

# ***OUT IN THE OPEN***

***Volume 4 of 8***

**(Featuring works written in 2005)**

***(214 Pages)***

***By***

***Francis William Bessler***

**Featuring a Compilation**

**of**

**The Complete Written Works**

**of**

**Francis William Bessler**

**From 1963-2011**

**Compiled in May, 2011**

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

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# 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

***ALL'S WELL WITH THE WORLD!*** That was one of the works I wrote in 2005 – which is the span of time this volume covers. Like the previous volume (Volume 3) included several years of written works (1995-2004), this volume features works for only one year – 2005. The next volume – Volume 5 – will also feature works for only one year – 2006. 2005 was a very active year for me – writing wise, though. That is why it requires one volume all by itself.

Actually, it could be said that it took me 30 years to write the entry I call ***ALL'S WELL WITH THE WORLD***. I wrote Part 1 of it in the mid 1970s – and even printed a thousand copies of it. I called that one ***NEVER BE ASHAMED TO LOVE***. It was about a young married couple, David & Belinda, who decided to set aside an entire weekend to speculate about life and try to make intellectual sense of it – that is, without any so called, scriptural, input. They did OK, but I left them somewhat in a lurch, not certain of where they should go from their weekend. I was a bit unhappy with my ending of that story for leaving my characters in a lurch. So I never did anything with it, even after printing a thousand copies of it.

In 2005, I rewrote ***NEVER BE ASHAMED TO LOVE*** as Part 1 of a new story, however, – ***ALL'S WELL WITH THE WORLD*** - changing the characters of David & Belinda to Tom & Molly – and having them go forward in life to exercise the virtues that were decided upon in ***NEVER BE ASHAMED TO LOVE***. Part 2 of ***ALL'S WELL WITH THE WORLD*** features Tom & Molly dealing with friends and neighbors, exercising the prime virtue they decided upon in Part 1 – a shameless acceptance and embrace of life because in all likelihood, it is Divine. It, Life, is likely Divine because it is likely that God, being Infinite, must be ***IN*** it, not outside of it as so much of religion dictates. The ideal world in which Tom & Molly live may only appeal to a few, but I am one of the number; and you might be too. If so, I'm glad I can share the story.

Tom & Molly, David & Belinda – that's what this volume is all about, I guess. Essentially, they – like me, of course – believe that seeing evil is the basis of doing evil. For Tom & Molly and David & Belinda – there is no evil in life – except that we see evil in others and then go forward dealing with them as evil – or unwanted or abusive or imprisoning or whatever. **The key to the good life is to look at life for what it is – essentially good – and pay little attention to what people do with their lives.** It is life itself that is the wonder of our lives – and that is what we should attend – not get sidetracked by always reacting to what others are doing. Well, that's a way of putting it; but I will let Tom & Molly tell their own story below.

One person that Tom & Molly love is Jesus; but they are intent on explaining Jesus philosophically – not relying totally on stories told about him. Most of those who told stories about Jesus in the regular gospels of the **BIBLE** were guilty of “**seeing evil**” in the world and needing a messiah to resolve that evil – and thus, they could not but relate to Jesus within that narrow scope of vision. **I think the key to understanding Jesus is to remove him from the quagmire of history and listen to him through his parables – or his teachings – thus removing consideration of him from those who saw life as**

**evil.** Peter and Paul and all the gospel writers of the **BIBLE** were likely blinded by their vision of evil or seeing evil – thus almost completely missing the beauty of life itself; but as Peter and Paul and their cohorts started the traditional sense of Jesus, **which I believe is wrong**, almost all of tradition has followed their blind-sided view of life – and, of course, Jesus.

In several works, this volume will be taking a **hard look** at Jesus – both from my point of view of seeing no evil and from others viewpoint of seeing evil. Two works of note in that regard are one I call **CHILD OF HUMANITY SERIES** and another I call **KNOWING CHRIST**. Needless to say, if you choose to review the issue of Jesus as I discuss it in these works and a few others, you are in for a whole new look at Jesus.

Did Jesus “see evil” in the world? I do not think so. In fact, I think that his main message was that we should look for something else in life other than some imagined or real evil. Evil does exist, yes, but evil does not. There is no “**realm of evil**” headed by the fictitious commander some call “**Satan**” because there is only a “**realm of good**” – given that whatever exists is filled with God.

In one of my favorite non-traditional gospels, **THE GOSPEL OF MARY MAGDALENE**, Jesus counsels us to **look for the Child of Humanity within us** to find and know peace. Don’t be distracted by looking for the negative. Be virtuous by looking for the positive – in this case, the **Child of Humanity within us**. It is because of that counsel of Mary’s work that we should look for the **Child of Humanity within us** that one of my series in this volume was called **CHILD OF HUMANITY SERIES**. If you are unaware of my **Child of Humanity** source – **THE GOSPEL OF MARY MAGDALENE** – I will offer some clarification within my series of essays by the title: **CHILD OF HUMANITY SERIES**.

Well, Folks, that does not tell you a lot about the contents of this volume; but it should give you a bit of a glimpse. Enjoy it as you can and will, keeping in mind that there are always two sides to every story. Also, please keep in mind that I am basically a “**speculator**” in life. My opinions are my own, but my opinions are opinions – not fact. Please regard them as such. OK?

***Again, Enjoy the ride, Everyone!***

Gently,

**Your non-traditional Jesus guide,**

*Francis William Bessler*

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May 28th, 2011

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# A MINI REVIEW & ANALYSIS OF GENESIS & EXODUS

By Francis William Bessler  
Feb. 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2005  
(13 pages)

I just read the first two books of the **BIBLE** again – those two called **Genesis** and **Exodus**. I am taken with what I consider to be a very serious fallacy that is offered as scriptural truth from the story of Adam and Eve all the way to the conclusion of the story of Moses. **That fallacy is that creation is not an ongoing thing.** The great error, as I see it, in that which is called the **BIBLE**, is that God created in six days all that has been created or will be created. It is, in fact, that notion that has allowed for much of the evil that has been allowed in this world because humankind does not realize that all are of God; and in not being aware that all are of God, accusations of some being Godless is the foundation of all malice and murder – or at least, of most malice and murder.

Of course I could be wrong, but after reading story after story of God's so called "chosen people" being treated differently than all surrounding peoples, it finally dawned on me that the only way any people could consider themselves chosen of God is that they must have the impression that initially no one is of God. Starting from a premise that no one is of God, then, it can be somewhat logically assumed that some people can be chosen by God as others are not. If you begin your story with a belief that everyone is Godless unless and until chosen by God, then the stories of the **BIBLE** do make some sense; but if you begin the tale of life like everyone is Godly, then the stories of the **BIBLE** make no sense.

So, let me offer two prospective tales of creation – the one seemingly inferred by the **BIBLE** and one that I happen to believe. First, the vision of creation offered by the **BIBLE: God made all beings initially, then stepped out of the creation process, allowing all beings to create themselves from then on.** God made Adam and Eve; but God did not make Cain and Abel. Adam and Eve made Cain and Abel all by themselves without any help from God – or without any of God's energy, so to speak, or supplies. Adam and Eve conceived and gave birth to Cain and Abel without any input from God. Because God did not make Cain and Abel – or have anything to do with their making - Cain and Abel were made Godless. In other words, it was not God who created Cain and Abel, but Adam and Eve; and any that Cain and Abel might generate would be created by Cain and Abel – not God.

This is the implication offered by the stories of the **BIBLE**. God created initially, but after that, each created being generates its own progeny. Since God is out of the picture on all subsequent creation of life, then there are plenty of grounds for argument for the possibility of God being able to choose some of the created beings and refusing

others of those created beings since none of those created beings actually belongs to God in the first place.

Now, for my vision of creation. ***I do not see anything as having been created, but only of all things being created. My view of creation is that it is an ongoing process; and my view of creation is that God is in the principle of that ongoing process – or is that principle.*** Why? Because I can't imagine God being outside of any process in life due to the Infinite Character of God. I may be wrong, but I just cannot conceive of anything but an Infinite God if there is a God at all. That means that my Infinite God must be everywhere and in everything, including all processes – even the process of creation. I do not see God as outside of me or anyone or anything. I do not see even the beginning of a possibility that God could choose to be outside of anyone or anything; but that is strictly my vision of life and of God – which seems to conflict with the vision of God as offered by the authors of **Genesis** and **Exodus** – who offer God as some kind of person outside of all created beings.

As I see it, the author – or authors – of **Genesis** and **Exodus** assume that creation ended in six days. After that, God was out of the picture; however God is not supposed to be out of the picture. Ideally each of us – or some of us - are supposed to be **“called back”** into an original presence of God that was true with the founding of Adam and Eve. Thus, the story of salvation is God acting to call some of all Godless created beings into His presence while necessarily omitting others. The omission is necessary because salvation would make no sense if everyone could be **“called back”** to the presence of God. **Some must be doomed if others are to be saved.** Otherwise, salvation could have no meaning. Could it?

Realistically, how would you have liked to have been an Egyptian in the time of Moses? Imagine even that you are an Egyptian today and you are told that God chose some foreigners who were living in your land to be **“His people”** while excluding yourself. How would that sound to you? How would it sound that God who created neither yourself nor the foreigner could just arbitrarily choose the foreigner over yourself? Well, to read the stories of **Exodus** and **Genesis**, that is precisely the tale of man.

### ***A Very Brief Refresher Course of parts of GENESIS & EXODUS***

***Note: Some of you may want to skip this mini refresher course. I include it here mostly because having just reviewed GENESIS and EXODUS, my recent trip through these books make some of the themes worth while noting for my own sake. My little synopsis may lend assistance to myself in recalling some of the themes I note when I review my own essay years from now. As I have offered frequently, I write to learn. In that, I become my own student. I feel privileged to share what I learn with others, but that is not the main reason I write.***

***This little digression is not essential to the argument being offered in this essay, however. That argument is that I think the authors of GENESIS and EXODUS have a mistaken notion of God and creation in that their God is not really God, but only a god that is dealing with some humans who that god wants to possess and control. The god of the BIBLE is, for the most part, just that – a god – not THE GOD – similar to any of***

*the other pagan gods to which some people pray and offer allegiance. My God is not a personal god, but rather an Omnipresent God. My God is not one that can be outside of me like the god of the BIBLE seems to always be. The god of the BIBLE seems to be always trying to call people to him as if that god is not already in them. For me, that is the notion of a pagan god – not an Omnipresent God Which needs to call no one or no thing to it because It is already in everything.*

*Having said that, those of you who do not care to go tripping along with a visit with the god of the BIBLE and his chosen people, skip this section and go directly to the CONCLUSION on Page 21. OK? Thanks!*

To refresh those memories who may have forgotten the tale or to inform those who do not know of it, after a world wide flood which the god of **Genesis** worked to kill off mankind due to its wickedness, a few were saved in order to start things anew. Noah and his sons and their wives were saved from the flood to restart the human race. Noah had three sons, but only one – Shem - was chosen as the path of salvation for the new chosen race. I guess the other two – Ham and Canaan - were set free to make mischief elsewhere and repopulate the earth.

Don't look now, but that is the only way it could have happened because according to **Genesis**, only Noah and his three sons and their wives were saved from the flood. If you trace the genealogies of Noah back to Adam, the flood happened about 1,700 years after Adam and Eve were created; and if you take note of the genealogies from Noah through Abraham through Isaac through Jacob on this side of the flood, it would seem that the earth was repopulated with various descendants of Noah in certainly less than 2,000 years. Only one strain of those descendants of Noah, however, was destined to become the chosen people through Noah's son, Shem. It does not say so, but once again, apparently Noah's other two sons and their wives spread out to comprise all sort of people on earth – most of whom will eventually become foes of Shem's descendants.

Not wanting to take much time for all the intrigue that follows, eventually one of Shem's descendants becomes the father of the new nation of chosen people. Abraham begins the process in the land of his birth – around Babylon – perhaps present day Baghdad in Iraq. Abraham marries Sarah and they migrate to the southern end of what is to become “**The Promised Land,**” current day Israel - promised by the god of **Genesis** to Abraham and his descendants. Sarah shows unable to conceive and persuades Abraham to mate with her Egyptian slave, Hagar. From that, Ishmael is born. Thirteen years later, God makes Sarah productive and she and Abraham mate and Isaac is born. With a son of her own, then, Sarah convinces Abraham to send Hagar and Ishmael away to avoid any conflict about inheritances. Thus Hagar and Ishmael are dismissed. It is conjectured by some that from Ishmael will later come the Arabs from which Mohammed will emerge and his following – the people of Islam.

If one were to lift up above the earth and look down on history, and realize that where God is alleged to be working, gods were really enforce, it might prove very interesting to see that one man, Abraham, gave start to two sons whom varying gods adopted. On the one hand, you have the god of what will become the Israelites at work through Isaac. On the other hand, you have the god of what will become the Ishmaelites at work through Ishmael. Ishmael might argue that as the oldest son of Abraham, he should have been awarded the rights of the first born. Thus, he might argue that Isaac

became a thief and stole his birth right from him – similar to the younger brother, Jacob, stealing the birthright from the older brother, Esau, as progeny of Isaac later on. Esau will forgive Jacob from stealing the birthright and no problems will ensue because of it; but the theft of the birthright by Isaac will not go forward with forgiveness as the theft by Jacob will. Ishmael will become the father of a nation of Arabs that will eventually become dire enemies of Isaac – or the tradition to come from Isaac.

Even today, one of the basic squabbles on this earth is the ongoing bitter battle between Isaac and Ishmael – or the descendants thereof. On the one side of the battlefield are the Israelites and all their ensuing allies – especially Christianity and Christian nations – including with tremendous force and power – America. America was essentially a nation founded by Christians who acted very Isaac wise in stealing the land of America from the Indian nations who already populated it. The Isaac Syndrome which began so long ago continued on and on and on. If you want something, take it. Then justify your taking with some religious argument like those from whom you stole something were too primitive or irreligious or too pagan or too ignorant or whatever.

Again, trying to be objective and seeing some of the bitterest wars this world has encountered, just rise up above the earth and see how Isaac and Ishmael and their descendants and allies have been in the thick of it. What is the current war in Iraq but a continuation of the saga between Isaac and Ishmael? – between the Israelites and the Ishmaelites, the latter of which is perhaps comprised of a mixture of Moslems, Hindus, and Buddhists. The day that Abraham sent Ishmael away and stripped him of his oldest son birthright is the very day that the war in Iraq began. Look yonder! See Hagar and Ishmael being sent away by Abraham to make way for Isaac. With that dismissal the god (or gods) of what will become Israel and the god (or gods) of that which will become Islam were engaged in battle for all time. The price that the world has paid for the religious theft of all time has been far more than it ever could have anticipated; and perhaps the greatest price for that theft is the ongoing ignorance of the current day.

The Israelites and their descendants and allies are so blind as to not even realize that they have been involved in a struggle between gods – not God and that proverbial enemy called Evil. The gods of the Israelites and the gods of the Ishmaelites have been locked in battle, using all within their ranks to carry on their dubious agendas. And God – the real God – has only been part of the battle in the light of being present in all life. The real God does not take sides because the real God is in everything and everyone. But the various gods who like to pretend that they are God are not in everything and everyone – but only in or behind their respective selections of warfare.

When I was growing up, I heard stories about pagan gods to whom various peoples of the past would bow down and worship. I remember thinking – how idiotic! Did not these ignorant people know that there is only one God? Of course, that is what I was taught, being reared as a traditional Catholic. But then I had not come to realize that the Israelites and the Christians had only replaced many with one. Other than that, the story was the same. Where the pagans worshipped many gods, I would come to find out that the Israelites and Christians and Moslems worshipped one god – but neither pagans nor non pagans really knew about God. Oh, they think they know about God; and they think I am way off base in arguing that they do not; but as I see it now, with people worshipping and bowing down to something outside themselves, it matters not if it is one god or many gods. **Whatever it is, it is not God.**

Just take the one common practice between the pagans outside of the traditions from Abraham and the non pagans inside the traditions from Abraham. That one common practice is **sacrifice**. This really bizarre practice of attempting to influence a god or gods is the one huge telling point that shows there is no difference between the people who worship one god or many gods. Those pagans who worshipped many gods simply offered sacrifices to many gods in order to please them. The brands from Abraham only replaced many gods with one god and continued the rather useless practice of sacrifice in order to appease that one god.

Any god that needs to be appeased is not God. God – the real One God - is in all things and there can be no separation between God and subjects. It is only an unreal God who might demand some kind of illustration of unity or desired unity. If I need to look up to find God, then I am unaware that God is in me. It is only a person who has to look up and not look within that could possibly have need of sacrifice. As long as anyone looks out to find God, all they will find are gods who are only too happy to respond; and these gods will continue to require sacrifice as long as their subjects are willing to offer it.

What is the carnage of war but sacrifice to a god or gods? Just look at the history of gods. All of them require sacrifice or have required it. It pleases them. As the god of the Israelites says in **Exodus** over and over again, the smell of the smoke from the carnage offered on a table before him “pleases” him. How much more would vast sacrifice of a huge dimension please him if the taking of one life pleases him a little! When the people of the earth wake up and realize that they have been dupes of unseen gods finding delight in homage to them, they will begin to find a way to unseat those gods and find a way to really become friends of one another and no longer soldiers for the various gods.

Now, of course the gods of the Israelites and their allies and the Ishmaelites and their allies count on the illusion of gods being God to continue. I have no real feeling as to why these gods find such glee in such foolishness; but gods will be gods, I guess; and battle seems to be something that all gods relish. So the battles between Isaac and Ishmael will continue under the guise of a battle between Good and Evil because to stop it would be to deny some gods their favorite pastime – manipulating others to serve them via some truly bizarre sense of entertainment - sacrifice. At least, it has come to seem so to me.

Who or what is a god? **It is any soul – in or out of a body – who finds satisfaction in owning and controlling others?** Look about! There are gods all around. You may even be one. If you find no satisfaction in life outside of being in command of others, you are a god; and when you die and you can, you will probably take on the role of God because there is nothing sweeter than God to demand obedience – or so the world has been led to believe. It’s really very simple. Little gods do not die when their souls are separated from their bodies. They only go forward out of sight.

Perhaps this is a good time to reflect on Jesus. I may be wrong, but I do not see Jesus as a god – let alone God. In fact, I see Jesus being absorbed within the tradition of sacrifice of the Israelites when he probably lived to challenge the entire concept of sacrifice. The god – or gods – of some Israelites probably saw good use in Jesus – or of Jesus – by making him the greatest sacrifice of all. Keep in mind that the entire idea behind the worship of the Israelites and the Ishmaelites is to honor and please a god

outside of them. These little gods love the idea of life being offered to them. They thrive on the notion and the acts of those people who bend to “please” them.

What better way to use Jesus that to make him the exact opposite of what he lived to deny – sacrifice? Mel Gibson made a movie last year called **THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST**. Imagine how pleased the gods of the Israelites were with that! If they could become pleased with the wriggling of an innocent lamb having his throat cut to be heaped on a fire to please the gods, just think of how entertaining it was to have someone pretend to suffer for the sins of man? The only thing better would be to have someone really suffer for the sins of man. Of course it would not be for any real sin of separation between the real God and man. It would be only as the excuse needed for sacrifice to please some god.

I do not see Jesus as a sacrifice anymore than I see myself or anyone as a sacrifice. No sacrifice is needed in relation to the real God because God is in us and not outside of us so that we would have to appeal to Him or Her or It. Why should I have need to appeal to a God that is inside of me? I think Jesus was aware of the uselessness of sacrifice, realizing that the real God is everywhere and in everything and enemies of none. There is no evil related to God because God can have no opposition; but there is plenty of evil between created beings because **evil is only one being imposing on another**; and what better way could there be to impose than to impose in the name of God?

My favorite term for Jesus is *Immanuel*. Perhaps it is only a fancy of mine but until it is demonstrated otherwise, I will believe that Jesus intended to be *Immanuel* for the meaning of the word itself – which means *God With Us*. Jesus did not come to fulfill the wishes of the god or gods of the Israelites and only become another peg of the tradition of sacrifice. He came to teach us that no sacrifice is needed to please the real God because there is no separation between God and man. It is only in that we sense that we are separated from God that we have need to offer sacrifice. If God is really inside of everything, there is nothing to please outside of us. I think this was the real message of Jesus – my *Immanuel*.

But, you see, the god or gods of the Israelites had to have their way – and absorb Jesus as one of them. In a way, it is rather ironic. Jesus came to challenge the gods of the Israelites and challenge their entire notion of sacrifice; and he was turned into one of the gods and made the greatest sacrifice of all. But keep in mind, it is probably all an artificial play being mandated and managed by the gods of the netherworld. The real Jesus – like the real God – is not part of it.

Anyway, back to our story, later, Sarah dies and Abraham hands down the reigns to his son, Isaac, and then dies as well. Before dying, he sends off to his Mesopotamian homeland for a wife for Isaac from among his relatives there. A daughter of Abraham’s brother, Nahor, by the name of Rebecca is encountered by a servant sent by Abraham and agrees to travel to Hebron and become Isaac’s wife. Isaac and Rebecca then have **twins**, first born Esau, followed shortly by Jacob. Rebecca favors the quieter Jacob and Isaac favors the bolder and greater hunter, Esau. Rebecca gets Jacob to fool Isaac into believing that he is Esau and receives the blessing of the first born son.

As the story goes, Isaac has become a very old man and has become blind – reducing his senses to feeling and hearing and smelling. Rebecca wants Jacob to receive the rights of the first born, though he was a second born twin. Jacob had smooth skin whereas Esau

had hairy skin. So Rebecca gets Jacob to put on some hairy animal skin and visit his father to get his blessing. Isaac hears the voice that is claiming to be Esau, and notes that it sounds like Jacob, but the animal skin on Jacob's arms make him seem like Esau. Jacob is claiming to be Esau. So Isaac blesses Jacob like he was Esau and gives him the rights of the first born son that Esau rightly deserved.

Later, Esau visits his ailing father and asks for his final blessing that would secure for Esau the normal rights of a first born son; but Isaac had already given that blessing to Jacob. One can imagine the anger that an Esau might have had finding that out. Once Esau realized he had lost his birthright by trickery of his brother, he planned to kill Jacob – and perhaps regain his rights by being an only son. Getting wind of Esau's plan to kill Jacob, Rebecca convinces Jacob to get away and visit the land of her brother, Laban, back in northern Mesopotamia from where she originated.

In Mesopotamia, after much intrigue, Jacob falls in love with Uncle Laban's youngest daughter, Rachel; but Laban does not want to let Rachel go until the oldest daughter, Leah, is married. He tells Jacob that if he works for him for seven years, he can marry Rachel. After the seven years are up, the wedding is planned between Rachel and Jacob, but Laban actually gives Leah to Jacob instead of Rachel. How Jacob did not know the difference I have no idea. Perhaps he was too drunk; but in any case, he has intercourse with Leah and thus is married to Leah.

Recognizing the trick that Laban played on Jacob, Jacob complains. Laban says that if Jacob works another seven years for him, he will hand over Rachel. I must say that Jacob did lead an interesting life. With the marriage of Leah to Jacob by trickery, Laban gave Leah his slave woman, Zilpah. With the marriage of Rachel to Jacob, Laban gave Rachel his slave woman, Bilhah. And Jacob had intercourse with all four – and from the four came the twelve tribes of Israel.

From wife, Leah, were born **Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulon**. From wife, Rachel, were born **Joseph and Benjamin**. From Leah's slave, Zilpah, were born **Gad and Asher**. From Rachel's slave, Bilhah, were born **Dan and Naphtali**. Leah and Jacob also gave birth to a daughter, Dinah; but of course she becomes lost in the fray insofar as inheriting anything goes because only males counted back then.

All the twelve tribe sons were born in Mesopotamia except Benjamin who was born back home at Hebron. During that child birth, Rachel lost her life and was buried near what is now known as Bethlehem. I found no mention of Rebecca's passing in **Genesis**. She probably passed while Jacob was in Mesopotamia serving Uncle Laban and marrying Laban's two daughters and having a dozen kids. Since there is no mention of Rebecca's passing, neither is there mention of where she was buried.

Soon after that, Isaac died and was buried near his parents, Abraham and Sarah, close to Hebron. After more intrigue between Laban and Jacob and quite a bit of dissention, Jacob was finally allowed to leave Mesopotamia with his wives and concubines and sons and daughter to return to Hebron. Though Jacob expected to encounter wrath on the part of Esau on his return, Esau was overjoyed to see his brother again and had forgiven him his trickery of long ago. Jacob returned with considerable livestock all earned - but quite shadily, from Uncle Laban.

There is a rather crucial story that slips in at this point. It is one of the main events of Israelite history because it gives it its name. Before this time, Jacob has been Jacob; but after this time, Jacob becomes Israel – and, of course, the Israelites formally begin. The night before Jacob actually rendezvoused with Esau and found that all was forgiven, he wrestled with himself a good bit – wondering how it would all come out. He expected an angry brother and was preparing himself to humble himself before his wronged brother and beg for forgiveness. The story in **Genesis** offers that he wrestled with a real man all night long and was really tired in the morning, though neither of the wrestlers gains the upper hand on the other.

