, it is not likely, but as way of introducing why I am even on this case, I am beginning to address the court of public opinion.

Now, let us continue.

The Defective Genetics Theory

What is the traditional theory of cancer? According to conventional traditional opinion, what is cancer and what causes it? Near as I can tell, *the traditional and almost unanimously accepted explanation of cancer is that it is a malignancy within the body that occurs when normal body cells go awry and multiply at an abnormally excessive rate. This abnormality most frequently results in tumor like growths that impede normal body functions. Traditionally, it has been assumed that the reason for this abnormal growth or multiplication of normal body cells is that for some unknown reason, the regulatory mechanism – or mechanisms – of the guilty cells become defective. That which triggers cellular division is upset and derailed, thus causing runaway activity of the defective cells. Sick cells overtake healthy cells; and chaos results.*

Let’s keep in mind now that we are talking about genuine body cells derailing the system, not external germs or viruses. Let us analyze in brief the natural conclusions of this theory that I have taken the liberty to name the “*Defective Genetics*” theory. As I see it, there are two main issues it expresses. **First, cellular division is due to genetics** if it’s a violation of a genetic mechanism that stimulates excessive division; and **second, a deranged and sick cell can attack or immobilize and overcome a healthy cell.**

Taking the first conclusion at hand that cellular division is a result of genetic direction, I suspect that to be a false conclusion. *It would seem to me that cellular division must be an automatic process, depending primarily upon nutritional supply.* I

doubt that the genetics of a cell governs cellular division, although it probably does affect and effect cellular development in terms of use of assimilated input. We'll go into this a little deeper when discussing my own theory about cancer; but for now, let's just say that ***I don't think the genetics of a cell dictates the division of a cell.*** Rather, it's the quantity and quality of cellular food available, so to speak, that determines cellular growth and cellular division. The genetics of a cell probably only directs internal cellular activity – as if the brain of a cell; but it depends entirely upon food supply (including hormones) to carry on.

It would be interesting to test the *defective genetics* idea, as I have called it, by isolating two lab batches of cells – one comprised of normal body cells of a given organ and the other comprised of so called cancer cells from that same organ – and then submit both batches of cells to identical stimuli of varying input and conditions. Maybe cancer research has already done this and the results have verified their expectations. If they haven't done this, maybe they should. Of course, I could be wrong, but I suspect that the findings would show that under identical circumstances, alleged cancer cells with alleged defective regulatory mechanisms would not multiply any faster than regular cells. If that were the end result, the assumption that alleged cancer cells multiply at an excessive rate would be disproved; and the theory that alleged cancer cells have defective regulatory mechanisms would become very suspect; or at least, it should.

Concerning the second conclusion of the *defective genetics* theory that a sick cell can dictate to a healthy cell, that, too, seems rather implausible. **If a cell is sick for whatever reason, it is not likely it could have enough stamina to direct anything, let alone take on a role of a conquering warrior.** A sick cell would be like any other sick thing – a victim, not a controlling agent. The idea that cancer is due to the unchecked activity of defective and sick cells assumes that in sickness, there is strength.

Even if it is true, however, that irregular multiplication of cells is due to a defective regulatory mechanism within the genetics of victimized cells, what caused the defect? Could a cell be isolated and have its genetic structure bombarded or burned or whatever and still survive to become a terror on the loose? I doubt it. A dead cell is not a cancerous cell. Cancer cells are living cells out of control, it's assumed; but normally speaking any assaulted cell violated to the point of decimation (as might be claimed of a cancer cell) would likely soon become a dead cell, not a monster free to fire all torpedoes. Something must cause a defective cell to become defective in an environment where some cells of the same family are victimized and their brethren left intact. **If the traditional explanation of cancer is correct, it seems to me that a primary question to be answered is: what causes the defect? The primary question should not be: what causes the alleged defects to act as they do?**

At this point, I'd like to remind you that I am a layman and have no knowledge of lab evidence regarding cancer; but I must admit, a big question in my mind is: what reveals a cell to be cancerous? A biopsy specimen is taken to a lab and the lab technician investigates and reports that sample to be benign and non-cancerous or malignant and cancerous. **What evidence revealed in a lab declares the status of a cell?** Are cancerous cells flatter or fatter or rounder or more jagged or redder or browner or what? Can a lab technician see the genetics of a cell through his or her microscope? Even if a cancerous cell can be identified visibly, why is it assumed that it has a defective

regulatory mechanism that turned it that way? **Or is it possible that a cancerous cell does not appear significantly different than a normal cell and the only indication that it is cancerous is that it appears to be out of place and therefore, suspected of invasion?** I don't know the answers to these simple questions. Maybe if I did, I'd be more inclined to believe there's validity to the theory of *defective genetics* of a cancerous cell. As it is, I remain unconvinced that the traditional explanation of cancer is at all accurate.

Adding Commentary – October 24th, 2003

Life for me is an unending series of wonders. I may be wrong as I wonder, but I never cease to tire of wondering. Considering the commentary above at the time that I wrote it many years ago, I look back now and see what I said – or what I was wondering. I was wondering what a cancer cell looks like and even theorized that it may not look any different than a “normal” cell of the same organ.

Well, thanks to a fantastic discovery of yesterday, via a friend, **Clyde Edmiston**, perhaps the smartest guy I have come to know, I now know different. Clyde taught chemistry at the University of Wyoming for over 30 years and seems to me to be a veritable walking encyclopedia. We just recently met through a local Unitarian congregation here in Laramie. I gave Clyde a copy of this paper on cancer – minus this little section and another I will add later.

Clyde knows chemistry, not cancer, but he was very helpful in resolving for me one nagging question I have had for many years. **Do cancer cells look different than normal cells? Now, I finally have an answer. Yes, they do.** In a meeting with Clyde yesterday, he shared a book with me – a book that includes a bit of a treatise on cancer. In that book, there were two pictures side by side – one of a particular “normal” cell and one of an “abnormal” cancerous cell. **The major difference in pictures is that the normal cell was by itself, surrounded by some extra cellular (or intercellular) material; and the cancerous cell was not by itself. The cancerous cell was not really a cell, but a cluster of cells, stacked on top of one another, with almost no extra cellular material about. For what it's worth, however, the cancerous cells were not only more abundant, but they seemed odder as well. They seemed fatter and perhaps more oddly shaped and there seemed to be hair like growths on them.**

Be that as it may, let me now continue with my paper as I handed it to Clyde; but later I will add another October, 2003 comment about what Clyde showed me yesterday. I choose to add these comments rather than alter my original article because I think it is a bit more honest to do it that way. I pride honesty more than anything in life. Rarely have I found all the answers I have sought with a first speculation. As more and more knowledge becomes available, we learn more than we did before. *Speculation is the key to all learning, however; and without it, no one would ever learn a thing in this life.* I am learning as I write this – even though I wrote it originally it 1982. Twenty-one years ago I started with a speculative idea; and now twenty-one years later, I am continuing my speculation and adjusting with new data. Perhaps you can appreciate the whole trip more if you see where I have added an adjustment.

End of Added Commentary – October 24th, 2003

To continue, I believe our cancer research and researchers are guilty of plain ole unadulterated blindness. We may be clinging to a second assumption without having validated a first assumption, upon which the second assumption is based. **We may have assumed cells to be defective without having proven them to be so; and then based on that assumption, we may have proceeded to assume further that these alleged defective cells are guilty of anarchy.** If so, that's like looking at the Chinese and declaring them inhuman because of their slanted eyes and then assuming they are guilty of some outrageous crime because they are inhuman. The Chinese are not inhuman because they have slanted eyes; and more than likely, cancerous cells are not defective just because they look different.

It's only a hunch on my part, but I suspect that the feeding and growth and division of cells are strictly automatic processes entirely dependent upon food supply and availability and in no way are subject to varying genetic decisions among the same family of cells. **In short, cellular division and growth are likely due far more to supply conditions than to genetic decisions.** If so, any "*defectiveness*" within a cell's genetic regulatory mechanism could not in itself explain cancer. If it's true that our cancer research has assumed that cancer is due to irregular multiplication of cells due to *defective genetics*, it may be no wonder that we have been chasing vapor trails to find a cure. *How can we find a cure if we don't even know the cause?*

An Alternative Explanation

There's no such thing as a bad body cell or a body cell gone bad. This is my gut feeling and amounts to my starting point. As the traditionalists of cancer research assume for a starter that cancer cells are defective and rebel body cells, I assume for a starter that there's no such thing as a bad body cell or rebel body cell. *Certain cells may look different and even act different, but that doesn't make them bad.*

Consider this alternative explanation, if you will. What causes a cell to divide? I know we have asked that question before, but for emphasis, let's deal with it again. *If I were to take a single cell and isolate it from any outside influence, would it divide all by itself?* Could I force it to divide by bombarding its so called regulatory mechanism with something and thereby altering it? Again, I doubt it.

As previously stated, that which must influence cell division must be as much external as it is internal; and perhaps it is the analysis of an external cause of cell division rather than an internal cause of cell division that is indeed the key to irregular cell division. If nothing else, that cell must require food to survive and multiply; and perhaps that's where the answer lies in determining why cancer cells multiply at an irregular rate.