At dawn the visiting wrestler was anxious to stop the exercise as it seemed he did not want to wrestle in the light. So he told Jacob to let him go because it was getting light. Jacob replied that he would not let him go until the man blessed him – after which the man asked Jacob his name. Jacob told him it was Jacob. Then the man said: **Your name will no longer be Jacob. You have struggled with God and with men; and you have won. So your name will be Israel.** I am under the impression that Israel means *struggles with God* or the like.

At least that was Jacob's impression – that he had struggled with God, but he was also impressed that he had not been subdued. I guess if I were to have such an experience and I were to think I was wrestling with God and neither one of us gave up that I would consider the result a draw. Whether it was a dream or whether Jacob really wrestled – at least in spirit – with an angel he thought was God, he could have only emerged from such a night feeling he had won. Anyway, it was the night before Jacob was to meet again with his brother, Esau, that began – in name – the long history of the Israelites to come; for it was on that night, they were given their name.

Jacob had been an old man when he sired Joseph; and supposedly for that reason, Joseph was a favorite of Jacob; however I suspect it was because he loved Rachel more than Leah that a son of Rachel was more favored. Rachel could not bear children at first, similar to the case of Sarah with Abraham. Like Sarah had given her maid, Hagar, to Abraham for the purpose of bearing a son, so also Rachel gave her maid, Bilhah, to Jacob for the same purpose – to bear her a son. Then after Bilhah gave Jacob two sons, Rachel became pregnant with Joseph – and later with Benjamin.

In any case, Jacob favored Joseph over his older brothers – all born of Leah and Zilpah and Bilhah. Understandably the older brothers grew jealous of Joseph who told them a dream about them all being in a field tying up sheaves when all their sheaves formed a circle around his sheave and bowed down to it. They got the impression from that dream that Joseph thought they were to bow down to him; and so they plotted to kill him because they did not like that idea at all. Joseph's brother, Judah, however, noted some Ishmaelite traders heading for Egypt and convinced the brothers not to kill Joseph but to sell him into slavery to the Egypt bound band. Then they killed a sheep or something and smeared blood on Joseph's cloak and took it back to Jacob and said they found the bloody cloak but Joseph was no where to be found. Jacob assumed from the tale that his son had been killed and eaten by a wild beast. Of course, he was extremely distraught.

Anyway, in Egypt, Joseph becomes a special person who can interpret dreams. He interprets a dream for the king and the king rewards Joseph with a wife by the name of



Asenath, a daughter of an Egyptian priest. Joseph is thirty at this time and is also awarded special privileges – and even made the governor over all of Egypt.

Meanwhile Jacob and his sons have moved to the southern end of what is now Israel, near the place called Hebron – which is located probably no more than fifty miles south of Jerusalem and within twenty miles of Bethlehem. A famine occurs throughout the land, including Egypt, but in another dream, Joseph became aware before the famine that it was to occur after a seven year period of plenty. Joseph persuades the king to prepare for the famine to come by storing food in the years of plenty to make up for the famine to come.

In the land of Jacob, however, no awareness of plenty and famine is known. Not knowing to prepare for a famine during the years of plenty, Jacob and his clan become destitute during the famine and travel to Egypt in hopes of getting food for themselves and their livestock. There they meet with Joseph who after some intrigue finally reveals himself as Jacob's son and the brother of those who sold him as a slave to Egypt bound traders. Again, Jacob was told that Joseph had been killed by a wild animal by the other sons. So Jacob was unaware that Joseph was even alive, let alone doing well in Egypt.

To make a long story shorter, Jacob and family are well treated by the Egyptians and are allowed to settle in northern Egypt in the land of Goshen. Jacob proceeds to die there but requested that his body be buried back in Hebron near his father, Isaac, and grandfather, Abraham. I am not sure why they did not all go back to Hebron at that time, but apparently they did not. Eventually Joseph dies in Egypt but not until he becomes a very old man of 110 or so. By that time, a new regime has taken hold in Egypt and has come to depend on the Israelites for their labor. So the Israelites are not able to take Joseph to Hebron for burial, but Joseph requested they do so upon their eventual exodus from Egypt.

I guess it is several hundred years later that the then current king of the Egyptians decides that the Israelites have become too populous and he fears that they will become strong enough to overthrow Egyptian rule. The king begins by further suppressing the Israelites and giving them more work, but still they continue to increase. So he orders that the new born males of the Israelites be killed. Of the tribe of Levi – one of Jacob's sons – a child is born of a Levite couple. To keep the baby from the fate of new born babies, his mother hides him in a basket by the Nile River. The baby is detected by the daughter of the king and is saved from execution. The king's daughter actually entrusts the new baby – which she calls Moses – to an Israelite lady for nursing. That lady turns out to be the actual mother of Moses.

Moses grows up in Egyptian care; however he must be somewhat aware of his heritage. One day he sees an Egyptian being cruel to an Israelite and he kills the Egyptian. Fearing that his act is known, he flees from Egypt into a land east of the Sinai called Median. I am not sure why he goes there, but he encounters a man named Jethro who has several daughters – one of whom Moses marries – one called Zipporah. Then Moses has an experience of seeing a burning bush that does not burn up. After approaching the burning bush, the god of **Exodus** encounters him and tells him that he is to return to Egypt and lead the Israelites out of Egypt. Moses objects that he is too weak for such a mission, but the god of **Exodus** eventually convinces him that with the help of his brother, Aaron, he is up to the task. The god of **Exodus** advises Moses that he is to

direct the king of Egypt that until he lets the Israelites go, the land of Egypt will suffer many plagues.

There is one little interesting story about Moses that is told that comes from nowhere and goes nowhere. Out of the blue, the author of **Exodus** offers that the god of **Exodus** tried to kill Moses – though no details are offered as to how or why. It is then offered that the wife of Moses, Zipporah, circumcises her infant son and touches the foot of Moses with the cut off flesh of the infant son. Somehow that act keeps the god of **Exodus** from killing Moses and he is allowed to fulfill his mission to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. Saved by his infant son’s circumcision, I guess.

I am not sure why the god of **Exodus** required circumcision of eight day old boys as a sign of the covenant between him and his people, but for some reason, he saw it as useful. Who knows why? It certainly does require a great deal of commitment to undergo such a “surgery” to show allegiance. I suppose it was that degree of commitment to his cause for which he was seeking that he delighted in the practice. I guess gods have their own fetishes.

It is quite a story in that the god of **Exodus** directs that he does not want the king of Egypt to let the Israelites go until after many plagues have been imposed, offering that he would make the heart of the king hard to insure noncompliance with the request of release. Supposedly this hardening of the king’s heart is to allow a demonstration of the great power of the god of **Exodus**. If the king allowed the Israelites to go, the god of **Exodus** could not show his great power. So to insure that the world would know of the great power of the god of the Israelites, the king and his people would have to resist letting the Israelites go.

First, Moses is directed to throw down a stick that becomes a snake when it hits the ground. Undaunted, the king suspects magic and directs his magician to copy Moses. Amazingly, the king’s magician duplicates the feat. The king was impressed by Moses, but not very much since his own magician could do the same thing. Of course, by providential design, the king would not let the Israelites go. Then Aaron extends his stick over the Nile in front of the king and the waters of Egypt turn into blood. Again, the king’s magicians duplicate the feat – though I am not sure how they did that since the waters were already blood and all the fish in the rivers had already died. Then Moses threatens and produces frogs that crowd from the rivers to the land. After each plague, according to godly plan of course, the king relents and agrees to allow the Israelites to return to their homeland – just to renege after the plague is resolved.

Several more horrible plagues are imposed on Egypt and still the king won’t let the Israelites go – once again by design of the god of the Israelites to show his power. I find some of the later plagues rather interesting in that it is claimed that all the animals in Egypt that do not belong to the Israelites are killed by a plague. Then the next plague kills all the animals all over again. Then the next plague kills them again. I am not quite sure why all this overkill of animals was useful, but just read the story of the plagues and there it is.

Finally, Moses is directed to tell the king that if he does not let the Israelites go, the first born of each house will die. I have no idea what it has to do with it, but I guess the angel of death can’t distinguish between Israelites and Egyptians and that the Israelites are instructed that those houses with a brush of blood on the doorpost will be “**passed over**” for this final ritual of death. From this comes the Jewish festival of **The Passover**.

Anyway, the king finally relents and lets the Israelites go. The Israelites get a good head start on their passage out of Egypt via the Red Sea, but the king changes his mind and decides to pursue the Israelites and bring them back. Everyone knows the story. Moses stretches his wand over the waters and the waters part and the land dries to make crossing easy for the Israelites – then once the Israelites have crossed and the king’s men have become bogged down in dry land turned muck, Moses waves his wand again and the waters close in on the Egyptians – presumably the king included – and all perish.

From there, under Moses, the twelve tribes of Israel wander in the desert for forty years or so. Before they wander long, however, their god encounters Moses at Mount Sinai and begins directing the great covenant that the Jews will have to obey for the rest of their years. The covenant is between a god and his chosen people. As it happens, however, those chosen by this god are no better off than those not chosen by him.

In fact, you would have to draw straws as to which one fared better – the foreign Israelites in Egypt or the godly traumatized Egyptians. It would be bad enough to be an Egyptian and be subject through no fault of your own to be overwhelmed with blood in all your water, or frogs hopping about everywhere, or locusts eating everything green, or all your animals being poisoned, or all your first born sons being killed, all due to an angry god who is against you for no reason other than you are an Egyptian; but it would be almost just as bad to be among the favored in the exceptionally cruel story offered in **Exodus**.

Have you ever reviewed the laws laid down by the god of those who had been foreigners in Egypt after they were led back to the brink of the so called **Promised Land**? Wow! That saving god was one strict god. He demanded that the first born of all cattle and sheep and goats be sacrificed in honor of him – for all time. He demanded death as a punishment for any who would dishonor father or mother. He demanded death for any woman practicing magic. He demanded that all work be completed in six days and that on a seventh all should rest. That last rule sounds great except for the penalty of working on that seventh day. *Would you believe – death?* Can you imagine anyone having to rest on any given day without the option of being able to work – under the penalty of death for disobedience? That is what the Israelites of Moses faced being the chosen people of their god. The god of **Exodus** even included lighting a fire in one’s home on the Sabbath as a violation punishable by death. I guess those poor people sat in the dark a lot on the Sabbath.

A lot of people think very highly of the so called **Ten Commandments** laid down by the god of the Israelites – and I must admit, most of them are reasonable enough – but those ten commandments are only the beginning of a whole host of detailed commandments about making altars and offering sacrifices and building covenant boxes and making a huge tent in which sacrifices are to be offered.

Even the process of sacrificing was laid out in strict detail. All the blood had to be drained and some of it poured on the ground in front of the altar and some of it thrown on the sides of the altars. The offering priest had to dip his fingers into the blood for whatever reason. The carcass of a sacrifice had to be quartered and inside organs removed and cleaned to be offered in one sacrifice while other parts are offered in other parts of a sacrifice. It wasn’t just throwing some dead animal on a fire; and it had to be a healthy male too. Sick males would not do – nor would any female do. It had to be done

in a precise manner or the sacrifice was null and void; and it had to be done at a precise day and time, too. Otherwise the attending priests would be in big trouble.

Glancing ahead to the book of **Leviticus**, a story is told there where two priests – Aaron’s sons, Nadab and Abihu - tried to offer a sacrifice at the wrong time; and for their inattention to detail, the god of **Exodus** set them on fire and burned them to death. This god of **Exodus** and **Leviticus** was extremely temperamental. All detail had to be adhered to or else somebody got the ax.

The altar for the sacrifice had to be made of acacia wood and had to be of strict dimensions and had to be plated with gold. The priest had to wear a specific robe that was very intricately sewn and comprised of lots of different luxurious materials. The oils for the service had to be made of a mixture of various myrrh and cinnamon and cane and cassia, mixed with olive oil.

The mere details of offering sacrifice to their god for these poor chosen people was enough to make most of them fail. It’s no wonder they wandered about in circles in the desert for forty years. It probably took that long to get the required ceremonies right. Those requirements were so strict and I have not even begun to detail them. Offering sacrifice for the Israelites could not have been easy or perhaps even satisfying. All of those details – for what?

Most of those who favor the **Ten Commandments** pay no attention to all the other rules to come after them; and yet, if they accept the **Ten Commandments** because they were laid down by the god of the Israelites, it seems to me that they should feel themselves obligated to obey all the commandments.

Some will argue if they are Christian – Christ changed all of that. After Christ, all those sacrifices of the first born of precious flocks of cattle and sheep and goats were not necessary because the sacrifice of Christ overrode all other sacrifice. But before Christ, would it have been right? For what? What would it have proven? That a people should honor a god pretending to be God? Of what service would it have been to that god to allow a people to murder someone who felt it necessary to irrigate on the seventh day? If it was ever justified, it should not have been; and the birth of Christ could not wipe out something totally wrong in the past. Could it? I have already mentioned what I think about sacrifice to the gods or a god in general. I can think of nothing more useless.

Well, perhaps that is neither here nor there. I do not want so much to argue for or against the **Ten Commandments** as argue for a vision of God Which or Whom would have no need to impose any commandments to make anyone Godly where they lacked Godliness beforehand. I am not sure how the Israelites – from their predecessors forward – ever came to believe that they were not being created by God; and, of course, I am not sure why they did not believe that any so called foreigners were not being created by God either. They had a vision that they were outside the circle of God – regardless of why they believed it.

Let’s face it. The story of the Israelites versus the world is not a good story for the world or for the Israelites themselves. It was not a good story for the world because the Israelites felt justified in wiping out anyone who might stand in their way because they were the chosen of God. They migrated to a foreign land – in general, current Israel - filled with existing nations and proceeded to war against those nations because the land of those existing nations was destined to be their own land – as ordained by God. Tell that to the existing Amorites and Canaanites and Hittites and Perizzites and Hivites and

Jebusites and Philistines who were on “their” land. No, it was not a good story for the world that had to face the claims of the chosen people of Israel.

And, of course, it was no better story for the chosen people. Not only did they have to attend to all sort of rules of demands by their god that other peoples did not have to obey, but seeing themselves as chosen of God has often fatally put them at odds with all the rest of us who have not been chosen by God. I would say that having to confront friction as a chosen people would be justified if it were true that a people could be chosen; but in light of God being in all, I think a lot of folks down through history have suffered on the sides of being chosen and un chosen when the basis of the suffering has been without true validity.

### **CONCLUSION:**

I do not believe in the tale that God made man and then let man take over and create himself from then on. As I see it, creation must be an ongoing thing. As I see it, it is a false assumption that has it that creation has been finished; and it is a false assumption that anyone can be created outside of God. My view of God is that God is Infinite – meaning God must be everywhere. If God is everywhere, then there can be no such thing as a being – human or otherwise – that is Godless. If no one is Godless, then no one need be saved to become filled with God either. Everyone is full of God because everyone must be completely in the Presence of God. ***How can anyone or anything lack God if God is everywhere?***

Who devised the tales of **Genesis** and **Exodus** that has God outside of humankind? I know not. I am impressed as to their imagination, but regardless of source, I find myself in severe disagreement as to their definition of God. In the end, I guess each of us must go with a definition of God that is pleasing – or at least agreeable. I cannot agree with a god that can choose some and exclude others. Who is to say that such a god would choose me today and then reject me tomorrow? That would seem to be the fate of all those who think they can be chosen over others.

As for me, I don’t think it is possible to not be chosen by God. I have no vision of God except One that is the **Constant Base** of all that is and One that is the **Constant Source** of all creative process. I do not believe in a god who can call me into his or her or its presence. ***I only believe in a God in Whose Presence all must be.***

## **A MINI REVIEW & ANALYSIS OF GENESIS & EXODUS**

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**THE END**

# **ALL'S WELL WITH THE WORLD**

(80 Pages)

By  
Francis William Bessler

**--- A Spiritual Novel ---**

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Francis William Bessler,  
Laramie, Wyoming, U.S.A.  
March, 2005

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

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# **PREFACE**

## **- The Way It Should Be -**

**This is a work of love. It is a story about love; and it is a story about lovers.**

Tom and Molly are no ordinary couple; but they should be. They are a couple who feel that man has been endowed with all the intelligence necessary to determine by reason alone how man should live. They believe in God, but they believe that God has endowed them with all the reason or rational faculties necessary to determine what is right and wrong for a soul. They think things out and they act things out. They act as they feel they should based on their thinking things out because that is why they wanted to think things out in the first place – to determine how best to live.

Not being bound by a lot of irrational hearsay type of instruction, Tom and Molly are free to live their lives according to their own norms. This is their story and how they impact their friends and neighbors; but I refuse to allow any enemies into my stories because I do not believe in them. So Tom and Molly have only success in their dealings with others. No conflict is offered because I hate conflict and see little value in it.

Accordingly, you may be in store for a boring story. Can life without a villain be interesting? Well, I am not interested in providing villains just to keep you interested. If you need villains to find life interesting, then you will not find them here. My joy in life is to live it without conflict. It has always been my dedication – to live life without conflict. That dedication has driven me to walk away from a lot of relationships that, in time, have discovered and insisted on conflict. That is life, I will admit; but it should not be the way it is. We should not have to live in conflict – and so if I am going to write a story about life, I want to write about it the way it should be – not the way it is. Maybe by reviewing a story without conflict, some who read this story can see how very useless conflict is. I hope so.

My characters who are being refused conflict find themselves respecting norms that most who insist on conflict would consider outrageous. I think the norms offered in my story would be considered outrageous by many because of the need for conflict – the very thing that I refuse in life and the very thing that I refuse to allow my characters. You see, my characters are me. What you see is what you get. What you read in them, you will find in me.

Thus, in a way, this is a biographical story. I allow my imagination to invent characters who perform my norms, but essentially I offer reality as I know it – or at least want it. Can any of my own personal norms be useful to anyone else? Well, that remains to be seen. Who knows? I offer my story mostly to share where I have been in terms of thought in my life. I have already lived it. It has been really good for me. Maybe others can find some worth in it too.

Actually, I started writing this story in 1974 or so and called it **NEVER BE ASHAMED TO LOVE**. For the most part, the earlier story is reflected in Part 1 of the current story. In 2001, however, I wrote a good deal of the Part 2 of the current story; and now, in 2005, I am finally finishing it. I did not like the way I ended my story of 1974. I think that is because I had not lived long enough to know how to end it. Sometimes, it takes living out a story before you can tell it. **ALL'S WELL WITH THE WORLD** is such a story. I had to become a sixty year old and experience some of the changes of post potency days, I guess, to be able to finish my story.

As noted, this work is being split into two parts. Part 1 is a highly philosophical discussion that I call **Rationalizing Existence** – just as I have actually done. Many readers may want to skip Part 1 and proceed to Part 2 which I call **Rationalizing Life – The Way It Should Be**. Reading Part 1 should be very useful, but it features mostly an attempted study of existence in general. Unless you find a discussion of general notions like *goodness, unity, and truth* appealing, you may find Part 1 of this work terribly boring. If so, just bypass Tom and Molly's meandering in Part 1 and go directly to Part 2 where Tom and Molly have much more exciting things to do than just discuss existence. I'd hate to skip Part 1 myself, but to each, his or her own.

Part 1 offers a lot of discussion about rational morality, though. It may be boring, but it has been my life. It is part of the reason I have been able to live life without conflict. So, if a conflict free life is at all entertaining, the discussions in Part 1 may prove interesting.

Part 2 is mostly showing life lived in freedom after determining in Part 1 that it should be lived in freedom.

May I wish you a happy adventure in looking at life as one man thinks it should be; and, like me, I wish you luck in patronizing the characters of this personal revelation and carrying forward the personal liberties defined within.

*See you in Paradise!*

Francis William Bessler  
Laramie, Wyoming – U.S.A.  
March 27th, 2005

*Note: As offered above, ALL'S WELL WITH THE WORLD was finished in 2005, however in 2009, in converting the previous NEVER BE ASHAMED TO LOVE to a pc file, I changed the name of that work to DAVID & BELINDA – partly because that was my original name and partly because I wanted to distinguish the pc file from the previous printed work. Also, for the present work, the original names of David & Belinda are being changed to Tom & Molly – again for the purpose of distinguishing between works. Thanks! FWB May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2011*

# **ALL'S WELL WITH THE WORLD**

## **PART 1: RATIONALIZING EXISTENCE**

## Virtue Through Understanding

This would indeed be an unusual weekend for Molly and her husband, Tom. It would come about from their desire to probe deeper into the true meaning of life and the purpose of man's existence on this earth.

Tom and Molly possessed deep spiritual beliefs as to what life is all about; and they felt they could very easily live their lives simply believing there is a God and an immortal existence. However, they could not bring themselves to accept the idea that God would want them to merely believe. Why, they questioned, would God endow mankind with intelligence if He preferred that His human creatures blindly accept the word of another? While it takes a certain amount of intelligence to believe, it takes more to be able to reason things out. Man, they felt, has been endowed with reason and the processes of reasoning; and it seems almost sinful to deny him the freedom to make use of these talents.

Tom and Molly were young, intelligent, and very much in love. They found it hard to believe that their sort of love relationship isn't more common in the world. After several years of marriage, love was easy for them, but it hadn't always been that way. It had taken time to develop their present relaxed and fairly uninhibited relationship.

Before their first few years of marriage, before their son, Kerry, was born, they had each suffered numerous hurts – due simply to their many differences. At the start, Tom saw man's role as ruler of the roost, with the wife being totally subservient to her man and grateful for the opportunity. Molly, on the other hand, saw marriage as a cooperative venture, with the husband at least occasionally assisting her or serving her in the same way he might expect her to serve him.

Although disagreement on the roles of husband and wife caused their major difficulties, there were additional contrasts. The loud music he liked was "noise" to her. He liked to tease, but she had a more serious nature. He was fond of going natural. She was much fonder of dressing in the current fashion.

Through an uncomfortable period of adjustment, they had remained together, determined that their apparent incompatibility should not be allowed to lead them into defeat. They loved each other now far more than they had ever thought possible. Painful as the necessary adjustments were, the light now shone through, and the promise of a beautiful future lay ahead. Whenever they commented on their present state of happiness, Tom's usual comment was, "Sweetheart, the best is yet to come."

Endlessly enthusiastic, Tom censored little of himself in a fierce drive to know himself. His love of life boundless, he refused to be intimidated by the world at large, which would have him apologize for his thirst after full expression of his nature. The society in which he had thus far matured often looked with great disrespect, if not total disgust, upon the sexual members of the human body, especially those of the male. Seeing everything about his humanity as vibrant, alive and natural, he became irritated to the point of anger whenever anyone would accuse any member of the human body of ugliness.

Tom was convinced that such irreverence could only lead to a terribly unwholesome atmosphere, completely unsuitable for mutual love communication between the sexes. Dedicating himself to the thwarting of all damaging social misconceptions of human nature, he was determined to act without inhibition – to the frequent dismay of his much loved wife.

Tom and Molly had done a lot of growing up since their marriage vows. He had come to accept her somberness; and although she had frequently complained in those early days about his uninhibited behavior, she had since learned to appreciate his openness and natural honesty. She even learned to love his endless teasing and often took the initiative in launching what she referred to as “loving attacks” on him as he read the paper or some enticing romance novel he may have been reading. To him, these were “joyful irritations.”

Kerry, their pride and joy, was a real bond between them. Now three years old, he was their special blessing. They gave thanks daily to God for His precious gift; and they planned for the day that they would add to their family. Kerry was fast becoming like his father. Naturally outgoing, he was becoming quite a tease too. Both parents spent considerable time with their little prince; and, as a result, he was unquestionably spoiled. But in keeping with their realization that a full and open expression of love is essential to happiness, the little guy was learning early in life the lessons of loving and being loved. There were limits to the spoiling, though, for he was also learning that being disciplined is another way of being loved.

Having put in a full days work at the office, Tom was glad to be home. As usual, Molly had prepared an excellent dinner; and, as usual, he had eaten a bit too heartily. After dinner he had helped Molly with the cleanup detail and both had enjoyed playing with Kerry before tucking him in for the night.

Molly, relaxed with drink in hand, looked thoughtful. “Tom, we have always had 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 in which we live if we really applied some logic and sound reasoning to the question of what life is all about?”

Tom was not sure where this thought had come from, but he was intrigued by it. “I don’t really know, Hon, but maybe it would be worth some thought.” Tom recalled that Molly had often compared man to a puppet, although man, she reasoned, was created without strings attached since he, unlike the puppet, had been given the ability to think and act for himself. But man, like a puppet, must perform in all 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 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 Tom and Molly 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. 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 could not 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.

It didn't take long for Tom to adjust to Molly's suggestion. "Hmmmmm, sounds interesting! We could only gain by doing as you suggest, Molly. Just spending time together would be gain enough, but if we could really explore our lives and reveal some truths of which we are unaware, it would be mighty nice, I think. Do you have some specific thought in mind we could explore?"

Molly smiled. "Nothing in particular. Maybe we would do more rambling than anything else, but that would be nothing new. Would it? I mean we do a lot of rambling anyhow. Right?"

"At least I do," Tom responded. "You are always catching me questioning myself out loud. If that's not rambling, what is?"

"There's nothing wrong with questioning yourself, Honey – just don't answer yourself." She giggled a little.

"But I do, My Dear! I always answer me."

"Let me answer you for a change," Molly replied, "and let you answer me."

"I'm game," he said. "We need to think about how to get started with our musing. I will give it some thought; but in a couple of weeks, I'd love to give it a try."

Molly was pleased that Tom reacted so enthusiastically to 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.***

2.

## Existence – A Starting Point

During the days that followed, both Tom and Molly devoted considerable thought to the matter of a starting point for their search for man's purpose in life. Meanwhile, their family routine went on as usual with Tom keeping at his job during the week and Molly tending to home duties and Kerry's care.

Their free time was, as always, spent in family oriented activities. One weekend occasion involved a day long fishing excursion. Another day found them swimming with Kerry in a neighborhood pool. Tom was grateful that his son seemed to love the water.

As a child, Tom 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 Kerry 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 Kerry 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 weeks later – and after Kerry had gone to bed – Tom asked Molly if she had come up with a suitable starting point for their planned mind project.

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

Tom's first response was in regards to a saying that was stated all the time at work – *to assume something is only to make an ass out of u and me*. He was forever being told by his boss that he should never assume anything when it came to understanding what is to be done. Don't assume. Know. That was the constant dictation. So, Tom was not too keen on Molly's suggestion of a starting point. Facts were demanded at work; and he mused that their project should start with a fact too.

"I disagree, My Love," he said, without going into the definition of 'assume' at work. "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." It was clear that Tom had pondered the matter considerably.

"And I suppose you have such a fact in mind," Molly 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, Tom, 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 be figments of our own imagination.”

“Alright, then,” he said, “for the sake of argument, let’s say 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.” Molly was still uncertain. “Where can that possibly lead us? At least to say that life is beautiful would provide us a fairly strong and particular principle. The fact of existence, I think, would be too general and I don’t really 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, Tom,” said she. “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 should be existence – or the fact thereof?”

“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 of us has a clear idea of where we’re 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 take a bath 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 has 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.*



### Finding a Trinity

Existence! That would be their starting point. During the next few days, Tom and Molly spent considerable time thinking about what ‘existence’ really means. They were caught up in their intriguing quest and decided to leave Kerry with Grandma and Grandpa the following weekend to allow them the freedom they desired to delve into their project without interruption.

Actually, this would be the first time in a long time that they would leave their son with a baby sitter. Neither Tom nor Molly believed much in leaving little ones with baby sitters, although Grandma often begged for an opportunity to keep her grandson for a few days. They realized, too, that there must be some exceptions to their rule; and this was one they considered right.

Friday night soon arrived and they were eager for the weekend that lay ahead. As planned, Kerry was left with Grandma and Grandpa; and Tom and Molly were free to pursue their goal. Soon enough, however, each could play Socrates, but for a beginning – no thinking.

With a glint in her eyes that meant, “you can’t get away from me now,” she pursued her pleasure. Tom was ready for her ‘joyful irritation’ and succumbed to her assault without resistance. If she had not started their evening in this aggressive 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 would often say, “Satisfaction guaranteed!” More often than not, she had 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, with no duties but to themselves, they loved a little longer than usual. It was not late, however, when they, relaxed and refreshed, launched their planned search for answers. *Enter the Socratic Twins!*

“What quality best defines existence?” asked Molly, as she sipped a cup of fresh coffee.

“Certainly, anything that exists has a ‘being ness’ about it, so to speak,” Tom 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 that would tell us more.”

“Maybe we could help our cause if we answer the question, existence is a statement of what?” suggested Tom. “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’s 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 must exist simultaneously.”

Molly desired a definition. “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.” Molly was pleased with her Socratic sound. She had so enjoyed the discourses of Plato as offered by Socrates a few years back. To her, that may be how Socrates would have described truth – an affirmation of existence.

But Tommy Socrates wanted her to clarify such an opinion. “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.”

He pondered her answer for a moment – and then, “Sorry, I disagree. 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 unless there is someone to affirm it. In that case, only those things whose existence is affirmed by some intellect can, 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. 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,” Molly 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 – like a rock. 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 or 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 of its identity exist in the conditions necessary.

“Getting back to the salad,” he continued, “let’s say that we have available some lettuce, tomatoes, and cucumbers. When these elements are mixed together in a cut 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.”

He continued. “A rock is what it is because of the goods or properties of its specific matter, combined with a principle of adhesion – or cohesion. 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 possesses its necessary goods or goodness.”

“Correct me if I am wrong, Tom, but I get the message from that last comment of yours that you’re equating the terms of ‘goods’ and ‘goodness’.”

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

“To tell you the truth, I’m not sure,” Molly responded. “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 the rightness or value of a thing in relation to something else. ‘Goodness’ expresses an entirely different notion to me than ‘goods’.”

Tom paused a moment. “Goodness, in the realm of moral judgment, does mean rightness and benevolence and kindness and a host of other things, but goodness in 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 ‘goodness’ like a thing has ‘trueness’ 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 am 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 is made, but rather the composition of a thing before it becomes what it is.”

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

“You know, Tom, 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 experiencing the many blessings of life.

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

“Molly, I can’t tell you how gratifying it is to me that you’ve obviously grasped the meaning of goodness as I refer to it. 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 have determined so far, to put our discoveries in proper perspective.”

“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’s where we are at this point.”

“Now,” pondered Molly, 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,” mused Tom. “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 an existing thing.”

“Given your acceptance of unity as a third distinct characteristic of existence,” Molly continued, “what would be our next consideration?”

Tom thought a moment. “Fundamentally speaking, I don’t think there is anything more. I don’t think we can be more complete about a thing in general than to acknowledge that it has its necessary properties, or at least a necessary property, or 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 have determined that the three basic elements of existence are goodness, unity, and truth. Can you be more complete than that, considering that we are trying to find qualities that must be true of all existence?”

“How about beauty?” Molly questioned. “I realize that 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 all that is?”

“You have heard it said, Dear Spouse, that beauty is in the eye 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 are a little biased?” he said, gently poking her in the ribs. “Anyway, regardless of whether you are beautiful or not, 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 rather 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 valued, but is in the eyes of the one making the judgment. Otherwise, there would be no such thing as color blindness. Red would come out as red, no matter who is seeing 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. Do you understand what I am driving at?”

“I think I’m beginning to,” Molly replied, “and I’m also beginning to see the wonder of it all. You know I did not 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.”

“I’d say that is a pretty keen observation,” he said, “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, by definition, should mean ‘something bestowed,’ although it is used much more loosely now. The transcendental qualities, as you call them, are not bestowed by another, and, therefore, are not mere attributes. They are essential, elementary, and inherent in anything that exists – in a word - elements.”

“I don’t know about that, Dear. I think you are splitting hairs there. What difference does it make if we call them attributes or elements?”

“You’re right, Molly. It really matters not – just as long as we have a better feeling for existence because of them. I think our discovery of what might be called the *trinity of existence* could well serve as an appropriate breaking point. What do you say we hang it up for tonight?”

Molly was not ready just yet to retire. “Do you suppose it’s the same for God?” she asked. “I mean, shouldn’t God have the same trinity of elements as anything?”

“For sure, My Dear. For sure!”

“What a beautiful thought!” remarked Molly. “God and everything are all linked together via the same elements of Goodness, Unity, and Truth. Isn’t it marvelous?”

“Yes, it sure is, Honey,” he said. “Perhaps that trinity is the exact same as the so called *Blessed Trinity* in God. It would seem so. Goodness as the eternal source of all that is could be equated to the Father. Unity could be equated to that which comes from the Father – The Son. And the togetherness of Father and Son, of Goodness and Unity, could be seen as emerging as Truth – the so called *Holy Spirit*.”

“I’d bet it’s so, Tom! It is not so difficult to understand. Is it? Do you suppose that our enjoyment of life should be inspired by the existence of a trinity in God and man and everything?”

“If only we humans would pay attention to the beauty of it all,” her husband replied. “Rather than hurt our fellow man, just be aware that he or she has goodness, unity, and truth. The notions are so clear and yet men hate each other because of thoughts of inequality. Wouldn’t it be nice if people realized that Heaven is really and truly at hand because we all share in the ultimate Goodness, Unity, and Truth of God – a very real Trinity?”

“Or at least we share in the same notions,” Molly commented. “We all have goodness, unity, and truth – God, you, me, everyone. It seems to me that we all should rejoice in that. Tom, let me bow down to that trinity in you. I will love you even more now than before – knowing that we share in such a *Blessed Trinity*!”

Tom smiled and reached out to embrace his lovely Molly – and then he kissed her and said, *“and Blessed be the Trinity in you too, Sweetheart. And Blessed be the Trinity in you!”*

## Expression and Identity

Surprised to find herself awakening at such a late hour, Molly could hardly believe it was already past 9. Late as it was, she decided to let Tom sleep while she went to the kitchen to make coffee. Both she and Tom loved to start each morning with a cup of coffee. Tom was sold on the necessity of at least eight glasses of water a day and had two before he had his first cup of coffee, but Molly generally started her day with coffee. They had only been married nearly six years, but Tom was confident that, in time, he could persuade Molly to adopt his water regimen too.

Molly couldn't help but turn her thoughts to her son, wondering if he had given his Grandma any trouble the night before. It was, after all, the first night in a long time that he had spent the night away from home. There had been other occasions, but only a few.

Molly was grateful. Except for Grandma's willingness – and eagerness – to keep Kerry for the weekend, they would have had to find some other way to conduct their intellectual quest; however, good friends, Joe and Liz and their five year old daughter, Elise, would have been more than happy to take Kerry as well. Then there was Sam and Nellie next door who would have been extremely happy to take Kerry too – or at least, Sam, as Nellie was seriously ill, suffering from the debilitating disease of diabetes. In truth, Tom and Molly would have had a lot of baby sitters, but they chose Grandma and Grandpa this time.

With the coffee brewed, Molly delightfully light of heart, returned to the bedroom and her sleeping husband, carrying a tray with two hot, steaming cups, warm rolls and butter.

Sitting by the bed, Molly nudged him, suggesting that he share coffee and rolls with her. The aroma of the coffee almost made him forget his ritual of several glasses of water before breakfast, but he was quick to recover and hurriedly skipped off to the bath to complete that act before returning to his lovely Molly and her early morning presents.

As usual, Tom was naked. He never slept with a stitch, regardless of how cold it might get. Molly had come to enjoy the naked state as well, especially since the birth of Kerry three years before when the sight of her naked baby made her want to be naked too, however, she was also fond of pajamas. As he returned to the bed and stretched out, sitting up enough to consume Molly's offerings, she enjoyed looking at his body. Reflecting back on the night before, the trinity of goodness, unity, and truth seemed to make that body seem so much more. It was almost as if a good fairy had slipped into Molly and touched her with a wand that allowed her to see Tom as she had never seen him before. It was almost as if God Himself was present in her bedroom and lying right next to Tom; and, of course, it was true. God was there in the two of them.

Molly had been lying in the bed waiting for Tom to return from his early morning watering, but as she looked upon her naked partner, she rose and slipped out of her pajamas. "You look too good to be alone like that," she said. "I trust you could use some company." Then the two of them were naked; and God was still there, embracing both.

"You look so good, so unified as the one you are, and so true," she remarked. "It just doesn't seem right that I should overlook that remarkable trinity in you." Then she lay

down next to him and the two trinities bonded as one as the two sipped their coffee and munched on the hot rolls – and each other.

Before long, the breakfast was over and Tom and Molly showered together, then cleaned up the few dirty dishes from their meal, and retired to the living room to continue their quest. It didn't seem right to have God at a distance and try to hide from Him. So, out of respect for the Divine Trinity in their presence, they remained unhidden. Of course, two fresh hot cups of coffee accompanied them, which were settled nicely on the coffee table in front of them.

Molly started the session. Leaning forward to look into his eyes, while letting her hand fall where it may, she asked the big question. "Why?" she asked.

"Why? Why what?" he replied.

"Tom, we tried to research what things are last night. Perhaps we should try to research why things happen today. I mean, why do people act as they do? Why are some people like you and me, loving? Why are some others, like Hitler and his crew, hateful? Why do we act as we do? Why do people hate? Why do people love?"

"That shouldn't be too hard to figure out," he replied. "I must admit I think it is a powerful notion to resolve. Why do we do things? Since you are the one to suggest it, do you have any idea how to begin?"

"Yes, I think I do," she answered. "I think we can logically determine the answer to this question if we ask the question of ourselves in causing something to exist. We talked about existence last night. In a way, all things that exist are made to do so. Maybe we can find out why people do things by finding out what motivates them to create, what motivates them to make things exist."

"What do you mean, things?" he asked

"Things, anything, tangible and intangible. Why do I make a tangible thing like a car? Why do I make an intangible thing like love – or hate? It seems to me that all things that exist are made to exist by someone or something."

"You are right there, My Dear," Tom responded. "You know we don't ordinarily think of love or hate in the same way we think of a car. We make cars. We admit that. But we don't see ourselves as making hate or making love. But I guess we do because they exist – and they can't exist unless they are made. That is absolutely brilliant. I am proud of you to realize it."

"Well, I don't know if it's brilliant or not, but it is an observation. 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 because I need to."

"That's good for a starter," he said. "Let me cite several more examples. For one, I am going to build a house. For another, I am going to write a song. For another, I am 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 song writing is my business, I guess I would have to write songs."

"It seems to me," Molly expressed, "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 am expressing the fact that I cannot do without that something; and if I say I desire something, I am expressing a wish.”

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

“I am not so sure that what we say is true,” suggested Tom. “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? 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 had to be due to either desire or necessity.”

“That is not important, is it?” commented Molly. “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 for 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 the 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.” Molly was sure they were making some progress, as she paused and took in the expression of the sight of Tom’s body. Nature was doing well, expressing herself through Tom. She did not say it, but she thought it, as she smiled at him. “The particular thing that expresses us,” she continued, “should indicate our significance.”

Tom caught her smile and knew immediately that she was thinking on two separate rails at the moment – one of her was thinking about the subject of discussion and another of her was thinking about the expression of his masculinity as it had received a momentary glance a moment ago – though she was now focused on his eyes. He returned the smile, letting their smiles meet in agreement that the expression of Nature is mighty fine. “Maybe so,” he remarked, “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.”

She agreed. “That seems fitting. 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 I want to decorate the house with you. 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?” she said.

“Absolutely!”

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

“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 something unworthy and ugly. Therefore, it is both the subject and the object that determines the expression.”

“But, Dear, you will 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 in the way you have been molded to see me – but it will still be you, in spite of the 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?”

Molly did not hesitate to answer. “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 hate or love.”

“Maybe so,” he replied, “depending upon 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 do not 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 expression, 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 will 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 guess you might say Nature,” he replied. “You are a product like everything else we can touch and see and feel 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 will 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 does not 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,” Molly retorted, “I have never thought of it that way, but I’ll bet 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 each other.”

“Alright, then,” said Tom, “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 fashioned is not important, only why we are fashioned. We have determined that we are fashioned 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.”

Molly, looking a bit puzzled, commented. “That summarizes this 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 itself? 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 a love expression of something else.”

Molly countered. “But since we really don’t know the exact reality of Mother Nature, how can we possibly know the expresser of which she is herself an expression – other than she has to be an expression of love?”

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

“I agree. We have covered enough for one morning session, especially since we got 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.”

“Riches of the mind, riches of the flesh,” Molly remarked, “are really one in kind. We see the mind and flesh as somehow separated and at odds with one another, as if challenging each other for expression, but it seems such a waste to me.”

“To me too,” Tom enjoined. “Philosophy would have us believe we are all one, being equal expressions of a common expresser, but religion would often have us believe we are all separate, some deserving of happiness and some not. It’s too bad people do not think for themselves a lot more than they do. Then they would not be subject to so many ups and downs and pressures from those who think we are unequal.”

Tom bent down and kissed his wife in her middle; and while talking to her middle and not her eyes, he said, “Molly, I love you. I love all that is you. I love all that Mother Nature offers in you. I love the mystery of your womanhood – and the scent of it too.”

“And I, you, Sweetheart,” she said, as she gently pushed his head further into her middle. *“You like it there – and I like it that you like it. Taste it, if you like, while I close my eyes and think of God.”*

## Packing God into a Little Hole

And thinking of God was good. While Tom made love to Mother Nature through Molly, Molly meditated. Her meditation was quiet – with none of the ordinary chants of ecstasy. It was not so much a personal thing she and her husband were doing, but rather a natural thing. Molly was not thinking so much of herself as some isolated entity within Nature, but as one – just one – of the numberless little stars of the universe. It all meant so much to belong.

One of many. That is the thought that occupied Molly's mind as her husband was being familiar with her. I am one of myriads of girls in this world – all alike and the same in everything that matters. Sure, Molly delighted in her uniqueness, too, but being different, though nice, was no more of the total pie of life than one piece of ten. Molly felt that nine tenths of the pie of life was about being the same as all others; and only one tenth, at most, should deal with being different.

Tom was thinking along the same lines as he pressed his tongue in between the folds of Molly's vestibule of life, but he was making love to womanhood, not just Molly. They often commented to one another that when they made love to one another, it was like doing it for the world – especially for the world of humans. Each of them represented their gender making love to the opposite gender. It was very personal, but it was also very impersonal at the same time. They felt that they were representing couples everywhere in honoring the wonder of life.

Tom often argued that involvement with life and feeling the flesh for the sake of the soul should be like a mandate for every human. Souls occupy bodies for a reason – and that reason is to use the body to know the soul. How could anyone know their soul by ignoring the body? That seemed to be the prescription of the ages – know your soul by avoiding your body. At one time, Tom had believed it; but that was before he became liberated by his thoughts of reason. Molly also believed it before her marriage to Tom, but talking with Tom and adventuring with Tom while always talking about it in intellectual and spiritual terms had liberated Molly as well.

In time, Tom finished nipping on nature's buds and Molly finished with her meditation. They had enjoyed their various refreshments and were ready to go another round with their thinking things out.

"It's been good so far," Molly commented, "but where do we go from here?"

"Would you believe, infinity?" Tom suggested.

"Infinity?"

"Yes, infinity, or the endless or the whole or whatever."

"The whole?" she replied. "The whole of what?"

"The whole of existence," he answered. "You and I are part of the whole of existence. Maybe we should investigate that for a bit. Who knows what we will find?"

"I suspect you have an idea where this is leading. I sure do not," she said, "but I'll play along. You seem to be equating the whole with infinity. Is that correct?"

“Yes, it is. I’m just thinking that maybe we should try to investigate that which we call ‘God’ since we failed to do much with it in our last session. Maybe by analyzing the infinite, which God supposedly is, we can come to understand more about God.”

“Like I say, Honey, I’m game,” she replied. “Oh, Master, continue! But if we don’t get anywhere with this, I have a little story to tell you about God. OK?”

“OK,” he said, with a bit of a grin. “Let me give it a shot. When I say infinite, My Friend, I’m really meaning all that is. All that is – is the infinite. Given that definition of infinite, no one can quarrel that there is such a thing as infinite because no one can quarrel with the idea that there is an everything. Existence is infinite in that it includes all that is – without exception. Let’s just say that existence cannot limit its membership. All things that are must be included; and no thing that exists can be excluded.”

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

“It means for one thing that, as products of existence, we must eventually trace ourselves to being expressions of this infinity called ‘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.”

“I’m all ears,” she said. “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 true,” 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 am 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 case, 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 are saying that an expression essentially reflects something of the expresser.” Tom 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 him 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 that 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 any time 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?”

“Yes, we did agree.”

“Existence is limited to what is, is it not? I mean it can’t take in what will be – or even what was. It can only take in what is now.”

“Are you questioning 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 am 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 necessarily is limited. That’s why finite means ‘limited’. If it is 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 are talking about the ultimate in finite existence, and you can’t go further back than that. So, My Dear, to whom or what must the ultimate finite existence, which by its very nature must have a beginning, owe its existence?”

“As you have so cogently illustrated,” responded Molly, “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 of an absolute infinity?”

“Yes, I guess it does, but we still don’t know what the existence of absolute being means to us.”

“That we have yet to establish,” he replied.

“So, establish it if you can.”

“Alright,” he said. “We know that because the finite world exists, it does so because it is an expression of an absolute infinite being. Therefore, as part of that limited finite existence, we 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 Molly. “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,” Tom said.

“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 a 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 that 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 guess I will have to admit that we are getting into territory we can’t handle, Honey. We can know so much about our world and our meaning by applying our minds, but trying to figure out infinity, other than being assured it must have a Blessed Trinity of elements like everything else, we just can’t go there.”

“That doesn’t mean we can’t be enthralled with the idea of the Infinite and God,” remarked Molly. “We can love God as something we know must exist – even as we realize we can’t know what we love.”

“I think you are right, My Love. The Infinite is such a mystery and will always be a mystery. No one can explain it – and anyone who claims some kind of dialogue with the Infinite should be ignored. So many get themselves into so much deep water by believing some who suspect that they had an encounter with the Infinite. At least, we know where to stop. The last thing I would do to Kerry is to try and tell him I know about the Infinite – because I don’t.”

“Nor do I, Dear Tom. Nor do I.”

“Molly, you said that if we did not succeed to figure out the Infinite that you would have a story to tell. Well, we haven’t. So, a story is in order. Let’s hear it.”

“It’s a story my Dad told me a long time ago,” she offered. “The story is about a little angel, disguised as a little boy, playing on a beach. Watching the little boy was a man who was pondering God. Of course, the little angel knew what the man was trying to do – explain God to himself. The man observed the little boy taking trips between the ocean and his little hole in the sand. With each trip the little boy would empty his bucket into the hole and go after another. After watching him for some time, the man who was pondering God couldn’t help but become fascinated with the little boy. He finally asked the little boy what he was doing. The little boy told him that he was emptying the ocean into his little hole. The man told him that such a thing was impossible. The little angel boy just looked at him and said: *Sir, it would be easier for me to empty the ocean into my little hole than it would be for you to figure out God.*”



## Exploring Eternal Life

Her story about the little boy angel complete, Molly noticed that Tom was smiling. Her story was quite a good tale and it did what it was intended to do – satisfy Tom that *loving God does not require knowing God – just knowing about God*. What a wonderful thing it is to realize that we are part of an Infinite Being or Reality without really knowing what that means. Being part of Infinity – it meant everything to Molly. Maybe her Dad had satisfied her with that tale about the little boy on the beach and the pondering man long ago. Maybe it was at least partly because of that tale that she had the tremendous love for God that she had – a love she knew Tom shared.

Knowing that life is so full of God, how can one who loves want to keep their hands off of it? Molly often wondered why people who claim to love God and who offer that existence is created by God often treat life like it comes from something other than God. Molly had no reservations now about that. She knew that God was present – and that in some wonderful inexplicable way, both Tom and she were like gifts of that God. There was no stain in their relationship. How could there be if God was in it?

As Tom had done to her in the last break, Molly wanted to do now. Kissing her Tom and her God-send ever so warmly, she bent down and took his masculinity in her mouth. It was not a sordid thing she did. It was an expression of love – far deeper than any act of abstinence could possibly have been. The mystery of God was in her mouth. How could she not be exhilarated by that?

It did not have to go further than that. It never did between Molly and Tom. Somehow they realized that each of them was complete and they did not have to link to tell each other of a love they knew was already complete. Love is so easy when you do not complicate it with a sense of needing completion. Molly knew that – and so did Tom. Molly was holy. Tom was holy. Neither needed the other to become holier; and neither needed the other to feel complete.

It had not always been that way, though. At first, Molly felt that she needed to have Tom in her to feel completed – and Tom felt he needed to go into Molly too; but not for long. This was a couple who became caught up with the sense of the individual. They could not quite put their finger on it, but the simplicity of love without coitus somehow nurtured a sense of individual wholesomeness between them. **They had become as much brother and sister as husband and wife – allowing actual coitus only when an act of conception was desired.**

It sure did simplify life. Some might call it abstinence for lack of copulation, but Molly and Tom knew different. There was no abstinence between them. They loved freely and without inhibition, never having to concern themselves with unwanted pregnancies or timing or maneuvering that most couples have to confront. It was free and easy – and it was always with God in mind. Theirs was a Divine love as well as a human love. Somehow, Molly and Tom could not tell the difference. Was it Divine? Was it human? For their love of God and their love of themselves, they knew it was both.

In only the second year of their marriage, Molly had lost her father. She had been extremely close to him, but so also had her mother. With her father's death, her mother

became devastated. It was something about that scene that told Molly that she should never come to depend on Tom like her mother had depended on her father.

When two people love each other too much, they can lose a needed sense of solitary holiness. The key to knowing one is complete is to never completely depend on another. Anything that another can give is part of the one to whom it is given. There is no need to depend on another for any sense of individual completion. After Molly's Dad's death, that lesson became quite apparent to Molly; and she confided in Tom that she never wanted to become as dependent upon him as her mother had been on her father.

Molly and Tom had talked about it – and had decided on independence in marriage. They even marked the day as a kind of second anniversary – what they called their own Independence Day; and each year for four years now, on March 9th, they celebrated their independence from one another. Their real marital anniversary was September 3<sup>rd</sup>, but both saw March 9th as equally important.