So, what is it that's the catalyst for cell division? At least partially so, the catalyst is, or are, hormones. To put it plainly, when hormones are present, cells divide. Hormones are at least one of the external stimulants of cell division – although, of course, nutrients are as essential.

Now, consider this. *If the presence of hormonal substance is abnormal, would that not likely result in abnormal cell division? Thus, if not enough hormonal substance is*

present, would not abnormally low cell division likely result? And if too much hormonal substance is present, would not abnormally high cell division likely result? My Friends, the latter is cancer – abnormally high cell division. Perhaps here is where the answer lies and not in any defectiveness of genetic material.

Now, what could cause the presence of too much hormonal substance? Certainly an overactive organ that produces or generates the hormone could be the cause, but also consider this possibility.

As I understand it, the lymphatic system of the body normally drains off cell excrement, that is cell waste. It also drains off intercellular fluid which likely contains hormones and unused nutrients. *If the lymphatic system were to malfunction and normal drainage was prevented as a result, what would likely happen?* Would not an organ so plugged be susceptible to an oversupply of hormones and nutrients? And when that happens, would not the irregularly high amount of blocked cellular food likely cause abnormally high cell division and result in what we call *cancer*? *Irregular cancerous cell division could then occur to actually eat into the lymphatic system itself, thus preventing any further drainage and setting up a malignant or life threatening situation.*

Thus, what it might come down to is, in the case of a malfunctioning lymphatic system, what is it that could cause the malfunction in the first place? The lymphatic system is comprised of vessels that could be called *tunnels* which carry fluids. If the body were subjected to excessive heat, the tissues surrounding the lymphatic vessels might expand, causing constriction of the vessels – thus preventing normal functioning. *Because drainage is obstructed, hormones and cellular nutrients build up, as if in a dam, and stimulate excessive cell division.* It would seem like if a cell is presented with food, it would do the natural thing – eat or assimilate that food. Thus, if it were presented too much food, it would eat too much and divide more quickly than normal. If this is so, cancer may have nothing to do with an assumed defectiveness of genetic material. Of course, I suspect it doesn't. Leastwise, that's the argument I am proposing in this little essay of sorts.

That which it might amount to is that at least one of the causes of cancer may be an overheating of the body or any given organ in which cancer has developed.

Anything that bears the heat producing stimulus would then be the carcinogen or carrier that activates the process. That could be heat from sources external to the body or heat resulting from the energy processes of the body in digesting food and processing radioactive stimuli.

Smoking could lead to cancer by coating the lungs, thus prompting a retention of heat in the lungs much like blankets cause a retention of body heat. The body does not need too much heat anymore than it needs too much of anything. Too much heat could cause expansion of tissues surrounding needed flowing vessels – which could lead to the closing of those vessels by constriction. Smoking, taking long hot baths without cooling, wearing too much constrictive clothing or sweat wear, taking in too much radiation, lying too close to a fire or too long in the sun, eating too many heat producing foods – could all lead to cancer. That is, of course, if my speculation is correct.

Along with a simple overheating of the body, a number of other things could impede normal lymphatic vessel functioning as well and thus dispose the body to cancer. Viruses, perhaps, and germs, too, could infect and block vessels and prevent

their normal drainage function; but the bottom line is the same. *It could be a malfunctioning of the lymphatic system, regardless of cause, that could be the culprit that sets the table for cancer – not a defectiveness of the genetic machinery of the cells themselves.*

Get rid of the virus, if the cause is a virus, and perhaps remission of the cancer will occur. Get rid of the germ, if the cause is a germ, and perhaps remission of the cancer will occur. Get rid of the heat carcinogen, if the cause is overheating the tissue, and perhaps remission of the cancer will occur. And though we haven't mentioned the possibility of tension causing a constriction of the lymphatic vessels, get rid of the tension, if that's the cause, and perhaps remission of the cancer will occur.

So – there it is, a new explanation for an old foe. *Could it be that we have been on the wrong track from the beginning in assuming that the disease of cancer is far more complex than it actually is?*

Closed Tunnel Theory

Originally, I wrote a version of this speculative study of cancer in 1982, but at that time I did not give my theory a name. I passed on my unprofessional speculation without a name for my theory on cancer to cancer societies in Atlanta, Denver, and New York. **Apparently my work was not impressive enough for comment because I received no official responses.** I did, however, receive one unofficial response verbally from a secretary out of the Denver branch. She said that she thought my ideas were “*absolutely brilliant*” and she could not wait to pass them on to her superiors. It seems her superiors did not share in her enthusiasm because there was no further response.

In 1990, after eight years of silence, I decided it was time to open the box and rewrite my thoughts – and also to attach a name to my theory. It seems all things need names to be recognized at all. **So, on that second attempt, in 1990, I gave my theory a name, but I also gave the conventional theory of cancer a name as well.** The conventional theory I called the *Defective Genetics Theory*. I named my own theory the *Closed Tunnel Theory*.

After 1990, once again I spread my thoughts about – even tried to get publications like *Reader's Digest* interested in publishing them; but to date, as of this year of 2003, I have been unsuccessful in getting any response from anyone on an official basis. Friends have responded and friends of friends, but no actual official within medical research or medical treatment has offered me a response.

In 1994, I did receive a kind of response, however, from a fellow computer programmer – with whom I was working in Harrisburg, Pa. This one has a father who is a doctor. I asked my friend to ask his father to review my ideas. The response that came was by word of mouth only where I was hoping for the good doctor to write me so that I could study his comments. All I received from the good doctor, however, was that my ideas are “*too ludicrous for comment.*”

I might be remiss, however, if I did not offer the response of my own personal doctor in Atlanta. In 1990, I gave it to him to read. When I asked him what he thought about my ideas, he said that he started to read it and his dog started barking. He said that he took that as a sign. If his dog did not want him to read it, then it must not be worth reading. I kid you not. That is what he said. Earlier in 1987, I had been diagnosed with

gall stones with a recommendation of gall bladder removal. I sure am glad that the doctor's dog was not present for the surgery. Otherwise, he may have started barking and the good doctor would have taken that as a sign that his dog objected to my gall bladder removal – and I would still be hurting with gall stones.

Maybe these ideas I have are so crazy as to merit no attention – or comment. I am willing to admit that is not only possible, but leaning toward the probable. **It is unlikely that a relatively ignorant layman could discover something that all sort of experts have bypassed.** *On the other hand, maybe those experts have bypassed seeing the obvious for being too caught up in the rut of having assumed something to be true that is not true.* I mean, if all the experts who are trying to resolve cancer have signed on to the *Defective Genetics* explanation and that explanation is not correct, then it is no wonder that all the experts are on the wrong trail. It is not likely, I admit; but it is possible; and it is because it is possible that I am once again typing out these thoughts. When I finish, once again, I will spread the resulting effort about and see what happens.

To Review: Essentially, my theory, ludicrous as it may sound, considers blockage of body tunnel systems to be the principal cause of cancer. So it seems appropriate to call my theory a *closed tunnel* theory. Perhaps, *blocked tunnel* or tunnels would be a better way to put it. When the vessels of the lymphatic system are blocked, normal body cells grow and divide more rapidly than normal for having an excess of available food and form little colonies and become tumors. These colonies eat into the essential body organs, causing the affected organ or organs to fail. That's the basic theory called the *Closed Tunnel Theory*.

Of course, there are bound to be a bunch of objections. I will try to anticipate the more likely ones.

First, there's the question of metastasizing. Cancer is considered to be dangerously threatening because it appears to have a nature of metastasizing or spreading to new sites. Does the *Closed Tunnel Theory* provide an explanation? Does it explain why so called cancer cells would travel and infect other organs other than the assumed organ of origin?

My guess is that traveling cancer cells may be far more an illusion than a reality. I suspect that the condition of overheating – if that's the catalyst – may affect multiple organs simultaneously because the heat factor may be the same. This would lend itself to an appearance that the cancer of one organ originated from the cancer of another. *Actually, the cancer may not spread, as assumed, from one single source, but occur wherever tunnel blockage occurs.*

How about a cancer that does not result in a tumor, like Leukemia, for instance? Can the *Closed Tunnel Theory* offer an explanation? How can the overabundance of white blood cells, or a so called proliferation of leukocytes, occur in the blood? There's no tunnel blockage in the blood. Is there?

I would answer this objection by saying that *Leukemia might occur, not only because there are too many white cells, but maybe more accurately because there are not enough red cells.* White cells may be given bad press as the cause of the scarcity of the red cells, but perhaps that's not the answer. Perhaps the explanation for a scarcity of red cells lies with the red cells themselves and the conditions surrounding them in the

blood plasma. Perhaps white cells populate the blood to an excessive degree simply because the red cells lack some essential and therefore cannot reproduce – like sterile sperm perhaps. Given that the red cells cannot use their portion of the nutrition in the blood plasma, the white cells might use what the red cells cannot use and therefore populate within the blood more than normal, throwing the blood into an imbalance.