Brother and sister! A rather liberated brother and sister, but that is how they lived – unless it was time for a little co-creation. Little Kerry had been co-created using the normal act of copulation. They were more than willing to make an exception. It was just that their independence of spirit dictated the regimen they chose for a normal course. It was all so simple; and Molly and Tom had the happiest of any lives of which they were aware.

Perhaps it could only work for some. Molly and Tom realized that, but they also realized that most married people never even consider being brother and sister in marriage. Maybe if they did, more husbands and wives would follow that course. It was not for Molly and Tom to concern themselves about what others do or do not do. They had long ago decided their own course. They told others about their decision, but it was for others to make of it what they wanted or could. Once told, it was enough to let others do as they chose.

Molly always enjoyed the intimacy of her mouth on Tom's unique parts, but when it was time for him to come, he was to let her know and her hand replaced her mouth on his virility and her mouth went to kissing. Once the kissing took over, she almost never looked at what was happening in the lap area because kissing was really important. Let what happens happen in the lap area, Molly argued, but never did she want to miss kissing while it happened. Molly loved all the acts of love making, but nothing pleased her as much as kissing. Other ways of loving could come between the kisses, but kissing was like bookends for Molly. She always wanted to begin and end any intimacy with a kiss.

And now the act had been completed with the kissing. It was time to resume the discussion. "I suppose that Mr. Socrates could use a fresh cup of coffee."

"You bet, Mrs. Socrates, but first I have to pee." All the water that Tom drank earlier was pressing for release.

"Me too," she said.

Following their bathroom break, Molly retreated to the living room to fetch their coffee cups for refill as Tom stepped out back for a few minutes. They had a back yard that lent itself to privacy and they spent a good deal of time out back when they could, watching the squirrels munching on the sunflower seeds that the birds would drop to the ground from the bird feeder Tom had attached to a tree limb.

It was springtime. The weather was comfortably warm and it was a real joy to be out with Mother Nature. Tom found immense pleasure in just being a part of it all and knew that the wonderful God that the man in Molly's story could not fathom was there present in all the trees and evergreens that populated their little landscape. Mother Nature is God's child. We are Mother Nature's children. So, that makes us God's grandchildren. It is a way of looking at the big picture.

Soon Molly joined Tom out back. "I see you are watching the birds and squirrels again. I knew you would be. I see no reason why we should not continue our quest out here. We could even add to our suntan while doing so."

So, the mini convention to discuss the meaning of life was moved to the outdoors. It was still early enough in the day that hot coffee would not be out of place. Later, they would resort to coke, but for now, it was still coffee time. They had a small patio in the back, with a gas grill to the side. They would probably use that grill later in the day and fix some steaks for an evening meal. But for now, Tom and Molly settled down around the round tin table in their back yard and began to add another round to their fantastic quest.

Molly had been thinking about what she would like to talk about. "Honey, do you think we might be able to discuss human conduct – or what it should be, using reason alone to define it?"

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

She continued. "It seems to me that we have 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 nonexistence."

"Agreed," he replied.

"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 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."

Tom responded. "Anything which is not in accord with the nature of the Infinite – which, for all practical purposes, is simply, existence – would be considered improper conduct. That's your argument. Right?"

"Yes, it is," she replied. "That may be oversimplification, but does it not illustrate by the use of unaided reason what proper conduct should be?"

"I might agree that it might 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?"

"Maybe none," she replied, "but would you agree that if reason can explain the basis for unhappiness, reason could also dictate the basis for happiness?"

"Yes, I think I would agree with that, although I don't see how such a discussion would tie into our study."

"Come now, Tom! You don't really think that happiness is irrelevant. Do you?"

"Of course, it's relevant," he responded. "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,” Molly argued. “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 and unhappiness. Is that what you are saying?”

“Yes, it is,” she answered, “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 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, that theoretically at least, it would be to your advantage to eat the item, in spite of your dislike for it.”

She continued. “Your indisposition, or close mindedness, toward eating the item may cause you to react in one of 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 will be more or less frustrated because of your discomfort.

“The wise man will choose to eat the item,” Molly said in conclusion, “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. Therefore, the basis for unhappiness is frustration. If you are frustrated, you are naturally unhappy. Consequently, if you want to be happy with something, you have to overcome the frustration related to it, if there is frustration accompanying it. That's fine as an explanation of 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 by accepting that Existence is Infinity, but then fail to act in accord with it, you can't lead anything but a frustrated existence. Reason alone can tell us this.”

She added. “The way I see it, 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 afterwards. 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 discomfort than to take it, if

you knew that your life expectancy is short. For instance, a man who knows he is to die shortly of cancer would be better off not to undergo an operation for some other ailment. 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. "I'm arguing that a man might be better off finding his own choice world of happiness, even if that means acting contrary to our imagined 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 – or simply admiring existence – might be validly compared to undergoing an operation, in spite of imminent death from another cause. 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 foolish as well. Why waste away life by trying to be good if it's more fun to be bad? Do you think that reason alone could provide an answer to 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 mean to tell me that reason can 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's 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 of 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, trying to be patient to see where she was leading with all this.

"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 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, rather than as a complex 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 that simple existence is incapable of normal death and is, except for possible annihilation, immortal, you have not proved that, in fact, there is anything about human life that is simple. It seems to me that, on the contrary, the human being is very much a complex being, 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 is.”

“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 – though I suspect you are talking about the soul. Right?”

“Of course,” she replied. “It’s the soul. At least most would call it the ‘soul’. I think it might be better described as a ‘consciousness,’ however.”

“Alright, call it ‘consciousness’ if you like. Our consciousness is immortal, you say?” he questioned. “Right off hand, I’d say that is not so – just to play the devil’s advocate – merely because our consciousness is entirely a product of our brain; and if the human 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 our 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, Tom,” 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 are conscious, we attach a particular notion. Even though the subject matter may be complex, the idea we form from it – or for 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 indestructible.”

“Let’s back up a moment,” he said. “You can’t tell me that salad is simple. It’s made up of the 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 or idea is not.”

“I am not sure I agree with you, but assuming I do, what does that prove?”

“Wholly complex things can only produce complex products,” she explained. “Yet, clearly, to my mind, the human being produces simple products in the form of the notions it expresses. Therefore, there must be something essential about the human being 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 cannot die and that is 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 alone, which work only in conjunction with our minds, are immortal – since, in fact, they are responsible for the notions we produce.”

“I must admit that is one fantastic notion by itself,” he conceded. “If your argument is correct, after the brain and the mind have ceased producing notions, the mind still holds those notions in reserve. The brain may die, but the mind, as simple, and the notions, as simple, live on. Apparently in some inexplicable way, the mind, even though simple, must cooperate with the brain in producing notions. As such, before the brain is deceased, we had better be storing good notions, so to speak, because after death, we are going to have to live with them.”

“Exactly! The Infinite would have us love because that is what It does,” she continued, “because that is Its Nature, yet we often choose to violate our reason for being and hate or kill 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 can be reborn in 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 and the expression of existence.”

“It would also stand to reason,” Tom added, “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 correctly 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 the destiny we created for ourselves when we had the chance.”

“That’s true,” Molly responded. “Solely from the standpoint of reason, then, it can be seen that it is very important for us to immediately develop a good, loving disposition that we can take into eternity. To wait until tomorrow would be a very foolish thing to do – since there is no assurance that we will have a tomorrow with which to work.

“It would be entirely correct, then,” she continued, “to say that the hell we have in eternity is simply an extension of the hell we have here. If we are not in hell here, we won’t be in hell on the other side of mortal life either.”

“I agree. You know, Molly, 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 advanced 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 resolution, 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."

"Oh, Lovely One," he enjoined, "that indeed should be the number one goal of each of us – 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, we can avoid any bad feelings and bad disposition merely 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 someone. To love, then, is to be grateful and to enjoy what is loved. *Love is not so much a duty as an inspiration.* If we do not feel inspired to enjoy, we are not loving. We may be obliging, but we are not loving. If I say I love you – and have pain in my heart toward you – it is a lie."

"For sure, I agree," he said. "*Love is an activity of the heart that reveres the Infinite and all that the Infinite creates.* It seems to me, as it does to you, that it's extremely important for us to use, now, to the fullest extent possible, the gifts of our expresser. Indeed, we should practice gratitude without inhibition every hour, every minute, every second. To put our talents under a blanket under the pretext that they deter us from our end is tantamount to telling our Infinite Father that we don't appreciate His gifts, and that we have a better way to please our Infinite Benefactor."

"I know you are saying 'Him' out of convenience and not out of correctness, My Dear," remarked Molly, "but allowing for that reverence, I could not agree with you more. The kind of pride that says that the gifts of God are not good enough to embrace in the sunlight and in the nighttime should certainly be damned. In fact, acting like the life we have from God is not good is damnation, even if we think we are directing a prayer to God, while striking our breast and pledging unworthiness. We humans are such fools to think that such can be correct behavior for any soul wanting to attain Heaven."

"Again, you tell it like it is, Honey," he responded. "Speaking of Heaven, how about letting me kiss my angel?"

"Anytime, My Dear! Anytime!"

Tom stood in front of Molly and assisted her to her feet in front of him. They embraced and kissed; and then Tom turned his angel around with her back to his front. She closed her eyes and had some wonderful daydreams as his hands massaged all they could reach. Indeed, Molly thought, it was nice to be at Home in Heaven.

After a few moments of his loving hands touching her loveliness where they would and could, Molly opened her eyes and looked at a tiny pink and blue bird resting on the limb of a tree in front of her. It was easy to see that her little bird somehow had sensed by instinct what it had taken discussion for Tom and Molly to realize. Her little bird was at home in Nature. Why shouldn't it be the same for humans too?

"You know, Tom, I think we have really discovered a very important idea," she said as she kept her eyes on the little bird in front of her. "In a very significant way, the concepts that we emphasize in that which we call our souls are probably the prime



determinants of how we spend time and eternity. My life is so full as I am in your embrace, but that which is really fulfilling me is the thought or notion of kindness I am experiencing. And if for some reason you were not here and I was alone, I could reflect back on the time you were here and recreate, as it were, the kindness I am feeling now. In a very real way, you are assisting me to create the images and the notions I can take with me into eternity. I am like that little bird I see in front of us. *I am getting ready to fly.*”

“Me too,” Tom replied, as he turned his love around and looked into her eyes. Then he lowered his mouth on hers and kissed her sweetly. Having kissed her, he pulled back and again looking into her eyes, he said, “I agree, Molly. Kindness is probably the best disposition. I am glad you feel a sense of kindness with me.”

“If kindness is the ideal, perhaps we should just take a moment to reflect on the less than ideal,” Molly responded. “Besides kindness, Tom, what do you think are the basic dispositions we could have?”

“I am reminded of that song that Daniel O’Donnell sings, Honey. I think he calls it ‘*Yesterday is History – Tomorrow is a Mystery*’ or something like that.”

“Yes, I think he does call it that. I know we both enjoy it; but refresh my memory. What disposition are you thinking about that he offers in that song?”

“One of the verses offers that *it’s best that we forget all the things that we regret*. I definitely believe in that, but it’s that word ‘regret’ that comes to mind as one of the basic dispositions of which any soul is capable.”

“How so?” she asked

“Well, it seems to me that one can’t hold both regret and kindness as dispositions at the same time. I can see that regret may be a step toward kindness in the end, but just speculating about it, I can’t see how I can focus on regret and kindness at the same time.”

“You mean you don’t think one can regret what one has done and be kind at the same time?”

“No, I don’t. Do you?”

“No. I guess not – not at the same time.”

“So, there it is,” he said. “Like Daniel sings in his song, *it’s best that we forget all the things that we regret.*”

“But how can you forget all the things that you regret without overriding your regret with something else?”

“That’s just it. You can’t. If you have regret in your heart, there can be no room for anything else – be it kindness or whatever.”

“I think you’re right, Honey,” she said, “but if regret can be overridden with kindness, what else might override it?”

“Meanness.”

“Meanness?”

“Yes, meanness, Molly. It seems to me that one can go one of two ways from regret. One is kindness and the other is meanness. One is down from regret and the other is up from regret.”

“I’m not sure about that, Tom. Are you telling me that the three basic dispositions of a soul are meanness, regret, and kindness?”

“It seems so to me,” he replied.

“What about justice?”

“What about it?”

“I am not sure, but at first hand, it seems to me that justice should play some kind of part in the picture.”

“As I see it, My Love, meanness, regret, and kindness are justice. I don’t think justice should be considered in itself as a disposition of the soul. As I see it, justice is only the state of a soul for choosing one of the three basic dispositions. *Justice for a soul is only having to continue a state of mind.* If I am kind, then my justice is that I will continue to be kind. If I live in regret, then my justice is that I will have to continue to live in regret – at least until I override regret with kindness – or Heaven forbid, meanness. If I am mean, then my justice is that I will have to continue to be mean – at least until I override my meanness with regret.”

“You don’t think one can go from meanness to kindness without having regret first?” Molly anticipated total agreement with what her husband was to offer.

“No, I don’t. I think that if I am mean, in order to be able to change to kindness, I have to go through a state of regret for or from my meanness first.”

“There are a lot of people about, Tom, who do not regret being mean.”

“Exactly! Did you hear what you said – do not regret being mean? That is exactly my point. How can you go from meanness to kindness if you do not regret being mean first?”

“Wow! I like the simplicity of that,” she replied. “It’s like a roadmap for a soul. If one is mean, then to change to kindness, regret for that meanness must be experienced first. It makes it all so simple.”

“Yes, it is simple, Honey. We both know that – or at least, we both suspected that because we entered this weekend thinking that reason could tell us how to live well all by itself. Our reason is telling us that there are three basic possible dispositions or attitudes of a soul – meanness at the bottom, being the most negative, regret for meanness in the middle, and kindness at the top, being the most positive. One cannot focus on but one of those three at any one time. As one lives, one will probably die. There are probably very few so called deathbed conversions. That would make the state of our soul before the time of death to be the justice we will take with us beyond death.”

“Hmmmmmm, that’s delicious, Sweetheart,” she replied. “It is delicious because it makes it all so simple. I love it because it makes ideal conduct so clear – as you say, by reason alone. But maybe we should ask, what is meanness?”

“It’s a lot simpler than we think, My Dear. It is the complete opposite of kindness. Being kind is only wishing or doing any neighbor well, no matter what any neighbor may have done to you because it is an attitude. You can’t want ill for someone and injury to them at the same time. It should not depend on what another does or does not do. True kindness must be a constant disposition – or else it would not be kindness.

“On the other hand,” he continued, “meanness must be a constant disposition too. Meanness is only wishing or doing another ill – again not depending on what another does or does not do. It’s an attitude; and being so, if one has it, it is simply dispersed over everything one does. I suppose you can pretend to be kind to some and mean to others, but that is all it is - pretense.”

“I am not so sure about that, Tom. I don’t think I agree with that. I think I can wish one well and be kind to him or her and wish another ill and be mean to him or her. Maybe I can be mean and kind at the same time.”

“Not at the same time, Honey. Since the mind can only really focus on one disposition at a time, in reality, if there are two dispositions in a person, one is probably a pretend disposition and not a real disposition. It is only the real disposition that amounts to anything in terms of the justice of a soul – or for a soul. One can’t pretend he’s being kind. He either is or isn’t.”

“Again, I am not sure about that,” she responded. “But do you think that one can be mean to another without actually doing them ill?”

“Of course. I don’t have to literally hurt you to hurt you in my mind. It is not so much what I do to you as what I do to me in my mind. Attitudes exist only in the mind and soul – not out there in the world. I am responsible for what I think because how I think and what I think shapes my attitude. It is attitude that is our judgment – in terms of our souls – not what someone else might do to us.”

“I certainly agree with that,” she said. “Like I say, it makes it all so simple. But it seems to me that we are making all forms of punishment an expression of meanness because if we want some one to be punished for some act or crime, we are actually being mean to them in our mind.”

“That’s the crux of it, alright,” he replied. “Wanting someone hurt is to be mean to them in the mind. It almost makes me feel sorry for anyone in the so called ‘justice system’. Just being part of it almost handcuffs them to have to be mean because the normal mind almost instinctively wishes those who do ill harm. How can you avoid being mean, then, if you constantly put yourself in a situation where you have to wish another ill?”

“There’s always regret,” Molly offered. “It is probably the only way out of such a mess, but I doubt that many who are mean really think of themselves as being mean. So that does not give them much of a chance to regret their states of mind. Does it?”

“It certainly doesn’t,” he agreed. “Well, at least we are aware of what we have to do in order to practice the ideal, which we think is kindness. We can’t mess around with meanness and we can’t even dally with regret. Like Daniel sings in his song, *it’s best that we forget all that we regret*; but the only way we can forget all that we regret is to override it with kindness. What a wonderful way to go for those of us who can go that route.”

“And sad for those who can’t,” she replied. “Why can’t we see what we are doing to our souls?”

“It takes thinking to know what we are doing, Honey, and not many people take time to think. Thus, they continue to pay the price that justice of soul demands – they have to continue with the attitudes they possess.”

“Thank Goodness for your kindness, Sweetheart. It is oh so sweet – and for that I have no regrets.”

“You better not have, Honey, because if you did regret kindness, there would be only one way to go – and that would be meanness. You do not have a mean bone in your body, Molly. Thanks so much for being you!”

“And thank you for your being you, My Prince of Kindness, My King of No Regrets!” But Molly was still pondering regret. “Regret – or the notion of regret – seems a bit confusing, Honey. We think we have a handle on meanness and kindness, but what do you think is regret?”

“Wishing you were mean or kind, I guess,” he replied. “I suppose one can go from mean to kind or from kind to mean, but either passage has to be through regret. Regret is like some middle ground where real meanness or real kindness are only pondered. From a state of kindness, it is far inferior. From a state of meanness, it is far superior.”

“But you think one can always go from one extreme to the other through regret?”

“I suppose it is possible. Why not? But somehow I doubt very much that it is very likely to go from kindness to meanness because once one experiences the true liberty of kindness, I can’t imagine being able to give that up for something as unfulfilling as meanness. Can you?”

“Not really,” she responded. “Do you think that one would have to spend a lot of time in regret – or what I might call a state of limbo – before being able to go from meanness to kindness?”

“I like your referring to regret as a state of limbo, Molly. I think that is a great characterization of it. In answer to your question, maybe yes, maybe no. I think it is possible that one who has previously been mean of heart could realize the insanity of the state of meanness almost instantly and switch from meanness to kindness almost instantaneously, spending almost no time at all in regret, but I don’t think it is likely.”

“No, I don’t suppose it is likely,” Molly said, “but it sure is comforting to think it could happen. Maybe it is the bleeding heart in me, Honey, but I want everyone – no matter how mean they have been – to be like us instantly. I want Hitler to realize he was wrong almost instantly. I want him to realize he can become an angel of kindness very quickly if he would put his mind to it. I don’t want anyone to suffer either hating or being hated. I want kindness for everyone.”

“That is why you are kindness itself, Honey,” Tom replied, “and you are not alone. At least, I share your sympathy. I want kindness for all too.”

Molly was still not finished. “Tom, what about sorrow?”

“What about it?” he responded.

“Do you think it is an expression of regret?”

“I guess you could consider it to be so. One needs to feel sorrow for one’s meanness before one can actually wish that one were kind, I guess. So, it could be considered to be a lower stage of regret; but, you know, Honey, I really prefer to think of sorrow as being a higher stage of meanness rather than a lower stage of regret.”

“Why do you think that?”

“I just see sorrow as still being mean. I don’t see it as stepping up to regret at all. I think people are sorry all the time for being mean, but that does not stop them from being mean. It is a step in the right direction, but it is not regret. I suppose Hitler was sorry for his meanness, though he probably did not see it as meanness. He probably saw it as some form of justice. He may have thought about being sorry for having to execute all the undesirables, as he saw it, but that did not stop him from doing it. No. I don’t think sorrow deserves to be considered regret. Regret is much much higher than sorrow. People are sorry all the time for what they think they have to do in terms of being mean to others, but it does not stop them from doing it. Does it?”

“No, I guess it doesn’t. It’s true. When you analyze it, if one regrets what one has done, it is like they have stopped doing it. They may have not yet proceeded to be kind after they have stopped being mean, but at least they have stopped being mean – or have no desire to continue being mean. When one is only sorry for being mean or having to be

mean as they see it, then it is true, they may still continue being mean. They are still blinded within meanness and being sorry for having to be mean will not necessarily release them into regret for what they have done. So, I think you are right. Sorrow, though a step in the right direction, is not true regret.”

“And forgiveness, Molly? How would you see that?”

“As a higher stage of regret, I think, Honey. It may well be the last stage before you can say goodbye to the world of no kindness and say hello to the world of kindness. I think forgiveness is really only closing the door on a previous world of meanness. It is saying I am ready to go forward with kindness. It is saying I am finally through with meanness and I never want to experience any of it again. Don’t you think?”

“Yes, I agree,” he replied. “I do not think it is thought of that way, but I think you are right. I think most people think of forgiveness as something another does for you rather than what you must do for yourself. You know our love for Jesus, Honey, and I think he would be agreeing with most of our sentiments about life and love and kindness. I think he would also agree with our notion of forgiveness. It is not Jesus forgiving another. It is one forgiving himself for a life of past error and telling himself – I am ready now to go on. That’s true forgiveness.”

“Exactly!” she exclaimed. “If people ask for forgiveness for what they have done from an outside source, chances are they are not ready to stop doing what they are sorry for. If they see forgiveness only in an external sense, thinking they need forgiveness from another, more than likely their forgiveness is not really forgiveness but only sorrow – which has not even passed into the stage of regret yet.”

“Yes, I think you are right there, Honey,” he replied. “Forgiveness is very often equated with Jesus. Jesus and forgiveness are often seen as one, but they should not be. Jesus cannot forgive another for a past meanness. There is only one way that meanness can be forgiven; and that is by stopping it. But forgiveness of self is probably necessary to get it all behind you. Like you say, it is probably the last stage of regret. Once you have really forgiven yourself and you are really ready to move on, presto, like Daniel sings in his song, *it’s best to forget all the things that you regret*. I think forgiveness is really only finally saying goodbye to regret.”

“Correction,” she responded. “*We* think that forgiveness is only saying goodbye to regret. We are in this thing together, Honey. You do not need to forgive me of anything and I do not need to forgive you of anything – even if you had done something gnarly and offensive. You need to forgive yourself and I need to forgive me; but I doubt that either of us needs any forgiveness. We have passed far beyond regret and the need for forgiveness has long been behind us.”

“I agree, Molly; and so I think would Jesus. Perhaps it’s time that this world started seeing Jesus right, even as Jesus could not have offered us any more than what we have offered ourselves today. In Jesus, we have a brother, one of kindred thought, but not a master or lord as so many want to make him.”

“Yes indeed, Tom – we are our own masters. We are our own lords; but neither of us is lord or master of the other.”

“Nor we of Jesus or Jesus of us,” he responded. “We are all only *spiritual siblings* of one another.”

Molly looked up into his eyes and gave him a great big smile. Then she closed her eyes and buried her head in his chest, thinking about the little pink and blue bird that had probably already flown away; and as she pondered it all, she was thinking that *she was flying too – with kindness in her heart and soul and no regrets in her mind.*

*Note: That is the end of Part 1. Stay tuned for Part 2. I let Tom and Molly call achieving happiness Heaven because that seems to be the common consensus; however, in fact, I am of the belief that Heaven is only the Presence of God. We are all in Heaven no matter where we are because we are all in the Presence of God. Personally, I do not believe Heaven should be tied to any kind of meriting process, but for the sake of my story, it does not hurt to act like Heaven is being at peace with life and treating it like an achievement.*

**PART 2:**

**RATIONALIZING LIFE**  
**- THE WAY IT SHOULD BE -**

## A Different Ethic – Natural Discipline

*Life – unbelievably simple, though mankind generally makes it inexplicably hard.* Tom and Molly both saw it that way. Several years had passed since Mr. & Mrs. Socrates spent the weekend they had dedicated to pondering life and its meaning. It was another Saturday and Liz and Joe were coming over with their eight year old daughter, Elise. Kerry would be celebrating his seventh birthday in about a month. It would be good for Elise to provide some kid company for Kerry as the grownups carried on as well.

The grownups, Joe and Liz, had been informed in detail – to the best of Tom and Molly’s recollection – about the deliberations of that monumental weekend. They had been thoroughly educated by Tom and Molly – Mr. & Mrs. Socrates – to the best of that couple’s ability – and had more than once expressed a wish that they had been included at that *University of Higher Learning*. Tom had offered that he and Molly had attended *UHL* that weekend – a thought that came to him after that weekend. When Joe asked what the heck is *UHL*? Tom chuckled and replied: *The University of Higher Learning*.

Liz and Joe were special friends of Tom and Molly on account of a strange beginning. Liz and Molly had worked together in the arena of insurance before both had married and started their respective families with Joe and Tom. As it happened, before Tom met Molly, Tom tried his hand at trying to sell the Rainbow Vacuum Cleaner door to door; and one of his casual potential customers turned out to be Liz and Joe.