Leukemia might be called a cancer because it seems to amount to a proliferation of one type cell to the detriment of another type, but personally I would not call it a cancer. I'd simply call it a blood disorder; and I'd look toward the red cells for an answer, not accuse the white cells of crowding the red cells into oblivion.

Cancer Cure and Prevention

As previously discussed, there may be many causes of cancer, but it is another of my gut feelings that most of it is caused by heat – too much heat, quite often because of too much constriction and protection. Of course, preventing cancer is much easier to handle than arresting it or curing it, but the same measures needed to prevent it may be the best measures needed to arrest it too.

In short, don't overheat the body. Unwrap it and let it do its thing. Don't smother it. According to the ***Closed Tunnel Theory***, doing so might cause overheating; and that might lead to vessel or tunnel blockage.

It might be worthwhile to note here that the bra could be a dangerous item for some ladies. Imagine for one little moment that you are a breast. How would you like it being trussed up and imprisoned and refused freedom to move and breathe? Of course, I am guessing, but I do suspect that the bra is quite possibly the single greatest cause of breast cancer for the ladies as briefs are for prostate and testicle cancer for the men.

Perhaps the best of all external measures to prevent and arrest cancer is nothing more than nakedness, at least in warm weather; but I am willing to bet that in a vast majority of cases of cancer, the patient does just the opposite. Rather than loosen up, I bet they bundle up, thinking erroneously that the body needs protected. If my theory is correct, that's the last thing any body needs – especially one with cancer.

The three biggest killers to set up cancer could be excessive exposure to the sun or heat, restrictive clothing or sweat wear, and long hot baths or saunas - although as long as the body is adequately cooled after being subjected to excessive heat, I suppose that no long term problems should ensue. Ideally, however, it should be clear that avoiding too much heat altogether would be the far wiser course; and that can best be achieved by wearing nothing at all.

About current treatments of cancer based upon the ***Defective Genetics*** perspective, I would rather not comment – at least not in any detail. Chemotherapy and Radioactive treatments may well be effective in terms of reducing cancer colonies. Once cancer has been started and has been allowed to develop into a crisis, I would not rule out the current treatments for myself if I were to get cancer. On the other hand, if confronted with a diagnosis of cancer, I may thumb my nose at all current practices because they are based on what I consider a wrong definition of cancer. ***I have no idea how I would react.*** Upon reflection, I might concede to current treatments or I might go my own way. My guess is that I would go my own way, prepared to call it an exit should that way fail.

There are no guarantees in life; but should I come down with cancer, I reserve the right to decide then how to deal with it.

A New Ending – October 24th, 2003

Remember – a little while back I added a comment from October, 2003. Now, let me add another; and in the process, I will replace the old ending with a new one.

In concluding this mini offering, I must admit that I may well be in over my head in speculating about a subject about which I know so little; but I do not think I have the right to assume that my thinking cannot be right. ***Who has the right in this world to assume he or she is wrong when if he or she is right, so much will have been lost in not going forward with an idea?*** So what if I am wrong. It won't be the first time someone has been wrong. Right?

My friend, Clyde, tells me that some cancer research suspects that cancer cells are like immortal cells in that they seem to be cells that can't age. I have no idea at this time in my speculation about cancer to even attempt a comment on that – except to say that since cancer research knows a whole lot more about cancer than I do, its suspicion is more likely correct than my own.

Without getting into details, as I understand it, it is believed by some that normal cells age with each division. For some reason, it is believed, that cancer cells lack that ability to age. Perhaps at some point these “immortal” cells – which may have been with us since infancy – get out of hand and go berserk. They begin to divide erratically - with each child cell retaining the “immortal” aspect of the parent cancer cell. Normal body cells lack this failure to age apparatus and get wiped out by the much stronger “immortal” cancer cells.

I must admit that this theory does sound smart, even if in the end, it isn't. I just do not know. Smart or otherwise, however, my current speculation tells me that my own chances are now even greater of being right than before. Before what? Before my chat with my friend, Clyde – and before the pictures he showed me.

Wow! ***What a difference a picture makes.*** Before that picture I suspected that cancer cells may become overactive simply because they had too much to eat. My speculation – as you should know by now – is that due to blockage of lymphatic vessels, normal cells grow out of norm because they are trapped into doing so. They grow and divide more than normal because they can't escape. It may be as simple as that. In being blocked from traveling in their own time down the lymphatic tunnel system into the body's evacuation system, they can't get out because the tunnels are blocked. ***Being blocked within all those nutrients swimming about in the intercellular fluid, they eat like mad, divide like mad, and act like mad; and in all this madness, only “normal” processes are occurring – normal in that given availability of food, a normal cell can only eat that which is provided.***

And now, having seen a picture of a cancerous situation, I am inclined to believe even more that such is the case. Picture in your mind's eye, as it were, several cells lost somewhat in a sea of intercellular fluid. Now, picture in that same mind's eye some time later - a few cells have become many. But according to the picture Clyde showed me, the intercellular material or fluid that had appeared in the picture with the normal cells had disappeared in the picture with the cancerous cells. ***Where did it go?*** How could it be

otherwise? It must have gone into the cells that have replaced the cells of the previous scene. Whatever happened between the first and second pictures did not only involve a multiplication of cells, but probably as importantly, a disappearance of intercellular fluid. ***Perhaps cancer research should study the reason for the disappearance of intercellular fluid and therein find the real root of cancer.***

As the saying goes, this may not be ***rocket science***. I do believe we have been looking away from the truth in thinking that cancerous cells become so due to a defective genetics within. ***Perhaps in our dedication to complication, we have wanted the explanation to lie in defective genetics; but wanting it will not make it so if it isn't so.*** Will it? Perhaps, as a society, we have wanted a defective genetics explanation because that explanation lends itself to an industry of drugs and to an economy, profiting via drugs. And so maybe we have been deliberately looking away from the real truth because the real truth does not lend itself to solution via drugs – and industry.

What is the solution to cancer if cancer is only dealing with a blocked lymphatic system? I'd say, ***Cool it, Baby!*** Stop overheating your system with external or internal heat processes if you do not want it to go awry. ***Cool it, Baby!*** Stop crowding your body. Let it live. Let it have its space. Let it breathe!

When I saw the picture of a cancerous colony that Clyde showed me, one of my first reactions was ***too many cells in too little space***. As humans, I believe we are doing the same thing. We are bunching up our populations into too little space. In a way, as our bodies are reflecting cancer due to failure to loosen, our societies are beginning to reflect a cancer of their own. It is not natural to do what we are doing; and yet for economic reasons, we are doing it. ***It is not natural to crowd so many people into so small a space; but we are high rising ourselves to potential disaster by stacking people on people rather than spreading out. If something tragic happens on the first floor of a high rise, the top 140 floors could be doomed; and yet we continue high rising – just daring disaster to happen.***

It is amazing what a picture will show – if we have eyes to see it. When I saw that picture that Clyde showed me, it was like a picture of New York in the body. All those cells stumbling all over one another and stacked on top of one another. It ain't natural – yet once the process has been given a green light, it is natural for cancerous cells to react or act as they do. ***It ain't natural that they had to be compressed, but being compressed, it is natural that they survive as they do – or try to survive.***

I am sure some would argue that cancerous cells are defective in that they take on a new form. If you will remember, the picture that Clyde showed me offered fatter and odder cells than the norm. But my question is what caused them to be fatter and odder? I think the fatter should be somewhat clear. The cells got fat because they ate too much – just like any of us would do. The odder part is not within my speculation to resolve. I have no idea why the cancerous cells I saw had hair like growths on them as they did; but I suspect that all of that happened because the cells could not get away. In staying and eating and multiplying and forming colonies where colonies should not be found, each of the members of a colony also assumed a transformation of sort. By finally seeing a picture, some kind of transformation or reformation is obvious to me; but I suspect that it was not due to any defective genetics; though part of the transformation of a cell could well include defecting the genetics. ***If, in fact, it turns out that a cancerous cell does***

have defective genetics, I suspect it is the cancer that caused the defect – and not the defect that caused the cancer.

A Final Challenge

Where should we go from here? *Demonstrate the truth, I guess.* Take two animals of the same kind with similar lymphatic systems as humans, separate them into different environments, feed them the same, and pay attention to the results. If my claim that excessive heat may cause a blocking of the lymphatic system is correct, it should be easy to verify. Feed two critters of the same kind the same thing, but vary the heat in the room of each – making sure that one of the critters has to deal with mildly excessive heat. You won't prove anything by subjecting one to terribly excessive heat. Anything will fail in a hot environment. Make the excessive heat somewhat mild, not torrid. Watch and see what happens. My guess is that the critter in the warmer room is going to fail much quicker than the other.

Oh, sure, I can hear some responding, the critter in the warmer room will fail, but it may not be cancer that results. I agree. It may not. I am speculating now. That is all I have ever done. I am claiming it might be so. Perhaps a few who really want to know if my speculation has merit can do some testing. How else can we find out?

I think the key to this test is to make sure it is conducted with public awareness and audited by an impartial jury. Repeat the test to confirm it with multiple impartial juries; but under no circumstance, leave it to a prejudiced party – like cancer or drug industry - to conduct. I could be wrong. I know that; but if I am not wrong, perhaps it would be wise to start acting much smarter than we have with both our bodies and our societies.

Thank you so much for taking a few moments to hear me out.

Francis William Bessler

GO IN PEACE

(From my audio cassette album I call FEELING FREE)

(Also featured later in album called MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE)

Written 1980s – though I may have written this originally in about 1974).

REFRAIN:

Go in peace, my brother. Go in peace, my friend.

Go in peace, my sister – with a love that will never end.

People are walking around this town, trying to fit their key,
but many of the doors they're tryin – are completely outside themselves.
Passing the first door of self, they never will succeed
to find any door but those – that will eventually lead to hell.
If you want to find the door to peace, turn your key upon yourself.
Look at the world through your own eyes – and make your love felt. **Refrain.**

God did not make us free, just so we should concede.
He did not make us to fit any law completely outside ourselves.
He made us to know and love Him through His creations tree –
to accept Him with gratitude – without any guilt.
If you want to find the door to peace, turn your key completely inward.
The door to God is through your heart – and joy will be your reward. **Refrain.**

Christ said to deny yourself, but from yourself, don't turn away.
You still are your own best friend – so don't lack in self respect.
You should deny yourself by helping others find the light of day,
But don't deny others as self denial – and say with God you connect.
If you want to find the door to peace, give yourself as a friend.
There's nothing better than the gift of self – the gift of your own hand. **Refrain.**

People are walking around this world, missing that they're Divine
and act like they are lost fools, wandering in the night.
If God is truly Infinite, then God must be in you and me,
and that would make us all members of God's wondrous Divinity.
If you want to find the door to peace, know All as God's friends.
Then you'll find the love of All – Divinely easy to the end. **Refrain (2).**

Note: *The previous verse – written on 4/18/2006 - is really intended to be an alternative for a previous 3rd verse – which was itself a replacement for an initial 3rd verse (written, I think, in 1974 or so); however it can be either a new 3rd verse – or a simply a 4th verse.*

FWB.

COUNTRY LANE

(From my audio cassette album I call FEELING FREE)

Written in 1982

You may have been born in the city. You may have not seen a day on the farm.
But I can tell you how to get there quickly – and it won't do you harm.

Country Lane, Country Lane – what, my friend, is Country Lane?
It's a takin off your clothes and a driving down that road.
That's what I call Country Lane.

Life was made for the living – and it's too bad we can't all relate.
But just because we can't be all forgiving, that's no reason to hate.

Country Lane, Country Lane – what, my friend, is Country Lane?
It's takin it all off and a working at your job.
That's what I call Country Lane.

I'm sorry some hate their body. I'm sorry others love their shame.
But the world belongs to the meek and holy. It's time we stopped honoring the lame.

Country Lane, Country Lane – what, my friend, is Country Lane?
It's stripping to the buff and enjoying life so much.
(or – It's wearing only your skin and avoiding the world of sin)
That's what I call Country Lane.

ROAD TO PEACE (A Poem)

(From my audio cassette album I call FEELING FREE)

Written 1983. Modified somewhat on May 4th, 2009.

All the armies that have ever marched have marched in a uniform.
Many of the plights that have plagued mankind
have plagued it for the clothes it has worn.
Without a loin cloth around the waist,
man is powerless to defame.
Men know this and that's why
their greatest ally is shame.
They build instead churches
that resound the message for their perceived impotence
and they call on God for a crown
to bless them for their resistance.
Satan and shame, shame and Satan –
what difference is there between the two?
For they're both excuses
that let men hide themselves from the truth.
To defeat war, we don't have to worry about the gun.
Remove the lie from around the waist –
and the road to peace will have begun.

DANCING'S JUST A WALK

(From my audio cassette album I call FEELING FREE)

Written 1983.

REFRAIN:

*Dancing's just a walk. Dancing's just a walk. Dancing's just a walk with a wiggle.
You can dance (be happy) if you've a mind to – just like a long eared beagle.
Dancing's just a walk. Dancing's just a walk. Dancing's just a walk with a wiggle.
Don't mind if I do – carry on with you – with a little chatter and a giggle.
Dancing's just a walk. Dancing's just a walk. Dancing's just a walk with a wiggle.*

Now, listen here to what I say – then come on and do it.
Never mind if you're all alone – because walking's just not for duets.
Walk around the floor, bending to and fro. Let your feet slide and shuffle.
Fred and Ginger, you don't have to be – because dancing's just not for couples.
Refrain.

ELEMENTS OF FREEDOM

(From my audio cassette album I call FEELING FREE)

(Also featured later in album called MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE)

Written 1980s.

REFRAIN:

There's an element of freedom in the way that we walk.

There's an element of freedom in the way that we talk.

There's an element of freedom by the way we comb our hair.

There's an element of freedom – almost everywhere.

There's an element of freedom by the look of our eyes.

There's an element of freedom in the sun in the skies.

There's an element of freedom by the way we touch our parts.

There's an element of freedom in shamelessness of heart.

I don't know who long ago, assigned that man should not
feel the goodness of his nature without the help of pot,
or who first said that man has lost his righteous ways
and needs some special grace to lighten up his days.
It's all a lie, I'm telling you as I'm standing here.
The only thing we need to love is the freedom to care,
about one another –man, woman, and child,
giving as we take – without a hint of compromise. **Refrain.**

They say that man and woman have lost the fiber of their strength,
that we're breaking down the walls of morality at length.
We should have tumbled down those walls so very long ago.
The walls of the unnatural is why our progress is so slow.
It's shameful that man and woman should feel ashamed of their excitement.
It's part of life and should be embraced in all of its enticement.
How dare we tell our children that our truth is to tell the lie –
that the impulse of the flesh is sinful and undivine. **Refrain.**

All that I can say is take your life in your hands.
Don't apologize for your nature walking naked in the sand.
Hold your head up high and be glad for the freedom that you have.
Let's drink a toast to all of life and embrace the worthy task
of letting each other live and sharing each others parts,
laughing and crying and telling the feeling of our hearts.
The one thing that's outrageous that's a violation of us
is to claim that we're unworthy and call it sinful lust. **Refrain.**

WHO'S TO SAY?

(From my audio cassette album I call FEELING FREE)

Written 1983.

REFRAIN:

Who's to say who will stay? Who's to say? Who's to say?

Who's to say who will stay on this earth another day?

And who's to say who will go where the winds will only know?

Who's to say? Who's to say? Who's to say?

There's a time for us all to live and a time for us all to die,
a time for us all to raise our crops while the sun, it still does shine.
There's a time for wedding bands and a time for gown and caps
and a time for us all to find what in our hearts will last. **Refrain.**

There's a time for us all to stand and speak and a time to listen well,
a time for us all to love a child and to be a child ourselves.
There's a time to watch the sunset and a time to court the moon
and a time for us all to see the world as just a great big room. **Refrain.**

Added 11/26/06: There's a time to find the truth and a time to attend the wise,
a time for us all to wonder about the meaning of our lives.
There's a time to offer thanks and a time to heal the ill,
and a time for us all to decide just what should be our wills. **Refrain.**

LIFT YOUR SPIRITS HIGH

(From my audio cassette album I call FEELING FREE)

(Also featured later in album called MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE)

Written 1980s.

REFRAIN:

You gotta lift your spirits high – no matter what happens.

You gotta lift your spirits high – and let your facades die.

Be vulnerable to your lover – and others do not despise.

Be kind to your neighbor – and watch your spirits rise.

It's they who've caused the human plight who've had no doubt that they were right.

How wrong we are to assume we're God – or claim the right to wield His rod.

When you're low and feeling down – forget about the talk of town.

Dream what you will, feel what you dream – and if it helps, spread on whipped cream.

Refrain.

When you find in life, the tide's recessed – and you seem a stranger to all the rest,

Never mind, it will all soon be behind – and you'll find friends of your own kind.

The pendulum swings, and life does too – from ecstasy to the dreaded blues.

Hold on, my friend, hold on with pride. Say thanks for the tears for you have eyes.

Refrain.

Life is walking a tight rope. Today, it's yes. Tomorrow, it's no.

How do you do, Francis the mule, Yes, your Honor, I swear it's true.

One moment you're the greatest friend they've had –

the next you're their greatest handicap.

Who can say who you should be. That's up to you to decide – not me. **Refrain (2).**

Be kind to your neighbor – and watch your spirits rise.

HOW CAN I BE BORED

(From my audio cassette album I call MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE)

Written 1980s

REFRAIN:

How can I be bored with my life, my friends?

How can I be bored when Nature's goodness never ends?

Why should I deny the many fruits of time?

How can I be bored with my life, my friends?

This is a simple little song with a simple little melody.

It's not Brahms or Mozart or Henry Mancini;

but it tells what in my soul like they have never done;

and it tells what I love – like the cricket and creek and evening and the sun. **Refrain.**

When I look into the mirror and see Nature's body true,

I can't help but want to give it all to you.

As Nature's givin to us – each and every one -

what bores us all is that we fail to give and pass our gifts along. **Refrain.**

To find gentle love, we must give of our life with pride.

That's the golden rule and it always will apply.