Tom was only a neophyte salesman when they had first met, with Tom knocking at the door of Liz and Joe and being told that they did not want to buy anything, but they would be open to having Tom practice his spiel – as Joe had called it – on the tenderfoot, Tom. Joe could tell almost immediately that Tom was only beginning; and from his own failed personal experience of trying to be a door to door salesman earlier in life, he recognized a beginner’s awkwardness and out of compassion for a fellow salesman, he offered to let Tom practice on him and his wife.

Later, Tom and Molly would meet at a church bazaar and fall in love. Of course, the first friend that Molly wanted to introduce to her new love, Tom, was her good friends, Liz and Joe. Imagine the surprise when the old acquaintances of Molly turned out to be Tom’s guinea pigs of some months back. When they all came together, it was like they had all known each other before – and they became great friends.

Poor Molly! At their first dinner out as a foursome after they met, Molly felt mortified by Tom when he told Liz and Joe that he believed in going naked for the rightness of it. He said he felt they should know that so that if they just happened to drop in like friends often do, they would not be surprised. Joe responded with – to each, his own – and felt no problem with the declaration. Liz, however, wondered in silence about this new wild and crazy friend of theirs, as Molly had sputtered to Tom – “Tom! Whatever prompted you to say something like that?”



“It’s my belief,” Tom had answered, “and friends should be aware of each other’s beliefs if they want to remain true friends. So why not tell it like it is? It cuts to the quick of things and everyone knows at the outset where everyone stands.”

Molly had responded, “Yeah, Tom, it’s good to be honest, but you don’t have to tell all. You think Liz and Joe care what you believe?”

“It’s not for me to care if they care or not,” Tom had managed as a reply, “but it is for me to care about being truthful. I mean it’s OK to withhold some little truth like not liking fried potatoes or the like, but it’s not OK to withhold a principle truth like that reflected in a spiritual belief. People should care about one another’s spiritual beliefs in order to relate the best they can because spiritual beliefs should be the very core of living. How can you attempt to communicate with people if you avoid talking about your very insides – about what makes you tick? People try it all the time – and live their lives as strangers because of it. I don’t care to be a stranger to those I love.” Such had been Tom’s argument.

At that moment, Joe had turned to Liz, showing a wide open smile. “How refreshing!” had been his response; and then he took a slice right out of the movie, **CASABLANCA**, and raised his glass of water as a toast to Tom and Molly and said, “*Louie, I think this is the beginning of a long and lasting friendship!*” To the quip, Molly had frowned and questioned Joe. “Who is Louie?” she asked.

“You mean you have never seen the wonderful movie with Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman called **CASABLANCA**?” Tom had seen it and knew immediately all about Joe’s fantasy character named Louie.

“No – sorry, I missed that one,” Molly responded at the time.

“Then we will have to share it with you sometime,” Joe had said. “It’s a wonderful movie and we have it in our video library. Until we get the chance of sharing it with you, let’s just say that Louie is just another term for friend. OK?”

“OK,” Molly had said.

And that happened nine years before. After that, Tom was caught on numerous occasions without clothes when either Liz or Joe or both of them came over without invitation – which happened quite a bit. Tom had made it clear at the outset that they should never feel like they had to ask to come over – and though Molly was not sure she liked the proposition of anyone catching her unaware and unprepared, she went along with Tom in his open invitation.

In time, Joe began to relax as well; and if Tom came over so that the two of them could go golfing or something, he would not hurry to dress – and neither would Liz. Little Elise was also encouraged to be free when the *Family Socrates* visited – and she loved it. When Liz saw the love of life reflected in her little one by just flitting about and flirting about au naturel, she became a great believer that life ought to be that way. First came Tom’s example about being open – then Elise’s. Anyone with an open heart could see that both reflected a wonderful thing called ‘innocence’. No one can beat that.

Elise acted like a big sister to Kerry whenever she could and pretended that Kerry was her little boy, however Kerry had grown up since those early baby days together and did not feel comfortable in being the baby any longer.

Liz had come to look forward to a visit by Tom. She knew there was a good chance the two husbands would get naked – either before an outing or after it; and she loved to see the two guys together. How admirable they both looked! Tom’s middle appendage

was a good bit smaller than that of her Joe, but unlike the greater population which cared about such things, neither of her two men did.

And Tom made it so easy to get along because of his **‘Ethic of Natural Discipline,’** as he called it. Tom had long argued that the biggest reason people can’t be free with one another is most choose to violate the standard of Natural Discipline – which he insisted should be capitalized in print. Nature made sexual intercourse for making babies, not wild and loose orgasms. If any two opposites of a relationship respected that truth and did not engage in intercourse except to make a baby, then any two opposites could trust one another to keep a relationship safe. Life is unbelievably simple, he argued, if we just pay attention to some basics; but if we don’t, then we have to pay the piper with the consequences of complicated behavior.

In the nine years they had known each other, Tom had not once suggested other than his Natural Standard. The result was that Joe could trust his Liz with Tom, naked or otherwise, because he knew his friend, Tom, would not challenge his right as husband to be a co-parent with Liz. The two could hug and be affectionate – and they often were – with nary a consequence to their behavior. *Life is so simple if we just act according to Natural Discipline.* Liz and Joe and Tom and Molly were living testimonies to that.

“They’re here already!” Molly exclaimed, as she heard a car drive into the driveway. “I didn’t expect them this early.”

“Great!” was Tom’s response. “I hope they have not had breakfast. It has been awhile since I cooked one for the six of us.”

“It just so happens we have plenty of eggs, Honey. That would be just fine if we could treat them to breakfast.”

Elise was the first to enter, as she bounded out of the car and ran to the door. Kerry was naked, as were his parents, but was eager to open it. “Hi, Elise! Come in!” the little host enjoined.

“Why of course, My Young Prince!” was her reply, as she giggled and hurried in. The two of them went bouncing off to Kerry’s room, with Elise patting Kerry on his fanny and giggling some more.

“It’s nice to hear them giggle so,” Molly said, as she glanced at Tom and smiled.

“Come on in!” Tom said to his friends, as they opened the door and entered. “It sure is good to see you. Make yourselves at home. We are.”

“Sounds like a plan to me,” offered Joe, as he smiled and began unbuttoning.

“We got the pictures developed of our outing last week,” Molly said. “Would you like to see them?”

“Of course,” Liz responded, as she joined Joe in disrobing. “I like clothes, but it’s always nice to get out of them too. Thank God for the two of you. We do not know another soul we could do this with.”

“Yeah, I know,” Molly replied, “and isn’t it sad?”

“Isn’t it?” Tom agreed, and then he reiterated his standard comment. *“Life is so unbelievably simple, but we make it so inextricably hard.”*

“Why do you believe that is so?” Joe questioned, looking at Tom.

“Why do people make it hard?” Tom repeated the question. “I think it’s because most see God as outside of life. It’s only a matter of perception. If you see God as outside of life, you tend to make of God a judge – and then you have to come up with

some arbitrary rules that such an external God must impose on his subjects. If you have God as outside of you, then you have to see God as a judge because who else is there that should judge? But if you see God as inside of life, then God can't be seen as a judge. It is really as simple as that. Don't you think?"

"At least we think it's that way," Molly added. "I mean, for example, look at Joe's erection." Joe smiled and felt proud that he was the object of everyone's comfortable gazes. "And then look at Tom. He's soft." Tom smiled and knew well what Molly would say next. "If you see God as outside of life, the tendency is that God is going to have to agree with one of our guys and disagree with the other because they are different. But if you see God inside of Joe's hardness and inside of Tom's softness, there is no problem. Both Tom and Joe are seen as good because both have the same God inside of them. When you put God outside of you, you have to look for approval and disapproval. And I think that is what troubles society so."

"Lady, you are right there," Joe said. "So many religious zealots claim to love the same God, but then denounce each other in the process. Why? Because each of them see a different God outside of them. It's like people actually have different gods when God is seen as outside of them. Even though in words every religious person claims to honor the same God, by having to define a God as outside of them, they are quite apt to define different gods – and the real God that is in all is simply missed."

"And that is exactly what happens," Tom agreed. "Just look at Moses and the Pharaoh of Egypt. Moses saw or knew a different god than did the Pharaoh and the Pharaoh saw or knew a different god than did Moses. The result was the Moses had his god or gods challenge the god or gods of the Pharaoh and the Pharaoh had his god or gods challenge the god or gods of Moses. If both Moses and the Pharaoh had respected only one God and realized that the one God is in both of them, there would have been no quarrel between them."

"I think it's true," commented Liz. "People quarrel because they feel they have different gods when all the time the same God exists in all. It's pretty stupid. Isn't it?"

"As stupid as it gets, Honey," Joe agreed. "As Tom would argue, look at me, look at Tom. We both have God inside of us. I'm harder than Tom right now, maybe because I just got out of restricting clothes and the new flow of blood to my penis is causing an erection – whereas Tom has been naked and relaxed for awhile. Anyway, on another occasion, he will be harder than me. So what? The only matter of importance is that both Tom and Joe are enjoying life because the same One and Good God is making it happen."

Just then, Elise, who had joined her young host in his state of the natural, came running in. "Mommy, Kerry says his dad is going to make breakfast for us all. Can we stay?" Actually, Joe and Liz had intended on asking their hosts out to breakfast; and that was why they had come so early. Tom and Molly were expecting them, but had not expected them until after breakfast.

Kerry followed Elise into the room; and the reflection of all six could be seen in a large mirror on the wall. "We are going to have them for breakfast, aren't we, Dad?" asked Kerry.

"That would be nice, Son, if they would agree. Would you mind joining us here for breakfast?"

“That would be delightful!” Liz remarked. “We wouldn’t have to get dressed so soon if that were the case. Actually, we planned to treat you out for breakfast. That’s why we are earlier than we planned to be.”

“We have plenty of eggs for all of us,” Tom replied, “and plenty of bread and butter for toast. Molly may even have some jam or jelly. If that’s fine, we can handle breakfast for all. If you want more than that, we will have to go out.”

“Eggs and toast sounds fine,” Liz responded.

“And coffee and orange juice, too,” added Molly. “Tom and I already had a cup of coffee this morning, but there’s plenty left. Would you like a cup?”

“Sure,” Joe said, “with milk if you don’t mind.”

“The same for me,” Liz said, “as if you did not already know how we take our coffee.”

“Kids, would you like some orange juice?” Molly asked.

“Please,” responded Elise.

“Me too.” Kerry was quick to agree.

Tom then proceeded to fetch the coffee for the adults – including for Molly, who always drank her coffee black as Tom preferred the altered taste of a milked down version. Molly grabbed some glasses from the cupboard and filled them with orange juice for the kids. Elise and Kerry thanked Molly for the orange juice and sat down at the kitchen table, chatting kid talk as they did. Kerry was a bit intentionally sloppy and spilled some of his on himself. Elise took advantage of the opportunity to play the mother and quickly grabbed a dish rag from the rack on the sink and watered it down some. Then she took the wet rag and moved to wash her friend.

“You don’t have to do that,” Kerry pretended to shrug, fully aware his intentional spill was designed to get him the attention Elise was providing. When people know each other, they also know what an action might prompt. This was a game these kids often played – as do a lot of adults. Why not? It’s fun.

Elise then pursued her task like a real grownup, washing Kerry wherever the juice had spilled. Elise could not tell if the juice went to her friend’s middle, but this little game was scripted to have her wash the area. She was intent on exploring her little friend, as he was intent on being explored. Curiosity is a wonderful thing, especially when it can be satisfied so openly.

Of course, Kerry was too young to expand from the attention, but Elise enjoyed touching him just the same. Now she was like Mommy who constantly touched Daddy and made him big. Elise was wise enough, however, to know that little boys are not supposed to get big when they are touched. She was as innocent as a lamb about such things – as were Liz and Joe who encouraged her.

As for our prince of the moment, Kerry, he enjoyed the attention – as any normal person would. Tom and Molly taught Kerry that it is OK to accept a kiss or hug or any attention if it is offered, but it is not OK to ask for attention. He was told that to ask for attention is to chance imposing on another person; and young as he was, he knew what imposing on another means.

It means putting another in a position where they might do something with which they disagree – just to please that someone. Kerry was only nearly seven, but he was old enough to know that love is not asking another to do for you, but to do for another. If that other wants to do something in return, that should be up to them; and a real

gentleman would not ask a lady to please him. Accept if offered, maybe, but never ask for attention. Enticing with a hint, like intentionally spilling orange juice on yourself, is not out of place to open a door, but actually requesting attention is not proper. If someone takes a hint, fine, but let it go at that. Always make it easy for another to respond. Never make it hard.

This was the ethic that worked for this small group of six; and none of this ethic would have likely become that if Tom had not been so mildly blunt so many years ago when they first met. He had testified that he often went naked at his house for the rightness of it. It was that honesty that first intrigued Joe and Liz to wonder about this strange man who seemed to lack the shame that most hold close to themselves.

Tom tried not to offer any disrespect for other beliefs, but early on had mimicked those who think they are sinful and unworthy of life by beating his bare chest and repeating the words in jest that so many repeat day after day in earnest. He knew the chant well, as earlier in life he had practiced it.

“Oh, woe is me, unworthy beast that I am!” he had mimicked, pounding at his chest with clenched fists, as others do who think they are unworthy of God’s love. “Of what sense does it make,” he argued, “that God Who is making his chest would approve of our rejecting the gift? *How can man be unworthy of life if life is a gift of God?*”

It made no sense to him; and deep down, it made no sense to Liz and Joe either as both had welcomed the suggestion that a contrary conduct in life should be the norm, not the exception. So they had become the masters of their own lives, starting out as a couple of students eager to learn and to attend what Tom called *The University of Higher Learning*. And like Tom and Molly were doing for their Kerry, Liz and Joe were doing for Elise. Attending *The University of Higher Learning* is simply to go into the heart and mind and make sense of the world about you. No books are needed – just an eager, willing mind.

Kerry and Elise had become students of *The University of Higher Learning*; and a principal course was the ethic of “accept, but don’t ask.” People need openings, however, and it’s OK to do things to open doors – as long as one does not insist that another must go through an opened door. Open a door, but never reach out to pull another through it. Kerry had intentionally spilled the orange juice on himself to provide an opening for Elise to react as she, in fact, did – and as he expected, knowing her as he did; but it would have been wrong for Kerry to ask Elise to wash him down. Besides that, it would not have been ‘manly’ either.

It’s OK to tell someone that your back hurts – as long as you don’t ask for a back rub in the process. To say that your back hurts and then leave it to your partner to offer a back rub is just fine, but to tell your partner that your back hurts while also commanding attention is out of order. Always approach a partner, armed only with suggestion and never petition. That way, life remains simple for all and people don’t get into making all sort of demands upon one another. To repeat, open the door for another, but don’t insist on pulling him or her through it. Do that and your world will always be filled with love because you will find yourself always seeking to do for another and not be the recipient of another. It’s OK to receive gratefully from another, but only if that other offered out of generosity first.

For sure, our youngsters, current students of *The University of Higher Learning*, were very much aware of the ethics of their parents – and the ethics of their parents were being adopted by themselves as well.

Elise knew what she would do next. She would provide a curiosity opening for Kerry as Kerry had provided one for her, but what could she do that would not be an imposition? She decided her course of action and went about it, while the four adults watched the little play going on before them with hearty approval. How could they not? They inspired the writing of the script being rewritten by their two students.

Elise returned her used rag to the sink and went back to Kerry, stretching her hand to him, palm open. Of course, that was an invitation to stand and go with her to wherever she was planning to lead them. “Let’s go look at ourselves in the mirror,” she suggested. Elise suggested the mirror activity because she wanted to give Kerry an opening to look at her; and looking at themselves seemed like a good idea. The mirror she was talking about was the huge mirror in the living room. Taking her young lover by the hand, she led him to the mirror. Without shame, they stood there for awhile, freely looking at one another’s body.

And what a beautiful sight they were to one another – and to the adults, too, who had followed them to watch the little play unfold as it did. Given the ethics of this small band of human beings, there was no need for privacy. Kerry and Elise did not feel they had to go someplace else to look at each other. They knew their parents would approve because their parents frequently did the same thing. They only left the kitchen because there was no mirror in the kitchen. Tom and Molly planned to install a mirror in the kitchen, but had not yet done so. So the kids went to the living room to find a mirror there.

“Look at us, Mom!” offered an excited Elise. Somehow, ‘Mommy’ would not have been the grownup thing to call her mother on such an auspicious occasion; and so, Mommy became Mom. “Look at us! Aren’t we beautiful!”

“You certainly are, Honey!” was Liz’s response.

“Yes, we all are,” Joe added, as he led his wife to stand beside the kids in front of the mirror. Joe had hair in his middle and had a rather firm penis to present in front of the mirror whereas little Kerry was still bald and still very little, though his penis did point out a bit rather than hang as Joe’s did. It must be the weight, Kerry thought, as he compared himself to Joe. I guess when you get older, you get bigger, but you must also get heavier.

“I can’t wait to grow up!” exclaimed an excited Kerry. “Joe, do you think my penis will be as big as yours?”

“Probably not, Kerry. Yours will probably be more like your dad’s than mine. Children often inherit the features of their parents. As your dad is much smaller than me, you will likely be that way too.”

“However you turn out, My Little Prince, I will like it!” Elise gleefully offered.

Kerry just smiled and knew that it would be that way too. The problem with other people’s ethics is that they accept others only according to size and not content of the heart. Kerry was taught that he was a very unique child of Nature; and though he may take after his dad a lot, he was still different. People should enjoy one another based on their general similarities, but they should also enjoy one another for their specific offerings as well.

One of the great joys of life should be that we come in all different manners – some small, some big, some in between. If we were all alike, the world would lack variety. With all of us being different, variety is a given. Yet instead of celebrating how different we are and finding tremendous encouragement in that, we often act like being different is a reason to submerge oneself behind some false claim of modesty. Our variety should be seen as a blessing; yet we often treat it like it is a curse.

Molly felt an urge to join the others in front of the mirror. “Come on, Tom! Let’s join the kids!”

Then all six were there, bunched in front of the mirror, able to gaze at one another without gawking. Mirrors are really wonderful things in that you can look at yourself or another and not worry about being seen doing so. So often, people don’t care to be gawked at. So the advantage of a mirror allowed each of this group to look and not gawk.

“Honey, as much as we are enjoying looking at the beauty of Nature in us all,” Molly said, “perhaps we better get on with making breakfast for our guests.”

“I agree,” Tom responded. “Kids, why don’t you go out and play a little with Tybee? We will call you when breakfast is ready. OK?”

“OK, Dad,” Kerry replied. “Come on, Elise.”

With that, the kids went out the sliding glass door at the back of the house as Tom and Molly proceeded to prepare the breakfast.

Kerry and Elise always enjoyed playing with Tybee, who had a great life as a yard dog. Molly was allergic to dog fur; and that’s why Tybee had to live outside. If Tybee had not been a dog with so much fur, she might have been allowed as a house dog, but Tybee was a cross between a Labrador Retriever and a Chow, making her a rather large dog at seventy pounds with a heavy coat of fur. Tybee did not mind being a yard dog, however, and she had a very nice shed to stay in when the weather was a bit inclement.

Surrounded by a high privacy fence made of oak panels and populated with large evergreens, the back yard was a gem of privacy. Though Tom and Molly would not have required any privacy, they knew that the neighborhood might require it of them if they became aware of their natural beliefs and conduct. So, a privacy fence was installed immediately upon purchasing the home some nine years back. Kerry and Elise were free to play naked in the back yard without anyone noticing, although almost everyone in the neighborhood knew that Tom and Molly and ‘the kid’ were Naturalists.

Tybee was an extremely friendly mutt and always enjoyed the frequent attention she received at the hands of Kerry and family and any guests who might drop by. Sitting on a chair by the picnic table on the back patio, Elise called for Tybee to come – which she did promptly. Elise couldn’t help but wonder out loud why it is that dogs seem to be so happy. With just a small bit of attention, they respond like the petting they just received was the only thing in the world they need – and enthusiastically, their tails wag, equivalent to the spark in their eyes. Dogs are so easy to please, thought Elise. Why couldn’t humans be that way?

Kerry was eager to show Elise how big the ‘mystery plant’ in the back yard had grown since she last saw it a week ago. “Let’s check out the mystery plant,” he said. Actually, there were two mystery plants in the back yard. One was in the middle of a path to the back woods behind that back yard and the other was just over a fence off an area for a

garden. A garden was never planted, as evergreens were planted instead, but the rather decorative wood fence that was to corral the garden was still there.

The mystery plants first occurred in the back yard out of the blue about five years previous. At first, no one knew what they were – but one friend of Tom’s thought they were ‘mosquito plants’. How in the world a ‘mosquito plant’ should just start to grow – if that’s what they were was a big mystery. Tom and Molly would later find out that their mystery plant – or plants – and the two plants were the same – were not ‘mosquito plants,’ however. Tom took a sample leaf to a neighborhood nursery and his plants were identified as something called a Royal Paulownia or some such. It is native to China and is called also “The Princess Tree” in China. Tom and Molly lived in a suburb of Atlanta, Georgia. How in the world a tree native to China became entrenched in their yard was quite a mystery, but they had two of them.

The first year of their existence, they grew only to about two feet. Each succeeding year, they seemed to double in size from the previous year – even though Tom would cut them down to the ground in the fall. Last year they grew as tall as sixteen feet or so. It was anybody’s guess how tall they would grow this year. More than likely, initially, the seeds of the Royal Paulownia were carried to the yard by the winds; but regardless of the origin of the seed, the resulting plants were as beautiful as they became tall. Their leaves grew very large, some extending a foot in width and another foot in length. Tom liked to call them ‘elephant ear leaves’.

Part of the huge mystery about Royal Paulownia seeds taking root in Tom and Molly’s yard is they seemed to be alone. No one in the neighborhood had ever seen such a plant. So why did the wind choose Tom and Molly’s place as a destination for the seeds? Molly conjectured that maybe other yards received the seeds, but the owners just hoed out the plants thinking they were weeds. Tom and Molly, however, took care to nurture their unknown weed; and it grew into a beautiful plant. They figured that the lesson of it all was that one ought not to be so quick to think of an unknown plant as a weed. It may just turn out to be a “Princess Tree.”

“Wow!” exclaimed Elise, as they approached the plants. “That thing is already taller than me!” And it was only early summer. It was quite a sight – two lovely, innocent, naked kids measuring themselves according to the mystery plant. A week prior to this, Elise was taller than the plants. Now, she was considerably shorter. “It will be fun to see how tall they grow this year,” she said to Kerry.

“Yeah, it will be,” responded Kerry, with Tybee jumping about between them and barking for joy.

Then they heard a voice beckoning them to come quickly. “Breakfast is ready, Kids. Come and get it.”

Molly had been showing the recently developed pictures of a previous outing to Liz and Joe. “Want to see the pictures of a week ago, Elise?” Molly asked, as the two hungry kids came rushing in.

“Yeah!” was the reply.

“Here they are,” Molly said, as she handed the envelope with the pictures to Elise. “Why don’t you and Kerry go to the couch and look at them. We will have breakfast when you finish. OK?”

“OK,” Elise responded. “Come on, Kerry.”



The pictures were of an outing the six of them and the next door neighbor, Sam, enjoyed a short time ago. They had gone to a wooded area about fifty miles from home where they knew they could enjoy a picnic au naturel. A good time was had by all; and the pictures captured the event. There were several of Tom and Joe and Kerry, naked except for sneakers, trying to climb an old tree. That had been a hoot. Only Joe managed to reach the third branch up. They had to admit that they didn't know much about climbing trees, though both Tom and Joe had climbed a lot of trees when they were Kerry's age. Sam decided he was too old to even try.

Sam had just reached sixty last December. He and his wife, Nellie, some thirteen years older than Sam, moved into the house next to Tom and Molly about a year before Tom and Molly moved to the neighborhood. Nellie had diabetes and died a couple of years ago, but before she passed, she and her husband insisted on Tom and Molly and Kerry having a Sunday evening meal together almost every week; and after eating, they would play cards – sometimes canasta and sometimes hearts. With this, Kerry was quite bored and almost always chose to watch TV instead of play any ole boring card games. Now, if Elise had been at the table, that would have been a different story – but to play cards with a bunch of boring adults was no fun at all.

Nellie was not at all comfortable with going naked; and she suspected that if she were to visit at Tom and Molly's, they would embarrass her by going naked. So she never visited at Tom and Molly's, even though she insisted that they visit her and Sam. On the other hand, Sam had no problem visiting the naked neighbors – and whenever Nellie was away and the neighbors were home, he would find a reason to borrow something or other. Until Nellie passed, however, he had never participated in going naked in his own home beyond the bedroom and bathroom, even as he admitted to those who did that it was probably a good thing. He did, however, go naked at the neighbor's home with the neighbors as often as he could – the neighbors being Tom and Molly and sometimes, Joe and Liz.

And then Nellie passed. After the funeral, he decided it was time for him to change and adopt the naked ways in his own home that he sometimes enjoyed in the neighbor's home. He even allowed for going naked both inside the house and outside of it around a seventeen year old grandson, Tony, who visited every summer for a couple of weeks. School had just finished for the year; and more than likely, Tony would soon be coming for his annual visit with his grandparents, though it was now only with Grandpa, being that Grandma Nellie was deceased.

Within the current set of pictures, there were pictures of Sam carrying some wood for the fire and some of Sam holding weenies over the fire and some of Sam playing kick the can with the others when Sam was caught alone in the middle. It seemed for some reason that most of the pictures that Elise and Kerry were enjoying on the couch in the living room were of Sam – but there were a few of Liz and Molly, too, sitting on an old wood stump, and one of all of them, except Tom who took the picture. Tom caught one of them all wading in the rocky creek that wandered through the area. And in all the pictures, only sneakers were worn.

The kids finally finished their review, laughing especially at the ones of 'Ole Sam' as they did. "Mommy, Ole Sam is so funny, isn't he?" Kerry liked the old fellow a lot.

"Yes, he is, Dear," replied Molly. Why don't you and Elise go and say hello to him after breakfast?"

“OK,” was the reply.

“Let’s all sit down for breakfast now, though,” Tom said.

The table had been set. A hot bowl of scrambled eggs was in the middle of the table – and a couple of plates of warm cinnamon rolls had been prepared instead of the toast that had been planned. Each had a glass of orange juice setting beside his or her plate. There would have been ham or sausage or some kind of meat had there been any available in the house, but that which was handy was quite satisfactory to all.

“Those cinnamon rolls sure look good. Smell good too,” Joe said.

“And they probably eat as good as they look and smell,” responded Tom, “but before we eat them, let us offer a word of thanks for the meal at hand.”

With that, they all joined hands. Some of them bowed; and some of them kept their heads high, looking mostly at the food in the middle of the table. Kerry and Elise sat next to each other and enjoyed the little affection they were sharing – and the adults were no less pleased. Tom offered the words.

***“Blessed Nature, we thank you for what we are about to enjoy – the meal before us. Without wheat, there would have been no flour. Without flour, we could not have made cinnamon rolls. Without sugar, there would have been no icing for the rolls. Without chickens, there would have been no eggs. All that we have before us comes from you, Blessed Nature – and we are grateful for it all. And we are grateful for ourselves as having come from you as well. Without you, Blessed Nature, none of us would be here today to enjoy this meal – or each other.***

***“As God is to you, Blessed Nature, you are to us. You come from God. We come from you. God is only the mysterious energy out of which Nature is born. It is not for us to insist on knowing how it all came about. It is only for us to enjoy that which has come about. And so, Dear Nature and Dear God, we embrace your gift of life as we enjoy each other. We thank you for the Blessed Trinity of Goodness, Unity, and Truth in us all.”***

After his blessing, Tom looked up and nodded his head and said, “And now, wonderful friends at this table, let’s eat.”

And the six said in unison – ***Amen!***

8.

## Becoming a Believer

“Hello, Sam!” Kerry and Elise arrived at Sam’s door. The main door was open in front of a closed screen door. They could see Sam at the far end of the house in his kitchen, wiping the dining room table. He had probably just finished breakfast, too, like they just had.

Sam’s heart quickened its beat, as he always enjoyed the kind of company that the neighbors next door represented. They were so generous and kind. How could he not like them – from the parents to the kid; and he enjoyed Kerry’s friend, Elise, tremendously too – as well as Elise’s parents. On a good number of occasions, he had encountered them during visits with Tom and Molly; and often, Joe and Liz and Elise would come by to say hello with the neighbors.

“Well, Hello!” he said, as he hurried to the door to open it for his young guests. “Come on in and make yourselves at home!” Since Nellie’s passing, Sam had fully embraced the neighbor’s naturalism – and as was customary for a day at home, he was naked. The kids expected that as they knew Sam from his many visits to Kerry’s house. Not all of Tom and Molly’s guests were comfortable with their host’s way of life, but Sam was one who was; and Sam knew he was welcome to drape his clothes on the rack by the front door. If Sam came over to visit rather than just ask a favor or offer a message, often he would join his hosts in their comfort.

Sam bent over and hugged his shorter visitors and kissed Elise on the cheek. Sam was 6’1” and much taller than the kids. He also had a bit of a paunch where his stomach was – and he enjoyed making fun of it. He claimed that his gall bladder surgery of fifteen years ago weakened his stomach lining and caused his belly to push out a bit. “Take heart, Kids,” he said, “as he groped his belly. “Maybe when you are as old as I am, you’ll be lucky enough to grow a pillow like me too. Nellie told me that if I ever got rid of my tummy, she would have to find another just to have a pillow to lean on.” And he chuckled at his own joke.

Sam was always laughing. His laughing often made the world brighter for Molly when she visited – and she felt like skipping home, even if she had walked over. It was good to hear Sam laugh.

“Are they still there?” he laughed, referencing his genitals often hid below his belly.

“Of course they are, Sam, you silly one, you,” retorted Elise.

“That’s good to know,” he laughed again. “Nellie’s been gone for some time now and I don’t have sex anymore, but it’s nice to know I still have something to pee with.”

Elise giggled. “Oh, Sam!”

Kerry had moved to the back of the house and was looking out the open door to the back yard. “Elise, come quickly! Sam’s birds are so pretty!”

Elise hurried to the site. Pointing at a red one, eating from Sam’s own bird feeder, Elise asked, “Is that a cardinal, Kerry?”

“I think so,” he said, while noting a blue jay scouting the ground for seeds dropped by the others. “Sam, I wonder why blue jays never use the feeder? I have watched your

birds and our birds and I have never seen a blue jay perch on our hanging feeder or yours. Are they scared of the feeder or what?"

"I don't know, Kerry," was his reply. "If they are scared of a feeder, that would seem to be out of character. I can't see them being scared of anything. They seem to be a rather bossy bird and drive the other birds away from the bird bath out front when they come. That's a good question. Why aren't they as bossy when it comes to feeding from a bird feeder?"

"I guess it's one of those 'Nature's Way' things," offered Elise. "Dad says there is so much we can't figure out about birds and animals. If we can't understand why something does what it does, just chalk it up to 'Nature's Way'."

Unawares to any of the three of them watching the birds and squirrels, Tony, Sam's seventeen year old grandson, had come up behind them. "Nature's Way! Yeah, that sounds good as an explanation for it all."

Elise jumped from the surprise. "Tony, I did not know you were here!"

"Yeah, came in last night with Julie."

"Who's Julie?" asked Kerry.

"Ah, she's just a girl friend," he said.

"Just a girl friend, huh?" remarked another newcomer. Julie had heard the voices and was intent on investigating.

"Ah, you know what I mean," Tony replied. Julie just smiled and gave Tony a hug.

"Julie, I want you to meet Kerry from next door and his 'girl friend,' Elise." Tony put a fun emphasis on 'girl friend' since he had spoken of Julie as his own girl friend.

"Hi!" Kerry said, as he gave Elise the eye. "And my 'girl friend' says hello too."

Kerry took special delight in taking advantage of the opportunity and calling Elise his girl friend.

Elise chanted, "Hello, Julie! Hello, Tony! Good to see you again, Tony!"

Like his grandfather, Tony was naked, though Julie had not become accustomed to the new freedom as of yet. She was wearing a blue bathrobe that Nellie had worn for twenty years before her death a couple of years ago. Tony had grown considerably since his visit last year – and that included his masculinity. Kerry and Elise both noticed the change."

"Wow!" exclaimed Kerry. "You have gotten so big!"

"Just call it 'Nature's Way,' Kerry. You will get big too when you get as old as me."

Tony snickered a little as he said it, seeing himself as really old, compared to six year old Kerry.

Indeed! Call it for what it is – Nature's Way. Julie was much too much of a neophyte of the *Natural Way* to be sure that this little rendezvous was at all proper, but it was very comforting to be referred to in such a polite term – Nature's Way. That was a lot like 'Nature's Child'. Makes everyone feel like they belong. That was nice. Why would anyone object to being Nature's Child?

Tony had seen Grampa naked often – even before his liberalization after Gramma's death. Nellie never went naked before her grandson, but she tried to accept Grampa teaching Tony the ropes. Even so, before Gramma died, Grampa did not mind sleeping in the raw, but he did not go about the house in the raw. Tony saw Grampa naked in his bedroom, but before Gramma had passed, he had not had the privilege of seeing Grampa naked in the kitchen or living room or out back.

Sam was grateful for his friendship with an angel, Molly. She had known of his acceptance of their own natural behavior when he visited and knew that he considered it the right way, but it took a little encouragement from Molly to go that extra step and become a practitioner of the *Natural Way*. Molly had followed a similar path a few years after her marriage when Tom convinced her that it was the right way to go.

Molly's conversion came as much from Kerry, however, as it did from Tom. Like Liz experienced with Elise, when Molly saw her naked baby frolicking with her naked and loving husband, she became a believer that natural freedom ought to be the ideal. She had been reluctant at first because of her upbringing that taught her that nakedness is of the devil and estranges the heart from God.

Tom, of course, had overcome the same teaching and did all he could to gently help Molly overcome her own bad vision. She struggled through the bad vision of her upbringing until Kerry was born – and then it was like a light came on. If Kerry was pure as a baby – with no taint of being soiled in sin – then, as Kerry's mother, she could not be tainted with sin either. *For how could it be that a son could be untainted while the source of that son was tainted?*

So, with Kerry's babyhood, she took off the bad vision glasses and threw them away. Every chance she got after that rebirth, she encouraged friends to follow the path. Most ignored her, but some, like Sam, heard.

And after Sam heard from Molly and Tom, Tony was awarded the same encouragement. Perhaps by this time next year, Julie will have heard the same encouragement, and she, too, will have adopted the *Natural Way* and feel right at home being just another of Nature's Children.

Tony had come to notice that the board holding the bird feeder had come loose from the pole to which it was attached. Grampa had nailed a two by four to a pole he had cemented into the ground that was to serve as an anchor for the bird feeder. The squirrels loved to scamper on the pole and board and try to reach the bird feeder from a wire holding the hanging bird feeder to the two by four. Apparently, the activity of the squirrels over time had caused the two by four to waver and become loose. Tony noticed it.

"Grampa, how about I fix that bird feeder for you?" Tony asked.

"Go ahead," Grampa replied.

Tony then fetched the step ladder from the shed out back, along with hammer and nails from Sam's tool chest in the shed and placed the ladder next to the pole. Then he climbed up the ladder to a point where he would be above where the two by four met the pole. Feeling the ladder as a little on the unsteady side, he asked Grampa to hold the ladder – and then he proceeded to add some new nails from the top down to better secure the bird feeder.

"I ought to get a picture of this," offered Julie. "What a sight you two are fixing a bird feeder, naked as the blue jays over yonder!"

Elise giggled. "I wonder if Sam is ticklish," she said to Kerry.

"I heard that," replied Sam. "In answer to your question, no, I'm not ticklish." But he chuckled as he said so. Sam's laugh always gave him away.

"Shall we see if that is true?" Julie sniggered to Elise.

Elise giggled again. "Yeah!"

Kerry joined the two of them and they all ganged up on Sam, while peering up the ladder and seeing Tony's middle attachments hanging down. The ladder was over a place laden with pine straw. So, if Tony did fall, he would not fall on anything hard.

After trying a few minutes to get a reaction from Sam by tickling him under the arms and getting no response, Julie decided to see how ticklish Tony was while Kerry and Elise kept up the attack on Sam. Sam laughed at the effort, but not as much from the finger tickling as from being tickled in the heart.

It wasn't a smart thing to do, going up a rickety step ladder to pursue a laugh, but Julie went two steps up and then decided she would not try to tickle Tony. She could not reach that high to get to his underarms. She would pretend that she was falling and then grab hold of his penis to keep her from falling. It had lost its earlier erectile state, but it was still big enough to grab.

"I'm falling," she pretended. Then she reached out and grabbed Tony's right thigh with her right hand and his penis with her left hand. With the grab, Tony's penis began to swell again, as an excited Julie shouted, "I'm OK! I'm saved!" And then she roared with laughter.

Seeing Julie hanging on to Tony as she was, Kerry and Elise joined in the laughter – and then Sam joined in with the loudest laughter of all.

"What's all the laughter about?" Tom and Molly had come over and seeing no one in the house, but hearing noises in the back, entered the house, knowing they would be welcome. The plan was for Liz and Joe to come over later, but for a little while, they wanted to make love in privacy in the home of their dear friends, Mr. & Mrs. Socrates.

Tom proceeded to the back while Molly took the liberty of slipping out of her dress and getting naked while still in Sam's kitchen. She knew Sam would appreciate the surprise; and she loved surprising Sam, however, she did not know Tony had come. So, Molly would be in for a surprise as well.

"Daddy, we're fixing Sam's bird feeder," Kerry said, as he continued to poke at Sam's ribs.

"Does it take all four of you to do that?" replied Tom, knowing full well that far more than fixing a bird feeder was in process.

Kerry and Elise stopped their fun with Sam and turned their attention to Tom. Kerry said, "We were just having fun with Ole Sam, Daddy!"

"I'm glad you were, Son," Tom replied, "and you, too, Elise, and you, too, Tony."

Tony had finished his nailing task and turned around to greet Tom. "Hello, Tom! Good to see you! May I introduce you to my girl friend, Julie?"

"Pleased to meet you, Julie. I see you have become somewhat accustomed to Sam and Tony and do not seem to be minding their ways."

"Tom, is it?" Julie responded.

"Yes," Tom replied.

"Glad to meet you, too, Tom – and yes, I am enjoying Sam and Tony for their ways. I would have never guessed I could be so comfortable around naked people, but I'm loving it. Do you practice their ways too?"

"Do they practice our ways?" offered Sam. "Julie, they are our ways. Tom and his wife, Molly, introduced me to their natural ways."

"Oh! Is Tom, Kerry's dad?"

"Yes, he is," Sam said.

“And he is my husband!” Molly had completed her disrobing and was talking from behind the back door screen. “And a mighty fine husband he is too!”

Of course, Sam recognized the voice. “Is that you, Molly? Come on out and give Tony a hug and meet Julie.”

Molly considered putting her dress back on since she had not expected any newcomers, but she gained her composure immediately and knew that greeting Tony and his girl friend without pretense was the right thing to do. Molly had become very dedicated to taking every chance she got to testify as to her adopted belief that the *Natural Way* is the best way. So what better thing to do than to show Tony how special it was and to illustrate the beauty of it to a new acquaintance? She could not do such a testimony on the street, but in her friend’s house, she knew it was right. She stepped out onto the back porch and into the morning light.

Sam was indeed a little surprised, but not a lot. Molly had gone natural with him many times – with and without Tom. “It’s wonderful seeing you, Molly – and I love your wardrobe!” Then he chuckled. “Bet you did not expect my guest and guests. Surprise, surprise!”

“I’ll say, ‘Surprise!’” responded Molly. “Hi, Tony! I was trying to surprise Sam, but it looks like I have surprised more than Sam – including me – and Julie, is it?”

Julie had let go of Tony’s penis upon Tom’s first announcement of himself, but was still holding on to his thigh. She let go and stepped down from the ladder. Sam and the kids had already backed away. What do you say to a naked lady? Julie was confronted with a most unexpected situation. She responded admirably, sensing immediately that there was no threat here. Walking up to Molly, she gave her a big hug – like she had always known Molly and was greeting an old friend. Molly responded in kind and embraced Julie eagerly, then turned her face to hers and kissed her warmly, gently, and firmly. It was like a reunion time – even though no previous union preceded it.

“Good to meet you, Molly!” Julie said, “but talk about a surprise first meeting! This one takes the cake!”

“Then you were not put off with my liberal ways?” asked Molly.

“I must say I was a little embarrassed at first,” she replied, “but - put off - no, not in the least. Tony told me about Sam and you guys. So, I am not totally unaware of your beliefs. And from what I have seen so far, I can’t help but wonder why the rest of the world doesn’t believe.”

“It’s a wonderful belief, Julie, to believe that all is right with you and that you belong just as you are – without pretense and with tremendous love in your heart – not only for yourself, but for everyone around you. It’s what dreams are made of, Honey, and it belongs to any who have the courage to say yes to it.”

“You are absolutely wonderful!” Julie replied. “I think I am becoming a convert.”

“May I?” gestured Molly, gently tugging at the tie around Julie’s bathrobe?

“Yes, Yes, Yes!” was her quiet, but eager, reply.

And then before Tony and Sam and Tom and Kerry and Elise, Molly untied the cincture to Julie’s robe. Then with the care of a great lover, she loosened the robe from around her shoulders and let it fall. Behind the robe, there had been nothing. So Julie was naked, even as she felt clothed like she had never felt clothed in her life. Yes, she was without clothing, but now having joined her friend, Tony – and Sam and Molly and Tom and Kerry and Elise – she felt like she had joined a real family.

Tony was still on the ladder, though his attention had been on the amazing scene below. “I told you that you would be in for a nice surprise,” offered Tony, as a tear of joy fell down his face. “I told you! Now, do you believe?”

“Yes, Tony, I believe!” she exclaimed, wiping her tears away with her hair.

“Kids, it seems as if we are the only nonbelievers here,” said Tom, feeling truly wonderful by all that had gone on here in his friend’s back yard. “What do you say we become among the believers?” Then he sat down on a picnic chair that was available and began to untie his shoes. *Soon, he, too, would join the believers.*



## A Lesson in Love

Six year old, Kerry, and eight year old, Elise, did not hesitate to help each other join the believers. Neither knew how profound a belief in the *Natural Way* could become, but both believed in their parents who believed. Elise suggested to Kerry that she should help him undress and that he could help her undress. It just seemed like a right thing to do – to assist each other out of love – though like Julie could have disrobed herself, they could undress by themselves too. Elise knew Kerry would like to agree; and so she knew she was not imposing to offer her suggestion.

First came the shoes, then the socks, then the pants, then the little briefs, then the shirt. Like an artist going from one part of a scene to another, she filled the canvas with a naked boy. All the adults had gone in upon Sam's suggestion that he take out some steaks for a cookout later in the day. He had gone in, but all the others had followed, perhaps sensing that the kids needed some time to themselves.

Little Kerry with his sparkling eyes and slim body stood before a fully clothed Elise. Being reminded of the scene with Tony and Julie, Elise felt comfortable with touching Kerry all over, as she drew him close and hugged and kissed him, with her little hand feeling the little fellow's genitals. It wasn't sex. It was better than sex as only a child, perhaps, could enjoy it, not having progressed to the sometimes tumultuous feelings that can be unleashed when raging hormones assume control of some after puberty. What better time for a child to experience affection while he or she can still reach out spiritually. Then when puberty happens and all those raging hormones come into play, having known spiritual affection as a child, love would continue and penises and vaginas would not take over. Minds would be in control because minds started the direction.

Greater civilization would not approve, but greater civilization approved of all sort of things that were not proper – like theft and murder and war. What was greater civilization that it had the right to determine that love among the young is improper – even as it did condone hate and anger among adults? If all the Elises in the world could feel love for all the Kerrys in the world, would not this be a better world? Why should love among the children be denounced? And who denounces it? The many who find God above and beyond life. That's who. Elise was finding God inside of Kerry and inside of herself; and the two were becoming a prince and princess of kindness in a world that knows mostly hate and prejudice and envy.

"My Handsome Man, I adore you!" she said, as she stood before him. "Now, it's your turn."

Kerry then pursued his part of the deal. He removed her clothing in the same way she had removed his. And then they were both naked. "Let me feel you like you did me," he said, as he took his hands and felt his way around her body, becoming spiritually aware of the possibilities of purity as he did so.

"OK," she agreed, "but don't go in my vagina with your fingers because Mom says little girls are too young for that. She says little girls should grow hair around their vaginas before they are old enough to do more. Mom says, *first let there be hair, then you can do more.*"

“And little boys should grow hair around their penis before they can do more too,” he added.

Neither the little boy nor the little girl knew exactly what ‘more’ meant, but they were content on not having reached that stage, whatever it meant. Too many parents refuse allowance for little boys and little girls to get to know one another on their own levels because of a fear of ‘more’. They fear that little kids should not investigate one another because they will follow the adults and try to experience the more that Liz told Elise she should not try to experience until later. But at her age, Elise had no desire to learn of the ‘more’ that would come about later. She was content on being a child, knowing that she was unique in that. Why put away her childhood too soon when her parents enjoyed specifically that aspect about her so much? There would come a time for older loves. Now was a time for Mommy and Daddy to enjoy her being a child. Why should she want to do that ‘more’ thing and lose her childhood when her childhood meant so much to her and her parents?

In truth, if kids are left alone to themselves to investigate as they can and will – with a little safe direction from their parents about staying away from the ‘more’ thing, they will grow to become loving adults who will want to do the ‘more’ thing. Kids are smart enough to know that ‘more’ should not come until hair prepares the way. It is Nature’s Way. First, let there be hair, then you can do ‘more’. If adults would approach their children with that simple little directive, little children could live and play in the world like it is the Paradise it is. But when parents refuse to let their kids learn on their own level as Nature would have them know the lessons of life, then girls grow up having skipped childhood and boys grow up having skipped it too. In the end, all become adults without ever having enjoyed their childhood.

But to let children be – that’s to make childhood wonderful; and no child would want to become an adult and leave all their fun behind. In time, they would take their place as adults because it is ‘*Nature’s Way*,’ but having such wonderful memories of their freedom loving childhood, they could only become freedom loving adults. And wouldn’t that be wonderful? But all too often, for fear of ‘more,’ parents live in fear themselves – and teach their children more of the same.

“I like you, Elise. Isn’t God wonderful for making something so pretty as you?” Kerry was repeating what Daddy said to Mommy all the time. Kids learn by what their parents say and do.

“I like you too, Kerry,” she replied. “I like you a lot, but I’m thirsty. Let’s go see if Sam has a coke we can drink?”

“Me too,” Kerry responded.

And so she took him by the hand and they went inside where all the adults were.

“Hi, Mom! How do we look?” asked Kerry of Molly.

“Splendid, Sweetheart, just splendid!” Molly replied.

Sam was quick to agree. “My Dears,” he said, “you children do the whole world proud – and all of us adults are very proud of you too.”

“Yes, we are, Kids,” Tom added. “We are very proud of you, but very few in the world agree that to go natural is to go Godly. So, until the world changes a good bit, you need to keep this thing of going without clothes just between us here. OK?” Tom hated to have to offer a warning at a time like this, but being a parent, he felt the urge.

“I know that,” Elise replied. “Mom and Dad always tell me to go naked only with those who agree that it is good and Godly and do it themselves. She says, you can know who agrees with going naked by how they talk. If they make fun of going naked, then they probably don’t do it. If someone asks you to take off your clothes, but they have their clothes on, then they probably are a bad person and only want you to take off your clothes so they can hurt you.”

“It’s too bad there are people out there in the world who want to hurt others,” Molly offered, “but unfortunately, there are a lot of people who do not care about others and love to hurt them. It’s too bad, but that’s the way it is – at least for now. Someday maybe the world will learn to love much better, but right now, we need to be careful.”

“But why would anyone want to hurt me?” Kerry asked.

“Because they have been hurt by someone else, Honey,” replied Molly, “and they are only trying to get even. Someone who has been hurt by someone else thinks that to make it all even he or she has to hurt someone too. That’s why someone might want to hurt you, Kerry. That’s why someone might want to hurt you, Elise.”

“If you know someone who has been hurt and you think they may be looking to hurt someone else to get even, be sure and stay away from them,” added Tom.

“But shouldn’t I be friendly with someone who has been hurt?” Elise asked. “I thought I am supposed to love everybody.”

“You can love everybody, Sweetheart, but you can love everybody without getting in their way. Just wish everybody well and that’s loving them. OK? Love is only wishing another well.” Molly knew it is more than that, but she also knew that hate in the world cannot be controlled.

If another is out to hate because of being hated or hurt, then they will do hurt to those closest to them at the time. Every parent frets about their child being the victim of one who hates, but it is not good to live life afraid of those who hate either. If one lives afraid to act like one should for fear of being the victim of one who hates, then that one’s life is damaged. The best defense in life is not to fail to love out of fear, but to love in spite of fear, and as much as possible, stay out of the way of those who hate. But how do you tell that to a child who only wants to love? How do you tell that to anyone? All anyone can do is just do the best they can by good example – and hope for the best.

Elise had been satisfied with the short definition of love she had received. “Molly, I wish you well. So I guess I love you. And I wish Kerry well. I guess that means I love him too. And, Sam, I wish you well. And, Tom, I wish you well. I guess that means I love you all. It’s nice to wish you well and love you. It’s really easy to love. Isn’t it?” Then she shouted to Tony and Julie, who had escaped to the living room - “And, Tony, I wish you well too, and Julie, I wish you well. That means I love you!”

As it happened, Joe and Liz picked just that moment to check things out next door from where they had been enjoying themselves – at Tom and Molly’s.

“Looks like we are joining a love fest,” Joe said to Liz, as they heard the voice of their dear little one shouting how she loves everybody while coming up the walk to Sam’s front door. Having reached the front door, Joe yelled in jest, “Anybody home?”

Elise was the first to respond, as she ran to the door and opened it wide for Mom and Dad to come in. “Mommy, Daddy, I wish you well. That means I love you!”