You can't measure wealth by how much you can control.

With all your money, you'll still be bored. What's worse, you'll lose your soul. **Refrain.**

LIKE A BIRD IN THE HEAVENS

(From my audio cassette album I call MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE)

(Written on a walk to my friend, Emmett's, apt in Doraville, Ga.

from my apt. in Atlanta.)

Written 1980s.

REFRAIN:

Like a bird in the heavens, I'm free to be.

Like a bird in the heavens, I can fly to thee.

Like a bird in the heavens, I'm in love, you see

For love is just being me.

Look at the little birds. See how they fall?

In seconds, they learn about flight.

There's a lesson so clear. It should bring a tear.

Man's still at war with his fears of the night. **Refrain.**

BRIDGE:

Oh, how I love all the birds of the air –

no less than I love ole sister Moon.

So, please don't blame me if I follow their lead –

and act like the whole world is my living room.

I don't need a servant - tending my needs.

I don't need the world feeling sorry for me.

I don't need your glasses - to let me see.

Just set me free – to be little me. **Refrain**, followed by **Bridge**.

(Then repeat "I don't need a servant" verse,
concluding with **Refrain** twice.)

SMALLEST LITTLE ATOM

(From my audio cassette album I call MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE)

Written 1980s.

REFRAIN:

*From the smallest little atom, to the biggest, biggest star,
that's where God is living and He's living where you are.
From the smallest little atom, to the biggest, biggest star,
God is infinitely in everything – and everything's His jar.*

God is more than just spirit. He must be matter too.
For how can it be different if He is all the truth.
The truth is in everything and in nothing can be denied.
So, God must be matter because matter is not a lie. **Refrain.**

God is in the little finger, but He cannot be known there
anymore than He can in Heaven – or in the soul who cares.
God is not to be divided or be sold at highest bid
and He cannot be derided - even by those who sin. **Refrain.**

For God there is no Hell – for He is everywhere.
And those who from God fell – God is still found there.
I'm sorry that we've been told a different theme,
but now let it be said, that tale is from a thief. **Refrain.**

THE STORY OF LOVE

(From my audio cassette album I call MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE)

Written 1980s.

INTRO:

Let me tell you about the story of love, the story of love, the story of love.

Let me tell you about the story of love – shining like a light from the sun.

Love's intended for release. Love's intended for release.

It's not intended for retreat unto yourself, unto yourself.

Love is only for the free. Love is only for the free;

can't be held without smothering – your inner self, your inner self.

REFRAIN:

*Now, let me tell you about my thoughts of love, never suffocating, always creating.
giving self to others so they can see. Care for them now as you care for me.*

Love's not for the shifty proud. Love's not for the shifty proud.

It is soft as it is loud, but it's always well – It's always well.

Love is not for control. Love is not for control,

not holding others with a rope – but giving yourself, giving yourself. *Refrain.*

THE SUNSHINE SONG
(HOLY CATFISH, ANDY)

(From my audio cassette album I call MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE)

Written 1980s.

REFRAIN:

Holy Catfish, Andy, life's so good, you see.

The sun's shining bright and it's simmering down thru the leaves of the trees.

Life's so good, my friend, my friend. Life's so good, my friend.
Take off your clothes like the antelope and feel the love I send.
Now I can't feel the meaning, the meaning that is me
if I insist on covering up what Mother Nature sees.
Take off your clothes like the antelope and feel the love I send
cause life's so good, my friend, my friend. Life's so good, my friend. **Refrain.**

You're so fine, my pal, my pal. You're so fine, my pal.
Look through your eyes at no disguise at the you that's Natural.
Now, you can't find the wonder, the wonder that is you,
if you insist on covering up what Mother Nature views.
Look through your eyes at no disguise at the you that's Natural
cause you're so fine, my pal, my pal. You're so fine, my pal. **Refrain.**

Now, you can't find the wonder, the wonder that is you
if you insist on covering up what Mother Nature views.
Now, I can't feel the meaning, the meaning that is me
if I insist on covering up what Mother Nature sees.
Take off your clothes like the antelope and feel the love I send.
Life's so good, my friend, my friend. Life's so good, my friend, my friend.
Life's so good, my friend. **Refrain.**

The sun's shining bright and it's simmering down, shining on you and me.
The sun's shining bright and it's simmering down through the leaves of the trees.

THE LOVE SONG – *Second Version*

(From my audio cassette album I call MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE)

Written 1980s.

REFRAIN:

***I'm gonna love everybody through the love I have for me.
I'm gonna love everybody. What wonderful feeling it'll be!
So step right up and be my love. I belong to you, you see.
Then go out and love because you first loved me.***

What is love, my friends? Why is it dear?
Why should we give it without any fear?
I have the answer, friends. I have it in me.
Love is giving of yourself the self that is free.

I'd like to tell of my love to those who'd like to know.
I'm not a horse that has to win – don't even have to show.
For every winner, losers have to pay;
but losers are winners just playing the game. ***Refrain***

There's a sayin, friends, that's goin about –
says we should go with the flow and let it all out.
I believe that's the way it should be.
There's no one alive who should not be free.
And again, while I have a chance in this song to sing.
I'd like to say that winning is not everything.
No one's a loser who tries at all to run.
Just in trying should be most of the fun. ***Refrain (2)***.

***Finish: Then go out and love, then go out and love,
then go out and love because you first loved me.***

I'M PART OF IT

(From my audio cassette album I call MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE)

Written 1980s.

Look at the little bunny – hoppin down the lane,
twitchin its nose and lookin for love and seein me on the way.
Look at the little chick, peckin at the ground,
finding the grains of wheat that make it grow so sound.
Look at the little kittin, purring on my lap,
finding joy in all it does and never finding lack.
Look at the little puppy, jumping about for joy,
sucking on its mama's tit and tagging behind the boy.

REFRAIN:

*No, friends, I'm not above it. God didn't make me to be a summit.
I'm just one of all the gang. I want to be found within the range.
Yes, friends, I'm part of it – not better or worse, but equal to it.
Why should I leave God's friends behind.
All life is God's and God's all life.*

Look at the older rabbit, squatting on its heels,
nibblin away at the carrot, amidst banana peels.
Look at that ole rooster – a cock that is so proud
as he struts around the yard as if it is his town.
Look at that ole cat, set in all its ways,
growing more independent as it sleeps the days away.
Look at that ole dog, still waggin its tail,
still lickin its friends and growlin at those it hates. ***Refrain.***

Look at the little bunny, hoppin down the lane,
twitchin its nose and looking for love and seeing me on the way.

HOW CAN LOVE SURVIVE?

(From my audio cassette album I call MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE)

Written 1980s.

REFRAIN:

How can love survive?

*In this world that we live in,
where there's very little givin,
how can love survive?*

Oh, to look upon the human race –
and to see such a dirty, dirty face.
Why, oh why, do we keep this pace –
of listening to the lies of the disgraced? **Refrain.**

Oh, when I see so many steeples –
who are all claiming to be His keepers!
Ten percent of what you make during the week, Sir.
Now, go my friend. Your soul is clean.
Be at peace, Sir. **Refrain.**

What more can I say of our condition?
Will our sins be allowed into remission?
Why must we continue to ask permission –
to be at peace with Mother Nature and her legions? **Refrain.**
I ask again, how can love survive?

DON'T WASTE YOUR TALENTS

(From my audio cassette album I call MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE)

Written 1980s.

A blind man is a blind man because a blind man cannot see,
but he would be the first one to say, don't pity me.
I may not have your eyesight, but I have a sight as grand.
It's not only the eyes that see or the mind that understands.

A deaf man is a deaf man because a deaf man cannot hear,
but he would be the first one to tell us not to fear.
I may not hear your sounds, - vibrations I do sense.
Let me feel your pulse – my love, it will commence.

REFRAIN:

*Don't waste your talents. Don't throw them away.
You should use them every night and day.
Don't tithe your eye sight – or the sight of your flesh.
or your soul will suffer for the test.*

A dumb man is a dumb man because a dumb man cannot speak,
but he would be the first one to say listen to me.
I may not have your voice or words - I can smile just the same.
Though my words are hard, there's softness in my gaze. ***Refrain.***

A sinner man is a sinner man – he sees only sin,
hears only that man is trash – speaks only with a grin.
He pleads, God come to me, because he knows not God inside.
He clothes himself in fear – his body is his plight.

A holy man is a holy man – he sees only God.
He doesn't look for heaven in religious applause.
He prays God your in me, outside of me as well.
As long as I go naked, I'll be in your spell. ***Refrain.***

Ending:

*Or your soul will suffer for the test.
Yes, your soul will suffer for the test.*

LET THE CHILDREN LOVE

(From my audio cassette album I call MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE)

Written 1980s.

REFRAIN:

Throw away the whip that's on the wall – let the children love.

To keep our world strong for all – let the children love.

Young and old, together, should follow – let the children love.

Adults and children, together, should mellow – let the children love.

You should love your fellow man – that's what he said so long ago.

Then he began writing in the sand – no one was left he could know.

It seems to me we better correct – this situation in our time.

If we don't, we may wake up, someday, to find our world on fire. **Refrain.**

To help our kids love as adults - they must be taught from the start.

How can we expect them not to fault – if we take them from their heart?

The lives of our children, too – have sensations yearning flight.

They don't belong within a zoo – with bars to later keep them tight.

Refrain (Several times).

Let the children love.

SONG OF THE SOUL

(From my audio cassette album I call MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE)

Written 1980s.

Hey, Everybody, come join with me.
Hey, Everybody, I want you to see
what, my soul, it seems to be.
Then, you'll know why I'm so free.

Like a whisp from the air – and a deer from a deer,
Like a log from a tree – and a bear from a bear,
Like a light from the sun – and a stone from a stone,
My soul did come – it was never alone. La,la,la,la,la,la,la

Hey, Everybody, can't you see – that the soul is free to be?
I have a parent soul that's my only mine. You do, too – it's your own kind.

Like a stream from the water – and a frog from a frog,
Like a prince from a king – and a dog from a dog,
Like a petal from a flower – and a flame from a fire,
My soul was born from another soul retired. La,la,la,la,la,la,la.

Hey, Everybody, I want you to know –
why I love my soul so.
It's the image of my parent soul –
and when I die, I'll become one too.

Like cheese from some cream – and a kid from a goat,
Like sand from some dirt – and a rose from a rose,
Like a leaf from a tree – and a child from a mom,
My soul will bear another daughter or son. La,la,la,la,la,la,la. (INTERLUDE)

(Repeat verse above)

Hey, Everybody, make use of your time.
Your days are numbered, as are mine.
Let's all be grateful for our parent souls –
as we find ourselves in loving them so.
as we find ourselves in loving them so,
as we find ourselves in loving them so.

BE AN ANGEL

(From my audio cassette album I call MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE)

Written 1980s.

Be an angel, be an angel, let me be me.
Be an angel, be an angel, don't make me see.
Be an angel, be an angel, it's really easy.
Be an angel, be an angel, go Naturally.

Be an angel, be an angel, don't tell me lies.
Be an angel, be an angel, lies are not wise.
Be an angel, be an angel, to lie is to die.
Be an angel, be an angel, don't compromise life.

Be an angel, be an angel, don't scream at me.
Be an angel, be an angel, it's you that can't see.
Be an angel, be an angel, don't imitate God.
Be an angel, be an angel, for God's not a rod.

Be an angel, be an angel, it's simple you know.
Be an angel, be an angel, take off your clothes.
Be an angel, be an angel, don't live for dough.
Be an angel, be an angel, I love you so.

BRIDGE:

There's no such thing as a bad angel. There's no such thing as a good devil.

There's no such thing as a bad angel. There's no such thing as a good devil.

Angels are those who care for us all,

but who know it's our way or no way at all.

Devils are those who would capture us all, make us go their way or no way at all.

Be an angel, be an angel, obey no one else.
Be an angel, be an angel, live for yourself.
Be an angel, be an angel, don't live in Hell.
Be an angel, be an angel, for Hell's someone else.

Be an angel, be an angel, don't step in my way.
Be an angel, be an angel, don't ask me to pay.
Be an angel, be an angel, light up my day.
Be an angel, be an angel, go your own way.

Be an angel, be an angel, don't be a leach.
Be an angel, be an angel, never deceive.
Be an angel, be an angel, don't hang on me.
Be an angel, be an angel, let me be me.

(Repeat ***Bridge***. Then repeat last verse, duplicating last line.)

THE FEEL OF YOUR FACE

(From my audio cassette album I call MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE)

Written 1980s.

Oh, Baby, I love the feel of your face, the soft touch of your hair on my shoulder.
Oh, Baby, you make me feel so good, so very, very good – as I'm getting older.
I'm going wild in my mind, having the time of my life.
Your love, Dear, is making me bolder.
Oh, Baby! Oh, Baby!
I love the feel of your face, the soft touch of your hair on my shoulder.

Thank you for the love you've given. Thank you for the life we're living.
Thank you for the dreams we've chased, but thanks mostly for your trusting faith.
Oh, Baby!

I love the feel of your face, the feel of your face,
the soft touch of your hair on my shoulder, on my shoulder.
Oh, Baby!

LET THE GEYSER WITHIN YOU GO

(From my audio cassette album I call MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE)

Written 1980s.

REFRAIN:

*Let the geyser within you go. Please discount all shame.
Let the geyser within you go – so I won't know your pain.*

Nature provides a lesson. It's so clear to see.
Get rid of all your tension – to let lose of misery.
There's a wonder called 'Old Faithful', It erupts every hour.
Let's all be like 'Old Faithful' – keep our lives from going sour. **Refrain.**

BRIDGE:

If Old Faithful did not blow as often as she does,
Earthquakes we would know from the tension under the crust. **Refrain.**

It is best to be hot or cold. Don't simmer within regrets.
Your life is yours to hold if your tension you'll forget.
So follow after Old Faithful in the land of Yellowstone.
Let us all be grateful – for the lesson of her moans. **Refrain (twice).**

THE RAIN SONG

(LET THE RAIN COME DOWN)

(From my audio cassette album I call MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE)

Written 1980s.

REFRAIN:

*Oh, let the rain come down. Oh, let the rain come down –
like the love that's in my heart.*

Let it flow upon the ground. Let it give the world a start.

Let the rain be for the flowers and the wheat fields and the trees
what the sun is for sunlight and what my love's for thee.

Love, they say, is gentle, and easy and true.

Well, I guess that's what I have is love –
that's what I feel for you. **Refrain.**

I've wondered almost all my life, why love is so sweet.

And now I know it's that way because it is so free.

Now, I'm not much for judging what makes others sing,
but love does the trick for me –

it has that special ring. **Refrain.**

Love is like a kite, reaching for the sky.

So let go of the string – and fly with it so high.

Now, it's not for me – to tell you how to live.

You must choose your own way –
and you must choose your list. **Refrain.**

Love is like a puppy, licking a child's face.

And love is the only thing that can keep us in the race. **Refrain (4).**

NATURE PEOPLE

(Nature Boy-Nature Girl)

(From my audio cassette album I call MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE)

Written 1980s.

REFRAIN: (sub with 'girl' if a lady)

I'm a Nature boy, from the start I say.

I'm a Nature boy and I like to play.

I'm a Nature boy from the start I say –

and I like to carry on thata way, thata way,

and I like to carry on thata way.

Give me the grass, give me the green.

Give me the mountains and give me the streams.

Give me the sunlight and give me the moon –

and let me frolic among the sand dunes. **Refrain.**

Give me the time to find who I am –

to figure the way I'm part of the plan.

Give me the love of a friend by my side –

and a way I can know the real Jesus Christ. **Refrain.**

No man's an island all by himself.

No lady's alone in feelings that' felt.

We're all the same in what's important to all.

Let's blend in with Nature and all stand tall. **Refrain.**

You can't take it with you. That's what is said.

In life you may marry, but in death you're not wed.

Well, I don't wish to disagree and confuse,

but you'll leave here with your attitude. **Refrain.**

We're not alone. Nature's our friend.

As God is to Nature, Nature's to man.

Let's not look down on the birds and the bees.

Let's join together and let's all be free. **Refrain.**

Give me the time to find who I am –

to figure the way I'm part of the plan.

Give me the love of a friend by my side –

and a way I can know the real Divine life. **Refrain (2).**

NATION OF NATURE

(From my audio cassette album I call MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE)

Written 1980s.

REFRAIN:

I believe in the nation of Nature. I believe in the call of the wild.

I believe in the nation of Nature. Come join with me and be a child.

I believe in the land of Russia. I believe in America.

I believe in friendly Germany. I believe in England's trust.

I believe in Japan and China. I believe in pyramids.

I believe in Argentina, but mostly just in Nature's mist. *Refrain.*

I don't believe in praising emperors. I don't believe in empires.

I don't believe in kings and queens. I don't believe that they're inspired.

I don't believe in saluting generals. I don't believe they have the right to make a man go against his morals – to take a life or suffer might. *Refrain.*

I don't believe in applauding bishops. I don't believe in what they claim.

God can't be the spoiled captain of a crew that has gone astray.

If God is not that spoiled captain, I can't be His rebel child.

God lives in what He's created – that's the nation of my pride. *Refrain.*

HEAVEN AND EARTH COME TOGETHER

(From my audio cassette album I call MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE)

Written 1980s.

REFRAIN: (Male/Female Duet)

Heaven and earth come together in my baby's mind.

Heaven and earth come together in my baby's smile. (sighs)

Heaven and earth come together in my baby's mind.

Heaven and earth come together in my baby's smile. (sighs).

(Note: Originally I wrote the above refrain to say "between my baby's thighs."

Later, I changed it to say "in my baby's smile" which is recorded in *MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE* as "sighs.")

Male:

When I'm loving you, Dear, I'm loving more than you -

I'm loving the ground and the blue.

And when I'm kissing your breasts,

I'm doing it for the rest of all the world and even God too.

Female:

And, yes, Sweetheart, when I'm holding you close,
I'm also letting you go.
And when our lips do meet,
there's nothing more sweet – and love in the world does grow.