Before Mommy and Daddy could answer, they looked in and saw that Heaven was at home at Sam’s too. Liz just opened her eyes wide as if they would pop out of her head as

she viewed all the naked people in one little house. Mr. & Mrs. Socrates had surprised her and Joe a lot in the years they knew each other, but not like this.

There was Sam over there standing by his sink, and there was Tony and some young stranger sitting on the loveseat, and there was Tom and Molly sitting at the dining room table, and lastly, there were the children, Kerry, standing next to Molly at the dining room table, and her own Elise, hugging her at Sam's front door. And everyone of them was naked.

Joe was surprised, but not shocked. Staring at the scene before them, having stepped inside, he shook his head and said, "What a wonderful surprise! But it looks like we have been missing something!"

"And we have been missing you," Tom said, "but you don't have to miss anything anymore and we don't have to miss you. Come on in to Sam's house!"

Sam was elated as Tom knew he would be. Tom would have never assumed the right to ask another into Sam's house – except that he knew Sam.

Sam exclaimed. "What a wonderful family you are to me, everyone! I feel like this is Father's Day, multiplied by eight, because of the eight of you who are here. I only wish my Nellie could have been here with us." Then he turned to the ceiling as if Nellie was sitting on the lamp over the dining room table and said, "Nellie, Dear, see what you are missing?"

Liz squatted to the level of her hugging daughter and said with tears flowing freely, "Elise, of course, we know you love us! And you know we love you too!" Then she looked across the room to Kerry and bid him to come. "***Come over here, Kerry. I'm in a very hugging mood!***"

## Making the Body a Paradise

“Looks like we are the odd ones,” Joe remarked, looking into the eyes of his love, Liz. Then he looked over to Sam and said, “Sam, awfully good to see you again. I see that Tony has arrived for another summer visit. And who might I ask is the lovely lady sitting next to Tony?”

“I’m Julie,” Julie volunteered. “I take it you are the Joe and Liz Tony has told me about. Now I guess I have met you all.”

“Good to meet you, Julie.” Then he went over to where she and Tony were and bent down and hugged Julie. “Hi, Tony,” he said. “Brother, have you grown in one year!” And he reached down and hugged Tony as well. “Come on over, you two, and meet my wife.”

“No,” Liz said. “Let me come over there to you.” Liz then walked over and hugged both Julie and Tony, who had risen to hug Joe better.

“Liz, I see by your reaction that you approve of all this,” offered a comforted Julie.

“I certainly do,” she said, “and I can’t wait to join you all. Life is such a wonderful blessing. I guess you could even call it a feast. But trying to love life with clothes on is like trying to eat a steak through cardboard.”

“That’s an interesting way to put it,” Julie responded. “So you see life as a feast, huh?”

“Don’t you?” asked Liz.

“Not until recently – until I met Tony and all of you,” she replied, “but I am beginning to see life in a different light.”

“Tom and Molly and us are all so very close,” commented Liz, while starting to undress. “That which makes us so close is our shared vision that our bodies should be a Paradise. It’s just the way we look at things.”

Joe had already stripped to his pants – and when they came off, his penis was erect. Julie glanced at it and then glanced at the others in the room, seeing that none of them seemed embarrassed. Noticing that Julie was a bit surprised, Joe moved to offer an explanation. “It happens that way sometimes, Julie. It’s *Nature’s Way*. This group of friends do not constantly question our reactions like so many others do. It’s important to accept life the way it is – and our bodies are our lives. So why not accept them for what they do?”

“But there is a perfectly normal explanation for it, Julie,” added Liz. “You will find it out with Tony if you haven’t already. When a guy has his penis tucked into his pants, it is kinda squashed in there. So when the little guy – or big guy as the case may be – gets out, he feels sudden freedom and sometimes springs to a stiffened state. At least that is what Joe tells me,” she added, as she laughed at her own reference to a guy’s penis as a little guy or a big guy.

“You can call that a normal explanation if you want,” countered Joe, “but the real explanation is that when a penis is set free from being smothered behind clothes, blood rushes to it. That’s what makes it come to life, as it were. I guess what we are saying by being so blunt is that we shouldn’t make erections as personal as we do. They are far

more natural than personal. If we accept our responses on a natural level, then we won't get all hung up with the personal."

"It sounds like you don't think much of the personal," Tony remarked, from his sitting position on the couch. He had sat back down after giving Liz her hello hug.

"We like being personal alright, Tony," Tom replied, having been silent on the sidelines for a bit. "We even love being personal, but we realize that the key to really enjoying the personal is to enjoy it only within natural bounds. It's proper that Julie enjoys seeing Joe's erection, but she should not make that a personal thing in that she may have caused it. People give themselves credit for reactions that are strictly natural – and that is foolish because it is often not the case."

Then Tom turned toward Julie and spoke to her. "Now, look at me, if you will, Julie. I have been out of clothes for some time and my penis is relaxed. Does that mean I am not excited about life or that I have suddenly become bored with life? Of course not, but people often think that if a man's penis is limp, that is a sign of his lacking excitement around those he is with. That, too, is a lot of personal nonsense. When we get too hung up with being personal, we lose sight of the real world. Why would anyone want to lose sight of the real world when the real world is Paradise?"

He continued Julie's education. "Keep in mind, Julie, that if I were alone in this room, the reaction of my penis would not be much different than if the most loving lady was touching it. Of course, I must mean by that, Molly – as she is the most loving lady of my life." He glanced at Molly and Molly smiled in return. "It is really important to keep a proper perspective – always try to see what is happening, first, as natural, and then only secondarily, as personal."

Stroking his penis, it began to rise. "You have seen it in Tony. You know what happens when I do this. My penis is getting hard because by stroking it, blood is rushing to it and through it, making it firm. But, you see, I am doing it – not Molly – or rather, Nature is doing it, not Molly or me. It's *Nature's Way*."

From his sitting position on the couch, Tony found himself amazed that he was actually enjoying Julie's education. It was as much an education for him as it was for Julie because Tom was showing it just exactly as it happens to him. He, Tony, had been guilty in his young life of seeing too much of the personal in him – and he was grateful that Tom was showing just how untruthful that could be.

Molly wanted to add something. "Julie, we in this room believe that the body should be Paradise because we believe that the mysterious spirit we call God is in us all. That makes us sacred vessels of God. We don't understand how God does, only that God is doing – and God is doing us. We are happening now because of God and God is making us happen. We should see our bodies as our Paradise because it is ungrateful to God to do otherwise. Keep in mind that it is only a perspective.

"Nature in all its unfathomable wisdom," she continued, "as the handmaiden of God is happening through us. It is not primarily a personal thing. It is primarily a natural thing, though our enjoyment of it should be personal as well. Nature is impersonal – and so should we be as much as possible. *If we get lost in Nature and embrace ourselves primarily as Nature's Blessings, then we can see it clear to enjoy what we are.*"

"Molly's right, Julie," Tom said – and Julie turned in Tom's direction and saw that he was still gently stroking his genitals. "This that I do is a wonderful feeling, but it is Nature's offering far more than my own. I am not some independent one outside of

Nature. I am only doing what Nature is giving me to do. It feels good, but it also feels right. It's convenient.

"My hands fall naturally to my middle; and the natural thing for a hand to do is touch what is closest. That is *Nature's Way*. So by designing mankind as Nature has, man is invited to touch himself – or in the case of you ladies, herself. I mean, my design is such that I do not have to go out of my way at all to reach my pubic area. And, in fact, if I do not touch myself and enjoy Nature's Blessings, then I do have to go out of my way to avoid things. Why would Nature design me with hands that reach my middle and then command that I avoid the middle? Only one who does not believe in Nature's design could possibly believe that my handling myself is not by design. If it's by design, then I should do it."

Noticing Julie trying to make contact with Elise, Molly decided that it would be best if the children were not brought into the discussion at hand – simply because it might be too confusing with so many people around. Molly moved to exclude the kids from the discussion at hand. "Kids, how about taking your cokes and going outside to watch the squirrels or the birds?"

Kerry was eager, but Elise felt a suspicion that they were being excluded on purpose. Of course, it was about what Tom did or was saying. She was smart enough to know that, but she knew she could ask Mom and Dad later for an explanation if she was still interested. So, off the kids went into the backyard so the adults could be alone.

Sam had been in the kitchen since Joe and Liz arrived, busily doing this and that, but he was aware of all that was being offered to Julie – with his full approval. He had no way of knowing anymore than anyone else of what Julie and Tony would think when it was all over, but he felt quite strongly that they should at least hear the side of life as believed by the group in this house. After the kids had gone outside, he moved over to the discussion going on in the living room. It was now his turn to talk.

"Julie and Tony, I hope you have enjoyed Tom's demonstration if you want to call it that. He is only trying to offer that we should be comfortable with our bodies and what they do." Pointing to a movable mirror, he said, "See that mirror there. My favorite time of the day is to sit naked before that mirror and meditate on the wonder of life. Tom and Molly bought me that mirror when Nellie died and told me it could become my best friend – and it has – next to them, of course.

"Now, don't get me wrong. I am not someone who thinks he is some outstanding looking guy. I am not. I am just ordinary – from head to foot – but when I look upon myself in Molly's mirror, as I like to call it, and see God's good graceful creation looking back at me, then I know that God is being good to me. Molly and Tom knew from the way I enjoyed looking at myself in their living room mirror that I enjoyed seeing something about me; and so they bought me that mirror which I can set in front of a chair to be able to look at Nature in me in my meditation.

"Looking at any body should prompt the same reaction," he continued, "and I enjoy looking at other bodies. But I'm mostly alone now and the only body I can look at is my own. It suffices quite well as a body to review because it is like any other body. I am not looking specifically at my body when I look at myself. I am only using me to see all of Nature – and I love it. The body is filled with the wonder of God – and yet mankind so often thinks it can override that wonder and even legalize the suppression of the natural. Mankind's greatest sin, I think, is its false pride that it has the right to make all the rules.

In doing so, it often overrules normal conduct of the body. The body's rules should be seen as God's rules for the body, but humankind often thinks it can outlaw various functions of the body because of being embarrassed by those functions.

"As Tom often argues, though, Honey," Sam continued, "we should do nothing in private that we should not be anxious to do in front of another. Nothing about life is primarily personal. It's mostly natural; and in loving Nature, we should not feel ashamed about anything that Nature does. When I sit in front of Molly's mirror and see life reflected in this still half vibrant sixty year old, I feel like I am celebrating Nature and God. I am seeing the gift of my body as my own passage way to Heaven. God must be in it because God is making it – not me."

Sam's offering mellowed Julie's confusion a bit, but she was still uncertain. "Tom, may I ask you a question?"

"Anything at all, Julie," he responded.

"Sam says he feels the same as you in that we should do nothing in private that we should not like to do in public – or something like that. Is that right?"

"Almost," he responded. "That is almost correct. I would prefer to say it like this. I should do nothing in private that I would be ashamed to do in public."

"Would you have intercourse with Molly in public?" she asked.

"I would not mind that in the least," he answered.

"He means he would not mind in the least if it were for the right reason – and neither would I," Molly added.

"And what is the right reason?" Julie questioned.

"To begin a child," Molly said.

"You mean you would have intercourse only if you want to conceive?" Julie asked.

"That's right, Julie – only if conception is intended," Tom replied.

"I am under the impression that you are liberal," Tony commented. "That is hardly liberal."

"Let me try to explain," Tom said. "You see, Molly and me and Joe and Liz – and even Sam – believe that we should respect *Nature's Way*. When and where it is clear that Nature would have us do one thing and we do another, then we are not being faithful to Nature – and not being faithful to Nature and Nature's design, we are not being faithful to God – from whence Nature comes. It is clear to us that Nature intends intercourse only for conception – even though societized man often chooses to disregard Nature's design. From the viewpoint of Natural Design now, when a penis enters a vagina, it is intended to release the male's seed. Keeping with respect for Natural Design, if I should enter Molly, it should be for releasing my seed. So, if I do otherwise and try to avoid the consequence of natural intercourse by withdrawal or contraceptive or condom or whatever, then I am not being a true disciple, as it were, of my belief.

"Now, one of the good things about practicing restraint," he continued, "is that we avoid all sort of unwanted consequences – like conceiving an unwanted baby or catching some venereal disease. By not having sex – in terms of intercourse – except to have a child – we are really protecting ourselves. We belong to Nature and if we respect that to which we belong, more often than not, Nature will protect us. We just won't suffer the many consequences that societized folks do. Know what I mean?"

"Societized?" That's a new word to me," said a puzzled Tony. "Just what do you mean by that?"



“To become societized,” Tom replied, “is to rule your life by what society does, regardless of how dumb it might seem. Sometimes we do the dumbest things and do them only because everyone else around is doing them. Society says to do this and you do it – whether you agree with it or not. That’s being societized.

“Society often teaches that God is outside of life, rather than in it. Anyone who believes that believes it by virtue of someone in society who first thought it was – or is – right. Now that one in society may have been under the impression that he was receiving a ruling from God, but since God did not speak directly to any of us who have been given the ruling, we can only rightly conclude that the one in society who thinks he spoke with God is probably wrong.

“I mean if God really intends us to follow some rule or ruling of His, then it stands to reason that God would instruct us all directly on an individual level. It makes no sense whatever that God would speak to an Israeli and not speak to a Brazilian. It makes no sense that God would speak to an Israeli in the year 2000 B.C. and expect that Israeli to tell some Brazilian 8,000 miles away of the conversation – especially if what God told the Israeli is necessary for salvation.

“Any ruling that someone in society has levied is a societized ruling – even if it is claimed to have come from God. That is how I see it. We believe we should rule our lives by virtue of our interpretation of Natural Design – not by virtue of what anyone in society may think is right. I think that which has corrupted mankind the most is its false sense of a bestowed spirituality – or a spirituality that is not interior to its being, but one that must be given in addition to its being. In other words, mankind has been misled by itself to believe that God must come to it when in reality, God is already in it.

“Now, the problem with the view that mankind is not already whole and Godly is that the door is left open to all sort of misbelievers who are absolutely positive that someone who speaks to them and gives them some outside ruling is God. Entire structures of societized man have been built on a false sense of spirituality because those who started the structures had false impressions of life in terms of placing God outside of life. If you don’t believe that God is in life, then you look for answers outside of life and leave yourself wide open to those who claim they spoke with an external God.

“In truth, most of our religious tradition is actually based on the false perception that life is unholy or ungodly. When the foundation is so poor, being based on error, then the entire building built over the foundation is at risk of falling. Societized man is so caught up in the web of its own misbegotten rules based on an idea that God is exterior to life rather than interior to it that it has been long lost in confusion.”

“Once again, Tony,” said Sam, “we emphasize natural over social. What comes from society is social. What comes from Nature is natural. We believe that it is best to go with what is natural.”

Joe had been silent for a good while, but was now ready to contribute. “Kids, you might think that restricting intercourse to conception is harsh, but you could not be more wrong. It is because of that restriction upon ourselves that I can trust Tom with Liz and he can trust me with Molly. By virtue of our belief – and our faithfulness to it – we are free to play and enjoy without ever suffering the many tragedies that society suffers. Our regimen makes us free and allows us to trust one another.

“Now if I were to make an exception with my wife, Liz, and have intercourse with her while using a condom, then she would have reason to believe that I might make another

exception too – like with her friend, Molly, for instance. Then in not being able to trust me, she might become suspicious, whether she has reason or not, and then our marriage would suffer and her friendship with Molly would suffer and my friendship with Tom would suffer.

“By voluntarily restricting ourselves to intercourse for conception only, we are free to play in front of the children and know that the children will not be hurt by doing something we should not be doing. If we have intercourse outside of conception, then there is no reason why our children should not do the same. And, in the end, chaos results and no one is happy.”

“You see, Tony and Julie,” offered Sam, “it’s like we belong to a club that has dues. The dues we pay are to restrict ourselves to conduct within Natural Design; and some of the many benefits we receive are healthy lives. But if we are unwilling to pay the dues of the natural club, then we can’t enjoy any of the benefits either. Keep in mind that conduct in the *Conduct by Natural Design Club* is totally voluntary. No one makes anyone join. It is entirely up to each individual.”

“Do you think Kerry and Elise will join your club?” asked Julie, wanting to hear how all of this liberal conduct might be affecting them.

“Not our club,” corrected Liz, “Nature’s club. But we realize that is a good question. The answer is that we think they will, but we don’t know. When Elise and Kerry become teenagers, they will undoubtedly be pressured to act societized, as Tom calls it. As their parents, we hope they will pay attention to our example, but they may not – and if they don’t, well, it’s their lives.”

“I’m curious as to what the kids think about what went on here today,” commented Julie. “Do you think it will hurt them?”

“They haven’t seen anything today that they haven’t seen before,” Tom said, “but in terms of our open conduct, there will be some hurt, yes. It will hurt them a little because it will confuse them. They know that what I call societized man will not approve of open conduct of adults before children – or they will come to know it. By our doing what we do and main society now disagreeing with what we do, that will confuse them for sure. But, in time, if our example is constant, they may agree more with us than with societized man. So, yes, it may hurt them a little by virtue of the confusion they will experience as children, but, no, it will not hurt them overall because, in the end, our examples will save them from making so many of the mistakes that so many do who have no regimen such as ours.”

Julie continued. “Tom, do you think that adults should relate to children in matters of sex?”

“Ideally, no,” he replied. “Kids should do with kids as adults should do with adults, but one should not do for or with the other. At least using Nature as the source of the instruction, in Nature, never do you see adults getting sexual with children – or children with adults. From that standpoint, it is clear that humans should not act contrary to the regular format within Nature. And yet societized man violates that rule a lot. We in this group do not.”

“Kerry is allowed to see us loving one another,” added Molly, “but he is not encouraged to join in. We tell him that he can join in with his friends and do with his friends what Nature allows of them, but he should not play with adults. Adults have their own play and children have theirs, but the two should not mix.”

“Do you think he understands?” asked Julie.

“Yes, I think he does,” answered Molly. “Being open like we are, it is clear to him that his body is different than his dad’s. He can handle that because he can see it for himself. He doesn’t have to wonder if it is so, even if he does wonder why it is so.”

“How do you handle Elise’s curiosity, Joe?” questioned Tony. “Does she ever want to check you out?”

“Of course,” Joe replied. “She has touched me to see what happens – and I let it happen to satisfy her curiosity, but she knows that adults and children should not engage each other as a standard practice. She knows I will never touch her, even if she asks, in a genital way, because she knows from what we tell her that only children should play with children and only adults should play with adults. It has never become an issue; and we don’t ever expect it to become one.”

“I hope you are right,” responded Tony. “I could imagine that a prolonged obsession could become an issue.”

“Obsessions are only for those who are not allowed to entertain curiosity, I think, Tony. Once a curiosity is satisfied, it goes away. We allow curiosity on the part of Elise, but we also rule by what we see as the rule of Nature in not encouraging adult-children behavior, even though adults and children can be in the same room as they play. It is not the play that is wrong. It’s the unnatural interaction.”

“We are not so fragile as we might think,” commented Molly, “if we leave ourselves to established patterns in Nature to make the right choices. That’s what making the body a Paradise is all about – letting Nature make the rules by doing what it does in the animal kingdom. ***All we have to do is observe her ruling and act accordingly.***”

“Let me play the devil’s advocate,” suggested Tony. “If you think that looking at patterns in the animal kingdom should be the basis of our own rules, look at a den of lions. Sometimes they fight with each other and kill each other. Is that to say that we should take from that observation that men should fight with each other and kill each other?”

“No, Tony,” Mollie replied. “We are not talking about patterns as established by just one species, but about patterns that are common to all species. Some animals kill each other and some don’t. You can’t deduce an ideal from just one animal – but from all animals taken together. ***It’s only where there is a common conduct among animals that we humans should be wise to conclude that if it right for the rest of the animal kingdom, then it should be right for humans.***”

“Exactly!” chimed Tom. “In the issue at hand of how humans should conduct their sexuality, there is, in fact, a general pattern in the animal kingdom that indicates that other animals only have sex to co-create. We kid about fast human males who conduct sex on a ‘slam, bam, thank you, Ma’am’ basis. Well, in the animal kingdom, that is true. Generally speaking, animals mate quickly without regard to any lingering pleasure. That’s not to say we humans should not take the time to enjoy sex, but it is to say that sex in the animal kingdom is for co-creation – or procreation – only. Accordingly, in the issue of sex, Nature does provide an answer by virtue of a common pattern within it.”

“That’s cool when you think about it,” commented Tony. “I can see now how you could consider such a ruling as gospel, so to speak.”

“Yeah, it is cool,” Liz replied. “I mean it takes all the guess work out of deciding what is right.”

“And when you consider how important an issue sex is for the human race,” added Joe, “by deciding the issue of sex as we have, we have eliminated most of the concerns that human beings face relating to one another because so much of our interrelations deal with sex in some way. And it was there all the time for us to know. All we humans have had to do was to study Nature and conclude our ideal conduct based upon a general pattern in Nature. If it’s good for all, then it’s good for any within that all. Since humans are within the all of the animal kingdom, since it is good for all the other animals, then it must be good for us too. Simple, huh?”

“It seems a lot simpler than I thought it would be,” commented Julie. “This reference that I have heard several times of making the body a Paradise seems so much more correct now that I have heard your explanation. We really can trust ourselves to find ourselves and attain Paradise by observing Nature. I really am amazed. Thanks so much for taking the time to point it out. I have really enjoyed this discussion.”

“That goes for the both of us,” offered a satisfied Tony. “We sure did not expect this, but it has been a wonderful surprise. We may just join that club of yours, Grampa.”

“Nature’s club,” Sam corrected, “not our club. We hope you do. You will be in great company if you do. ***Just make of your bodies a Paradise, keeping in mind that all is well with the world of Nature. Give yourselves to Nature and by so doing, give yourselves to God Who is in Nature. When you can, look toward Nature for the answers. Belong to Nature and seek its counsel – and by so doing, find peace.***”

“I think I will, Sam,” replied Julie. “I think I will.”

## A Special Love Offering to God

*“Let us offer a toast with the children!”* Sam exclaimed.

It was early evening and the day was coming to an end. Sam was there with all his guests in his own back yard. The gas grill had been reduced to low, just hot enough to keep the steaks hot. All the guys, even little Kerry, liked their steaks medium rare. Julie liked hers well done, but Molly and Liz like theirs medium rare too. Elise was not particular. She said it didn't matter to her.

Molly had mixed a salad from the vegetables she and Tom provided for the affair. It was a simple salad made up of lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers, and green pepper. At Sam's request, the salad, like the steaks, had been left off the large picnic table in the back. Sam planned a special toast and he said it would take the whole table. When asked what could take a whole table, he had just smiled and said, “You'll see.”

When Nellie was alive, her kids came around often, including Jason and Helen, Tony's parents. Jason was one of Nellie's kids. Sam actually had no kids of his own, but had married a young widow with three kids, ranging from four to ten. Nellie's husband, Steve, had been killed in an auto-pedestrian accident that had claimed his life at the age of thirty-three. Sam was a much younger brother to Philip; and Philip had been Steve's best friend. Sam and Steve and Philip went fishing quite often; and Sam had come to know and love Nellie via that friendship.

When Steve was killed, Sam became a real comfort to Nellie. Philip had to be away quite a bit due to business after his friend's funeral. So he asked his younger brother, Sam, to look in on Nellie from time to time. It was due to his looking in on Nellie that he came to fall in love with her. Though only twenty at the time of Steve's death, he and Nellie got married about a year later. He was twenty-one and she was thirty-four.

Sam had wanted to go to college, but with a quick family of three kids and a wife, he had to go to work. So he hired on with the Postal Service and remained with that job throughout his marriage. After the family of two girls and a boy had been raised, he and Nellie were mostly alone – except for occasional visits by the family. For thirty-five years, Sam worked with the Postal Service, delivering mail to all on his route while also delivering a friendly smile to all he met. Sam was well loved by family and everyone.

At the age of fifty-seven, Sam decided in favor of early retirement so that he could be on hand for his ailing wife. For the last ten years of Nellie's life, she was down as much as she was up. Her diabetes took its toll. About two years before Sam retired, Nellie had to have a couple of toes on her left foot amputated. Finding it hard to move around, she came to depend a lot on Tom and Molly when Sam was away at work. More often than not, either Tom or Molly was at home when she needed help; and a quick phone call would bring them to her aid. Sam really loved Tom and Molly for helping them through that dire time. Nellie's kids all lived far removed from Sam and Nellie and were told that they needn't worry about Nellie. Sam and his friends would see to her; and so it happened.

Grandma and Grandpa loved all the kids and their kids, but special to them was Tony. Whenever he could, Tony liked to stay with his grandparents; and Jason and Helen

always arranged for a summer stay for little Tony. Tony was special because he came around much more than the other eight grandchildren, but he was also special because he was one that Grampa felt he could confide in.

Being uncomfortable with her own nakedness, Nellie chose not to visit the neighbors, Tom and Molly, who were always talking about how wonderful it is to go naked and free for the love of God. Sam, however, made treks over to his neighbors often and fell in love with them and their ways. He never confided in Nellie that he often went naked with the neighbors because he thought it might upset her, though she probably knew it. It did not seem to matter to her. It was making Sam happy, even if it did not comfort her all that much.