Refrain.

BRIDGE: (Duet)

*Look over there, Dear, can you see the moon rise? Can you feel my love with the tide?
Are you looking this way, as the night becomes day,
and the sun relieves the moon in the sky?*

Refrain.

Female:

Look over here, Dear, at the gleam in my eyes, and at my curves as they complete.
God made me this way, and I'm not just clay, and I'm love from head to feet.

Male:

Look over here, Dear, at the gleam in my eyes, and the strength in my body lines.
There's nothing so dear as a man without fear who gives himself as if God's pride.

Refrain.

Duet:

When I'm loving you, Dear, I'm loving more than you –
I'm loving the ground and the blue.
And when I'm kissing you, Dear,
I'm doing it for the rest of all the world and even God too.

Heaven and earth come together. Heaven and earth come together.
Heaven and earth come together in my baby's mind.
Heaven and earth come together. Heaven and earth come together.
Heaven and earth come together in my baby's sighs.
Heaven and earth come together in my baby's mind.
Heaven and earth come together in my baby's sighs.

BIRDS OF AQUARIUS

(From my audio cassette album I call MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE)

Written 1980s.

REFRAIN:

Try on my way of life. Try it on, you see.

Try on my way life, and see if it's for thee.

Try on my way of life – like a bird, you're not free

Then my life is not your own. Just leave it all with me.

(Note: “Just leave it all with me” is recorded as

“Just give it back to me” in

MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE)

Guess I was born a bird of Aquarius.

I have never liked clothes from the age of four.

You don't have to be a bird of Aquarius.

If you need clothes, then clothe yourself and love yourself the more.

Guess I'll always be a bird of Aquarius.

No way I can ever change my ways.

You don't have to be a bird of Aquarius.

Have your tea in clothes and hope for a better day. **Refrain.**

Let me tell you about we birds of Aquarius.

Though we stand for freedom, sexaholics we are not.

You see, it's true about we birds of Aquarius.

Though we like sex, it's all of life that we think's so hot.

Let me tell you more about we birds of Aquarius.

We will not press our lives on you.

But if you deny us birds of Aquarius,

just think what life has been without our truth. **Refrain.**

Here's the corker about we birds of Aquarius.

Though we're high on Nature, drugs we don't need.

If you would be a bird of Aquarius,

then flush all your dope right down the sink. **Refrain (3).**

Then my life is not your own. Just leave it all with me. (3 times)

WALK WITH ME (A Poem)

(From my audio cassette album I call MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE)

Written 1980s.

It's not easy, at first, to be truthful,
and to care about the truth.
No one, at first, likes to stand exposed
and to shimmer in the nude.

Nakedness doesn't come easy
because we're all programmed to hide,
Though it can come eventually,
but only if we try.

Why not walk with me
and find what strength we can?
Let us walk beneath the stars
and play naturally in the sand.

Don't be hurt that you're embarrassed
going forward without clothes.
Know that God can only smile
at all Its Graciousness you hold.

No man can become a prince
by hiding from himself,
and no princess can find peace
by lying on the shelf.

So, come on down and feel the goodness
that in you does reside;
and, together, let us build a castle
that no one can divide.

A FRIEND TO THE MOON (A Poem)

(From my audio cassette album I call MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE)

Written 1980s.

I'm asked what I would look for in a lady, but her description does elude me.
How can you describe a notion, confirmed in flesh, that moves so free like the breeze?
I have walked many a mile – and lurched ahead – and run many a mile too,
looking to find upon this earth, a lady – a friend to the moon.
Man is caught up with this thing he has – this notion he should be a king
and cannot see that a real prince feels clothed in Nature's own scheme.
Woman is caught in what's equally vain – the notion she must be loved
and she cannot see that a real princess sees her flesh like the wings of a dove.
There is no God inside the soul – that's not, too, inside the stone.
God's not aloft. She is the fiber – the filament of soul and bone.
To go with God is to go with Mars – and Jupiter and Saturn and Neptune.
To be at peace is to smile and wave at Mars – and Jupiter and Saturn and Neptune.

THAT'S WHAT I LOVE ABOUT YOU (A Duet)

(From my audio cassette album I call MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE)

Written 1980s.

MALE: What do I love about you, Darling?

FEMALE: What do I love about you, Dear?

MALE: I'll be glad to tell you, Darling.

FEMALE: I'll be glad to tell you, Dear.

MALE:

In the morning after showering, before the aftershave,
I like it when you come on in, bring smiles upon my day.
And when I'm standing before you, with my comb in hand,
I like it when you make me grin and kiss me where I'm man.
I like it a lot when you don't stop if the kids should happen by.
You let them see your love for me and show them care so fine.

MALE REFRAIN:

That's what I love about you, Darling. That's what I love about you, Dear.

I'm so glad I have you, Darling. I'm so glad you are here.

FEMALE:

In the evening after retiring, though you may be tired,
I like it when you touch me still, and turn my night to smiles.
And when I'm lying beside you, while the lamp is glimmering low,
with our door open wide and our bodies in stride, your love for me you show.

I like it, too, when your tongue is you – and my spirits you do rise.
And let me show my feelings so – and cry out in the night.

FEMALE REFRAIN:

*That's what I love about you, Darling. That's what I love about you, Dear.
I'm so glad I have you, Darling. I'm so glad you are here.*

MALE:

In the daytime on the weekend, during long summer days,
I like to have the neighbors in and share with them our ways.
And when I'm telling a story and bungle it like I do,
I like it when you poke my ribs – make me shine just like the moon.
I like it when you join the kids – and we reach for paradise.
Sometimes we don't wear our clothes and we find God without signs.

MALE REFRAIN:

*That's what I love about you, Darling. That's what I love about you, Dear.
I'm so glad you're the mother – of the children we did bear.*

FEMALE:

In the daytime and the nighttime, every day of the year,
I'm so proud you are my spouse – there's seldom time for tears.
You never take me for granted and treat me like your slave.
You're gentle with your mind and kiss. You're easy with your play.
And it's so sweet when you smile at me – and touch me without thrust.
You bring me off, gentle and so soft – and in you I can trust.

FEMALE REFRAIN:

*That's what I love about you, Darling. That's what I love about you, Dear.
And I care about you, Darling – every day of the year.*

MALE/FEMALE REFRAIN (twice):

*That's what I love about you, Darling. That's what I love about you, Dear.
I'm so glad to have you, Darling. I'm so glad you are here.*

PRESIDENTIAL DIRECTIVE

(TAKE OFF YOUR CLOTHES, MR. PRESIDENT)

(From my audio cassette album I call MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE)

Written 1980s.

INTRO:

Take off your clothes, Mr. President. Take off your clothes and smile.

Take off your clothes, Mr. President. Lead us down the isle.

John Quincy Adams was an able man.

He was the President of this great land.

He loved to skinny dip down at the creek.

Even as President, this practice never ceased.

Early in the morning, before the sun did rise,

he'd leave his clothes on the bank and in the creek would dive.

He said there was nothing like the freedom that he felt,

altho to almost no one his story did he tell.

One early morning, John went dipping in the nude.

He left his pants on the bank, along with his shoes.

And in the darkness, he went swimming in the stream.

A prankster took away his clothes and never more was seen.

The President was surprised when he swam back to the bank

and he found his clothes missing, along with the prank.

Hiding in the bushes, he stopped a passerby,

who brought him extra clothes from his house that was nearby.

REFRAIN:

Take off your clothes, Mr. President.

Take off your clothes and smile.

Take off your clothes, Mr. President.

Lead us down the isle.

Take off your clothes, Mr. President.

Take off your clothes, First Lady of the land.

Take off your clothes. Take off your clothes.

Take off your clothes

and lead us by the hand.

Take off your clothes. Take off your clothes.

Take off your clothes

and be a truthful man.

Now, it's too bad, John didn't take the chance,
to use this opportunity to reveal his private stance.
There was absolutely nothing he should have had to hide.
Someone took his clothes – he was walking back with pride.
Who knows, he could have changed the course of history.
and presidents who followed could have joined him in that stream.
Today we could all be free and nakedness espouse
if John Quincy had gone nude in the White House.
Now, hopefully the lesson of John Quincy has been heard.
He lost his chance to change the world not passing the word.
If he loved the nude so much, he should have admitted it to the world
and proudly said, follow me, my belief I will unfurl.
Instead he kept to himself and shrank back in shame
and in the course of history, a footnote he became.
If John Quincy had gone nude when he had the chance,
Hitler, Stalin, and Roosevelt may have followed in his path. ***Refrain.***
(Repeat last 4 lines of ***Refrain.***)

DEVIL IN YOUR CLOSET

(From my audio cassette album I call MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE)

Written 1980s.

REFRAIN:

*There's a devil with you in your closet – and he won't let you out.
He keeps you there with all your clothes – and you'll never find him out.
He hates sunlight as he hates all lovers - and those who clown about.
There's a devil with you in your closet – and he won't let you out.*

There's all kind of devils – spirits who want control.
Some love Bibles and some love bottles – and some just plain love clothes.
But all of them love us fearful and bowing to them in fright.
They'd love to take the day out of time and leave us just the night.

Now, ladies, let me tell of a story that frightfully true.
There's a devil for every panty that you choose for you.
If you'd like to beat the devils and not let them survive,
then throw all your panties in a fire box – and make love in the light. **Refrain.**

Since they've been the preachers of God from the first of time,
this next verse is for the men – let me lay it on the line.
We've been wrong and blindly led in listening to the gods.
They've turned out to be devils – and upon us they have trod.

I'm not gonna say the devils hate sex – cause that's just plain not true.
They love sex as they love preaching – if it makes life look crude.
They lead us to love in darkness – then turn it back on us.
They shout that sex is dirty and dark and hidden from the just. **Refrain (twice).**

*But here come the angels, here come the angels, riding with Nature and me.
The devils are buzzin, fumin, and runnin. In the presence of angles, devils can't be.*

(Note: In MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE, the song BE AN ANGEL follows.)

BECOME A CHILD

(From my audio cassette album I call MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE)

Written 1980s. (A poem)

It's time, My Friends, that we took a different look
and begin to see life in a very different way.
It's time, My Friends, that we read a different book
and begin to be as children, each and every day.
It's time, My Friends, that we stopped listening to fools
who know not of wisdom, but claim to be of God.
It's time, My Friends, that we opened another school
that teaches not of swords – and offers guidance with a nod.
Look at the love of a child – and let it be your own.
Don't pretend to be a master because you have grown.
A little girl or a woman – why should there be a difference?
A little boy or a man – there's no change in essence.
It's time, My Friends, that we begin anew –
Close your eyes and forget the sins of the past.
It's time, My Friends, that another picture we drew.
Open your eyes again – to see a truth that will last.
It's time, My Friends, that we learn to admire the child –
Forget the line of arrogance we crossed when we matured.
It's time, My Friends, that we embrace the kind and wild
so that we can finally say – truth and peace will endure.
It's time, My Friends, that virtue, not sin, survives.
Yes, My Friends, it's time – that each of us becomes a child.

MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE

(From my audio cassette album I call MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE)

(Recitation with Refrain)

Written 1980s.

RECITATION:

Mother Nature, in all her nakedness,
as the handmaiden of God, bids me to go naked
and submit to being with her.
Let others choose whom they will as their masters,
but I don't think any mastery can compare to that of one who already is.
Nature is already a master and has nothing to learn.
Some choose as masters, students, who, perhaps know even less than they do –
and in serving such a master, never attain mastery themselves.

REFRAIN:

*If you would be master of your own fate, the earth is not the place to be.
Everyone here can only be great if Mother Nature is their queen.*

RECITATION:

So be careful in the choices of your submission.
Everyone who is finite and not God needs to submit.
Let no one deny it. Choose your master carefully.
Love that master with all your soul and all your heart
and all your mind and all your body.
Say, Master, here I am, your servant to become as you
and to love you with everything I am. **Refrain.**

RECITATION

I think it absolutely ironic, Friends,
that everyone here on earth has at their fingertips, the master they seek;
and many walk right on by.
They look for a master from among the students who also come looking
for a master. And they often end up ridiculing and defaming each other.
Stories of mastery are their downfall;
for in looking for a master, they are too eager to believe others who claim
some right of mastery. **Refrain.**

RECITATION:

Submitting as a naked participant of Mother Nature is saying,
I want to belong. I need to belong. Take me, I am yours.
Mother Nature, while I'm in this body of yours, take my hand, lead me on.
Give me sustenance, as I give you submission.
And when I leave here, a soul lifted up from the earth,
I will take you, and the memory of you,
with me to comfort me all the days of my immortality.
Thank you, Mother Nature.
Thank you for taking me as your servant
and molding me in the process to become my own master.
I love you, Mother Nature. I love you. I love you. **Refrain.**

RECITATION:

And when I go, Mother Nature will wink her eye at me,
and She will say, Old Friend, come again anytime and we'll be your host again.
Send any of your children you will.
It's been nice having you as a guest and a friend.
Goodbye, Friend – and Good Luck. **Refrain (3 times).**

Finish with repeat of: *if Mother Nature is their queen.*

EPILOG: *MAYBE*

That concludes my speculations about quite a few items – notions, as it were – that were included in this first of eight volumes of my trying to live life *OUT IN THE OPEN*. I think there is tremendous advantage to being open in life and considering alternatives – as opposed to deciding various issues of life in a beginning and never straying with your thoughts throughout life.

As a writer who has dared to speculate with my writings – from 1963 through 1984 in this volume – I can see a person changing right before my eyes. I had some very strong beliefs in 1963, beliefs that I penned in the poem *Prayer Of A Priest*. Remember that first entry of this volume? But what a difference 21 years made – simply because I was willing to consider alternatives and ended up changing my beliefs to see God in a considerably different way by the time I had penned the final entry of this volume in 1984 – *Master Of Your Own Fate*.

Was I right in how I thought of God in 1984? **Maybe.** One of the great wonders of change is that you might be wrong in a current belief. I think I was wrong in how I saw God in 1963. That should tell me that my thoughts as of 1984 could be wrong too. *Having changed as I did in that period, however, I do not see anything but strength in being willing to admit you were wrong.* So what if I was wrong at the completion of this volume in 1984? Or maybe I was right in 1963 and should not have changed to adopt a rather different view of life. And maybe I will live on to return to my beliefs of 1963.

Who knows?

The important point I want to make with all my writings is that *maybe I am right and maybe I am wrong.* That is how I think a true speculator should consider things; and if I am nothing else, I pride myself on being a speculator within life and about life. I like to review the thoughts of others and sometimes consider another person's thoughts in making up my own mind about an issue, but I also like to think for myself. *I do not have to be right to think for myself.* Yes, thinking for yourself could end in error; but it could also lead to some worthwhile speculation too.

Should I have dared to think about arthritis without any previous indoctrination about it? Some would say I was way out of line in pondering an issue I knew nothing about. Well, it is true. I did not know anything about it before I attempted to ponder it. In pondering it, I speculated about it. After speculating for myself, then I opened books about it and compared the opinions of “**experts**” with my own; but if I had not speculated first on my own, I would have had no way to compare anything. Would I have?

Should I have dared to think about cancer without any previous indoctrination about it? Some would say I was crazy to do such a thing. Most would have piled through lots of scholarly books on the subject and then maybe would have tried to find some new light about it. But as it happened, I dared to think about it without knowing what so called “**experts**” thought about it first. After coming up with my own idea about it, then I studied other opinion. Am I right about my ideas about cancer? **Maybe.** Am I wrong because I happen to disagree with almost all the “**experts**” who have studied it? *Maybe; and maybe not too.*

Should I have dared to think about Jesus in a different way than the way of tradition? All of those who have decided long ago that the traditional ideas about Jesus have to be right may well disagree with my thoughts about Jesus; and I might be wrong too; but I also might be right. **Then again, no one may have Jesus right.**

Remember David & Belinda? They spent an entire weekend pondering the meaning of life – including Jesus. At the end of my story, they did not know anything for sure. Of course, they are really me. I do not know anything for sure either – about arthritis or cancer or Jesus; but I think I am way ahead of many who think they know about all these things and refuse to consider alternatives.

Remember Priscilla & Lance in another of my philosophical stories? Priscilla was very strong in her beliefs – and, of course, Priscilla is really me. But Priscilla believed first and foremost in the right of each individual to think for him or herself; and that is how I think. When we forefoot – is that the word? – our right to think for ourselves, then that is when life can not only become much duller than it should, but it is also when we stop in our tracks and fail to grow.

Maybe David & Belinda and Priscilla are wrong – or were wrong – **but maybe they are right too.** It is a wonderful thing, I think, to think. It is oh so wonderful to be wrong and take delight in that possibility; but what is not wonderful is to be wrong and impose that error on everyone else. As I see it, since I can be wrong about anything and everything speculative, I have no right to assume I am right about anything speculative and impose my “**rightful standards**” on anyone else. **Respect for another to think for him or herself should be our greatest respect we hold for one another. Or so I believe!**

With that in mind, join me, if you will for the next volume of my **OUT IN THE OPEN** series. I may stumble – and I can almost assure you that I will somewhat; but I am looking forward to the adventure. It will be rather fun to watch me grow – or otherwise – in my writings. The span of time is shorter than that of this first volume. This first volume covered from 1963 through 1984. That’s 21 years. The second volume will range from 1985 through 1994. That’s 10 years. I guess that’s to say that in my first “**epoch**” of writing, I was a bit less prolific than I would be in the next period.

No matter. **Whatever I have written is all speculation.** There is not an ounce of absolute truth in any of it – well maybe an ounce, but at least 15 ounces of a possible 16 in a pound are totally speculative. **No doctrines will be forthcoming; even though a way of life should be evident.** It’s my way of life – and it does not have to be that of anyone else – but I do take a lot of pride in sharing it.

See you then if you choose to join me. Bye for now!

Gently,

Francis William Bessler

Laramie, Wyoming U.S.A.

April 19th, 2011

OUT IN THE OPEN

Volume 1 of 8

(Featuring works written from 1963-1984)

THE END