But little Tony – he received an earful from Grampa. To Tony he could tell it like he had come to believe it. “Tony,” he would say, “we human beings are just not doing right by the gift of life that is being given to us. How do you think I would feel if I were to give you a bright new fire truck to play with and you would discard it? That must be what we are doing to God. He gives us these wonderful bodies to enjoy and we hide them, not only from ourselves, but from God Himself. Or at least we try to hide them. Now that can’t be the right thing to do. We need to try and get it right as best we can, just you and me, and maybe we can help change things.”

And little Tony would reply, “Yeah, just you and me, Grampa!”

Grampa told little Tony that he could always go without clothes in his room and Grampa would do the same in his. Grampa would try to leave the door open, too, so that Tony could come and visit anytime. And Gramma never seemed to mind that Grampa was naked and little Tony was naked when they came together in Gramma’s bedroom, but it was clear to both Grampa and Tony that Gramma did not think it was proper anywhere else.

“I think a toast with the children would be nice to start this meal,” Sam said. “We are all in agreement here that God would have us naked all the time if God could command us – because God would have us grateful for His gifts of life. I think it would really be nice if we adults could offer to God the youngest of us here, a boy and a girl. Kerry and Elise, could you both step up to the table and get on it?” Then he helped Kerry and Elise on to a couple of chairs, then on to the table.

Kerry and Elise had no problem with this. They liked it that they were the center of attention; but the adults were pleasantly amazed by Sam’s action. They all knew Sam and knew he could only do something wonderful, but they could only wonder what that something wonderful was.

“If you don’t mind,” Sam began, “I’d like to command just ten minutes of your time. During this ten minutes, we will be conducting a very spiritual exercise because we will be doing it with God in mind. We will be revering God by or with an attitude of gratitude for the wonderful gift of life. I consider such to be prayer in its most excellent form.

“Kerry and Elise,” Sam said, as he directed a warm smile toward the children, “you can look where you want – at us or the sky or at each other.” Then he glanced around at the others standing around the table and added, “but I would like all the rest of us to look at the children and study them in silence for a whole minute. I will tell you when that minute should start and when it ends. And then I would like each of you to study the person next to you and hug and kiss each other, while feeling the other’s body. That goes

for Kerry and Elise too. When I tell you to start, I want you to hug and kiss and feel each other all over. OK?

“During the first minute,” he continued, “I would like silence. Just look at the children in silence and listen to your heart and mind for what it is telling you. Knowing all of you as I do, I know there is only the right kind of love in you. So I know your thoughts will be of a kindly nature. Then after that first minute, while you are loving each other, I will be offering a prayer to God. I think this would be a very nice way to begin our meal – to start it with a prayer and a love offering such as God probably never receives. During your lovemaking to the nearest one to you, imagine your partner as being God Itself, because, in effect, it’s true. Since God is making your partner, then it could properly be argued that your partner represents God. So be intimate with your partner like he or she is God.”

“Sam, what a wonderful idea!” exclaimed Molly.

“How fitting!” offered Liz; and they all agreed.

“Let us begin our minute of silence, then,” he said. “Let no one bow their heads. Just keep your heads up, your eyes open, and look at the children.”

And thus began the loudest moment of silence since time began. It resounded with the chirping of birds in the background as all looked at the kids in the center. There was God’s naked little boy, Kerry, with his stout little body, looking around to see what the others were looking at. Standing there, they beheld his little penis and testicles – so full of the love of God – and so promising to hold the beginning of some life some years away.

***Tom saw him as bold, while Molly saw him as handsome, as Joe saw him as gentle, while Liz some him as cute, while Tony saw him as playful, while Julie saw him as pure – and they were all right. And Sam, he saw him as perfect; and he was the rightest of all.***

There was God’s naked little lady, Elise, with her lovely hair falling down her back. Sam offered an option of looking at the sky; and that was the option that Elise chose. While standing there naked for the others to enjoy, she chose to look at the clouds above and wonder for a time how she could get up there and take a look. Standing there, a little above them, they could behold her little vagina – into which would someday be placed a man’s seed to mingle with her own seed and begin a new life. No man could fashion such a work of art – but God could.

***Tom saw her as lovely, while Molly saw her as pretty, as Joe saw her as a princess, while Liz saw her as beautiful, while Tony saw her as splendid, while Julie saw her as pure – and they were all right. And Sam, he saw her as perfect; and he was the rightest of all.***

Sam started to speak and Elise brought her eyes down from the clouds to look into Kerry’s eyes. “Hello, My Handsome Man!” she whispered, as she cupped his face in her little hands. Then she moved to kiss him on the lips while taking her hands and feeling his chest and then his belly and then his little penis and then his little testicles. Sam said it was alright; and as young as she was, she knew it was.

Sam was speaking now, but the content of his words little Elise could not hear. She was enjoying being a princess on top of that cloud she visited a moment ago and she wanted it to never end. Bending down, she took her little prince into her mouth just like Mom did with Dad so many times. Yes, it was nice because it is somehow spiritual to

take one you love into your mouth. Only a child could know such love because the action is offered without expectation of any response – like an orgasm. It was not the taste of Kerry that meant so much to Elise at this moment because he didn't really taste of anything. But the intimacy. That was worth everything.

***“Dear Wonderful Life,” Sam spoke in his prayer, “we here today thank you for your wonderful gift of life. We honor you, Dear Creator, by accepting your gift. We accept the children and offer them back to you – though no offering is really needed because they are already yours. They are yours, Dear Life, as we are yours. The life we have is from you and in you and for you and by you. And we thank you for it.***

***“Dear Wonderful Creator, we reach out and touch you by touching and hugging and kissing each other. You deserve to be touched and hugged and kissed for all the wonder that you are giving us. Our earth is a Paradise and the air and water and soil and all that it allows to grow are our salvation. Without them, we could not live. Without them, we could not be here today to say anything. But we are here today and we do have the wonder of your gifts – and your wondrous gifts. We want to thank you by offering this very special toast.”***

While Elise was making love to Kerry, Kerry began to respond. His little hands stroked her hair as she was bending down to his middle. Her little mouth on him was nice, but he was much more interested in stroking her hair, and then when she stood up, he did as she had done and caressed her body with his hands. It was nice, too, to kiss her lips as she had his and bend over and kiss her little chest. He had watched Daddy do that to Mommy a lot; and so he knew what to do. But when he reached her little vagina, that would need some practice; but give him time and he'd get that right too.

It was nice to hear the words Sam was speaking. They said what they were all feeling.

Tom looked into Liz's eyes and saw the warmth spring back to him. “This is nice,” he whispered. “You are nice. Thank you so much for sharing your gift of life.”

Liz responded, “You are welcome, Tom. It's not my gift, though, Honey. It's Nature's gift.”

“Yes, I know,” he replied, as he stroked her and kissed her all over – and she, him.

Joe was embracing his friend's wife. Molly was fully aware of the intent of the embrace. Like Sam was saying, it was to offer human purity back to its origin – the Creator. As she felt Joe's penis, having reached the hard state from brushing up against her body, she knew she was feeling Nature's penis. Joe was only renting that penis for a lifetime, but the idea of a penis belonged to Nature for all time. So, when Molly took Joe's penis into her mouth, she was taking all creativity with it. By taking Joe, she was taking God – and she knew it. It was just like Sam said. She was making love to God.

And Joe was equally knowledgeable about what was happening. As he took Molly's nipples into his mouth, he was aware that from those breasts came milk to nurture little Kerry; but more than that, those breasts represented all the breasts in the world that nurture the young. “Bless your sweet breasts, Molly,” he said. Nothing could be more appropriate for this time of prayer than a loving mouth on her vagina. Once again, it was not just a vagina he was kissing. It was the vagina of the world. It was the only vagina that ever existed and ever will exist. It represented the very origin of life. “Bless your sweet vagina, Molly,” he said. And she replied, “Thank you, Joe.”

Julie and Tony were falling in love. If there had been any question of it before this day, there would be none after it. “Tony, you are so good,” she said. “And so are you,”



he replied. And the two of them took a moment to glance at the kids so engrossed in their own offering. “Tony, I love you. Would it be possible that we could have a couple of those?” she asked, nodding toward the kids. “Julie, anything is possible between us,” he responded.

Sam continued his prayer. *“Dear Wonderful Life, we who are here applaud you. We thank you for your wonderful mystery. May we always be proud of ourselves because we were first proud of you. May we be lost within the folds of your Infinite Sanctity and find salvation in the warmth we exchange.*

*“Dear Wonderful God, we are so proud to be sons and daughters of God and sons and daughters of Nature. All are sons and daughters as all come from you. You have no only son. You have only many children; and we are so proud as to be numbered among those children. We find our salvation of heart and mind and soul in the reverence we feel for your astounding love and gift of life. We share so much of you when we share with each other. Thank you, Dear Infinite Energy of all that is.”*

And then Sam moved to embrace each of the couples and kiss each on the lips. Lending a hand to the children, he helped them step down from their altar. Raising his arms into the air, he called their attention, saying, “Let us all close our eyes for a moment and say thanks in the depth of our own silence – and then, let’s eat.”

And so it was.

Sam’s benediction had ended and Sam and Tom were fetching the steaks from the outdoor grill. “Sam, Molly and I have been present for many a fine prayer – mostly our own – but none have been better than our prayer today.”

“Thank you, Tom. I agree. We have experienced so many wonderful moments together – your family and mine – but this day has been as good as it gets, even as I know it will be repeated many times in the future. We are just too full of love – the right kind of love – and too full of admiration as a group to restrict such happenings to one time.”

“Perhaps there will come a day, Dear Sam, that offerings of children like you devised will happen all over the world. The children of the world, like the adults of the world, are all the same. Kerry and Elise are not the only innocents in the world. They are only two of billions. If only we could let the billions love. Then there would be no room for hate. What a dream, huh?”

“A dream only for so much of the world, Tom, but a reality for us.”

“Come on, Grampa, let’s eat,” yelled a hungry Julie.

This was the first time she had heard her call him Grampa. It had always been Sam before.

“OK, child, keep your pants on. We’re bringing the steaks,” Sam replied. Realizing his reference to pants, he could not help but break out in laughter. The outer world used that expression a lot in his younger days. He thought to himself that he was going to have to come up with another expression with this group because it did not wear pants.

The steaks had been delivered and all were enjoying the simple feast.

“Grampa, this is really good!”

“What happened to calling me Sam?” he asked

“You have become my Grampa now,” Julie responded. “You have gained my consent to your beliefs with your prayer. Somehow, Sam just doesn’t fit anymore – especially if Tony and I become another couple in your life.”

“Sam will always fit, Sweetheart, regardless of your joining the family or not.”

“How about I call you Grampa Sam, then?”

“That would fit just fine. Welcome to the family, Julie!”

Then there was lots of chatter and everyone fully enjoyed the meal, talking about this and that, but mostly about God. This was a group that was in love with love and the very definition of love is God. There were almost no dishes, but what there were, Molly and Liz cleaned them and put them away.

By the time the cleanup detail had been finished, night had fallen – and it was dark. Joe and Liz and Elise decided to accept Tom’s invitation to spend the night. So no one was anxious to slip into clothes for the brief trip home next door. They would go naked so as not to interrupt the spiritual event – under the cover of a mild darkness. It was not totally dark, but the yard light was low and they felt they could slip back home without being seen. So they decided to take the chance and do so.

Sam had enjoyed their visit – and was a little sorry to see them go – yet he was also a good bit tired and needed to hit the hay, as he called it. Sam had been raised on a farm and farm people never go to bed. They hit the hay.

There was no way he was going to let them go without a fond embrace. “Kerry, I sure do enjoy seeing you. Come over anytime. You know that. How about a hug for ole Sam?”

“Sam, I love you – and thanks for the day,” he replied.

Then they hugged and next up was Elise. “Sam, I love you too!” Elise exclaimed. “You are so neat!”

“You’re neat too, Sweetheart. I love to see you. Come over anytime.”

Then they hugged and kissed and next up was Joe. “Goodbye, Joe. Thanks for coming over. I can’t tell you how much I enjoyed it. It is so special to have friends like you who don’t howl every time someone mentions the word ‘God’”

“Especially when God is found in the raw,” he replied. “Not many find God in life, but so many try to find God beyond life. But like you and I know, it just can’t be done. Can it?”

“Nope! To think you have to find God outside of your very being is like insisting that a butterfly be frozen in crystal to be viewed.”

They hugged and shook hands and next up was Liz. “Liz, what a wonderful lady you are. Thanks so much for spending some time with an old widow – or is it, widower?”

“You are far from old, Sam. In fact, I don’t think you will ever grow old. You are a beautiful man and a beautiful soul – and I am so proud to call you friend.”

“Thank you, Honey! That means a lot to me.”

They embraced – and Liz kissed him gently while whispering in his ear, “God Bless you, Sam.”

Then came Tom. Tom was the one who started it all – and Tom would always be special. “Tom, what can I say? We did it again. It seems every time we get together, it’s always the same. It never grows old – like our friendship.”

“You are right there. It can’t get old, I guess, Sam, because what we do is based on truth as we all see it. We all love life for the same reason – because it is a gift – and until it ceases to be a gift, I guess we will always want to unwrap it and enjoy it.”

“Yes, Tom, there is no doubt of that.” Then Sam and Tom hugged; and waiting for a goodbye was Molly.

“Molly, how wonderful to have you here today! It is always a treat. I feel like I have just eaten a luscious banana split every time you go because every time you come, you come with such love.”

Molly then hugged him firmly and kissed him, while letting her hand trail to his middle. “Sam, next time I come over we will pray together again. You know how much I appreciate the type of spiritual exercise we enjoyed earlier today. You are mighty fine, Sam, even if you have become impotent, as they say. It is particularly sweet to know someone older who does not pine for his youth – like so many older people do. In you, Sam, soft is fine.”

“I see life as continuous, Molly. How can I regret growing older when all the time I am only getting closer to being a baby again and doing life again?”

“That’s a good thought, Sam – and I believe it too – but even if we don’t get recharged with some new life after this one, we sure are fools not to enjoy the one we have.”

“And I intend to live out my days – however many they are – fully enjoying the life I have, Molly.”

“I know you will, Sam! Goodbye for now!”

Sam watched them as they moved from his front porch to across his front lawn to their own. It was beautiful seeing them going home as they enjoyed the day – dressed in all of God’s glory.

Sam sat down in his easy chair in front of the TV. Tony was already sitting on the loveseat.

“Grampa, it’s been such a good day!” exclaimed Tony. “We have really enjoyed it!”

“And I, you, Tony. Where’s Julie?”

“Brushing her teeth.”

“Well, I suppose we all better get a little shuteye,” Sam remarked. Then Julie joined them.

“Grampa, I would like to sit on your lap and give you a hug,” she said.

“What’s stopping you?” he replied.

“Not a thing,” she responded. Then she dropped her naked body onto his naked body and said, “Now do you think this is the way it is supposed to be?”

“Yes, My Dear, Yes! But it can only be this way if we throw out the old and bring in the new. We must throw out the old sexy ways and bring on the new sensual ways without sex thrown in. Tom and Molly are so correct in saying that voluntarily dedicating yourself to an intercourse free life unless a baby is desired is the only way to really be free.”

“Yes, Grampa. I see the light. Can I make a confession to you?”

“Is this a confession I can hear too?” asked Tony.

“Of course! You know there are no secrets between us, Tony. Grampa, I have never had sex – and I don’t think I will have sex unless I want a baby.”

“I think that is the smart way to go, Honey,” Sam replied.

“She wanted to, though, Grampa. She tried to get me to have sex with her. Didn’t you, Julie?”

“Yes, I did, but Dear Ole Tony here refused – said that maybe we should visit you first. I told him I would love to meet you – because he’s always talking about you. He

said that you and he have some kind of pact – that you and he are going to save the world or something.”

“Hardly save the world, Julie – only save ourselves,” Sam responded. “But, yes, Tony and I are a team. Aren’t we, Tony?”

“You bet, Grampa!”

Julie wanted to continue. “Grampa Sam, I never knew someone could talk of God in such easy to take terms. I can’t tell you how much I like that. Everyone else I hear talking about God is always talking about God as some kind of judge, but you talk about God like He is a member of the family. There is no notion of threat when you talk about God – only love. Like I said out there in your backyard, I think you have made a convert of me. I’m going to talk to God like a friend forever more. Thanks for giving me a real loving God, Reverend Grampa!”

“I may have helped to open your eyes, Dear One, but I have not given you God. You have had God all the while.”

Julie wanted to get back to her confession. “Grampa, back to my confession. I have never had sex – in terms of intercourse, that is – and because of what went on here today and listening to you guys talk about things, I don’t think I will until I want to have a baby.” Then she turned to Tony and said, “Sorry, Pal, you had your chance when I tried to get you to lay me, but now you will have to wait until you want to give me a baby.”

“I think I can handle that, Baby,” Tony responded, offering emphasis on the ‘Baby’.

“Baby, when you want a baby and I want a baby, we may have a baby – and we can call it ‘Sam’.”

“Or Samantha,” Julie replied.

“I am so pleased to have a baby named after me. I will look forward to rocking your baby to sleep,” said Sam.

“Speaking of babies, I hope I am not crushing yours,” chuckled Julie, referring, of course, to his genitals.

“No, but you are squashing them a little,” he replied.

“Well, we can’t have that,” she said, as she got up. “Thanks for letting me sit on you, even if I did squash your balls a little.”

“My balls are just fine,” he responded, while letting out one of his famous Sam chuckles.

“May I kiss them just the same?” she asked

“If you feel so inclined,” he answered.

“I do, Reverend Grampa. I do.”

Then with Tony looking on, she bent down and kissed him on his genitals, fingering them a little as she did. Tony felt no threat in this. After all, he and Grampa had a pact; but now it was not only the two of them. It would be Grampa and Tony and Julie.

And the beauty of it all was that in this innocent act of young female chivalry, innocence remained. Because Sam had committed himself to a holy abstinence, there was not the slightest danger of copulation, even if Sam had not been impotent. Freedom truly abounds in those who respect Nature and its design, including its design of sex.

Tony joined the two to make it three. After all, they were adding one to their pact. While Julie fingered and kissed the Reverend Grampa, Tony kissed and fingered Julie wherever he could reach by moving around the two.

“I could go all night long like this,” uttered a very flattered Grampa, “but perhaps we should all hit the hay.”

“OK, Grampa. I’ll be dreaming of you,” she said.

“You go ahead. I am going to rest out here awhile and enjoy a little bit of God and me in my Molly mirror.”

“OK, Grampa. Sweet dreams!” said Tony, as he led his Julie to their bedroom.

“Goodnight, Grampa Sam!” Julie offered, as she waved to him and blew him a goodnight kiss. “*All’s well with the world.* Isn’t it?”

“Goodnight, Julie! Goodnight, Tony! Yes, Kids,

***ALL’S WELL WITH THE WORLD!***”

# **ALL’S WELL WITH THE WORLD**

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## **THE END**

# THE MEANING OF EASTER – 2005

By  
Francis William Bessler  
Laramie, Wyoming  
March, 2005

This will be short. It won't take long to say what I have to say.

On a wonderful day sometime in 1945 – or maybe it was late 1944 – a little girl was born in Holland – a fantasy land of flowers and music and kindness, though there are many in Holland who would have it otherwise like there is throughout the world. There are always those who hate flowers and innocence even as they pretend to love them.

This little girl was full of joy and pranced about quite innocently. Her parents could have learned from her mild manners and quiet disposition. I hope they have; but if they haven't, this little girl that we will call *Julie* will make her own way and will retain her own spirit regardless of who may be her parents or her country. You see, *Julie* is the meaning of Easter – and Easter should always be hopeful.

It has always been the same. Easter has always meant the same thing – the rebirth of innocence and a refusal to impose; or at least, that is what it should mean, though it does not always mean that. It will never change, though many who think they admire Easter and love what is Godly have no idea that it is not Easter they love so much, but Good Friday before it. Those who love power love Good Friday because it represents some right to imprison or execute the unwilling and the uncooperative. Those who love freedom love Easter.

Power is in love with hurt. Innocence is in love with kindness. On a wonderful day in about 33 or so, there was another child born – this time maybe in Egypt. Like Julie in 1945 or so, this child was in command of the quiet and the kind too. Let's call him *Benjamin*, though I doubt that such is an Egyptian name. It doesn't really matter if he was born in Egypt or India or maybe England or maybe even Germany or China. The place and his name does not matter, but his birth does. Why? Because his birth was a personal celebration of renewal. That is what Easter should be all about – a celebration of a renewal.

In 1945 or so, just a little while before, *Julie* had been a lovely soul that we know as *Anne Frank* – or maybe *Ann Frank*. She died in the most horrible of circumstances – at the hands of the powerful – the German Gestapo or the like. She was a victim of power gone awry. It doesn't matter if we call that power Hitler or Stalin or “**just the people.**” In truth, it is always “**just the people**” and Hitlers and Stalins only rise to power to do the bidding of the people who put them in charge. But Hitler and Stalin go on too; but nobody who loves freedom celebrates their new beginning.

In 33, *Benjamin* came back too. He had been *Jesus*. In all likelihood, there have been sightings of *Jesus* down through the years, but none of *Benjamin* and all the persons he has been since his dismissal as *Jesus* at the hands of the powers of the day. In fact, there have probably been countless charges of heresy brought against the *Benjamins*

and the *Julies* since their rebirths. And all the many who have claimed to be messengers of *Jesus* may be following a false lead. That's the way it goes. Those in power love the power they have and it makes no difference to them if they get it by a *Jesus* or an *Anne Frank*. It is the use of a hero that leads them to pretend to honor heroes of innocence, though in reality, they do not practice the virtues of the fallen.

But we do not have to go any further than the story of *Anne Frank* and *Julie* to know the meaning of Easter. It is the same with *Jesus* and *Benjamin*. You see, the *Julies* and the *Benjamins* live on because their spirits cannot be squelched. No matter what the provocation, they remain true to their ideal of innocence and kindness to all.

**We all survive who we are as we are.** That is the meaning of Easter. **Hitler** survives as **Adolph**, though his new name is not likely **Adolph** anymore than *Anne Frank* is likely *Anne*. **Stalin** survives as **Joseph**, though his new name is not likely **Joseph**. Maybe **Adolph** is **James** now. Maybe **Joseph** is **Victor**. Who knows? But **Adolph** and **James** will continue to demand power – and so will **Joseph** and **Victor**. That, too, is a meaning of Easter – the dark side of Easter.

So there it is – Easter! It is good to be aware of it because we will all have our Easters when we die. It is up to each of us to choose the personality and the legend with which we want to continue life. No mystery to it! As we sow, we reap. *As we were, we will be*. I only hope I have the wits about me to be like *Julie* and *Benjamin*. What about you?

Thanks for listening!

Your Easter Friend,

Francis William Bessler

## I AM DIVINE

*(From my “opera” called SUMMER TOWN)*

By Francis William Bessler

Written March 30, 2005 and later added to a revised *SUMMER TOWN* in 2005.)

I'm like a star in the heavens. I'm like a sun in the sky.  
I'm like a star in the heavens – because I am Divine.  
You're like a star in the heavens. You're like a sun in the sky.  
You're like a star in the heavens – because you are Divine.

### *Refrain:*

*Who knows what the life of mystery is – who knows, who knows?  
Who knows what the mystery of life is – who knows, who knows,  
who knows, who knows – who knows, who knows?*

I'm like a deer in a meadow. I'm like an eagle flying high.  
I'm like a deer in a meadow – because I am Divine.  
You're like a deer in a meadow. You're like an eagle flying high.  
You're like a deer in the meadow – because you are Divine. ***Refrain.***

I'm like a horse on the prairie. I'm like an angel riding high.  
I'm like a horse on the prairie – because I am Divine.  
You're like a horse on the prairie. You're like an angel riding high.  
You're like a horse on the prairie – because you are Divine. ***Refrain.***

I'm like a man in a garden. I'm like a lady in Paradise.  
I'm like a man in a garden – because I am Divine.  
You're like a man in a garden. You're like a lady in Paradise.  
You're like a man in a garden – because you are Divine. ***Refrain.***

I'm like a parent holding hands. I'm like a child running wild.  
I'm like a parent holding hands – because I am Divine.  
You're like a parent holding hands. You're like a child running wild.  
You're like a parent holding hands – because you are Divine. ***Refrain.***

***I'm like a star in the heavens. I'm like a sun in the sky.  
I'm like a star in the heavens – because I am Divine.  
I'm like a star in the heavens. I'm like a sun in the sky.  
I'm like a star in the heavens – because I am Divine.  
I'm like a star in the heavens – because I am Divine.  
I'm like a star in the heavens – because I am Divine.***



# POPE JOHN PAUL II

## And Me

By  
Francis William Bessler  
Laramie, Wyoming  
April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2005

As I write this, Pope John Paul II is near death. In fact, he may have already died. I do not know because I have not turned on the news yet today; but it seems such an opportune time to talk about death. They say that death is the great equalizer in that everyone has to die. That is true, but it is just as true that life is the great equalizer. There is certainly no more or less equality in death than there is in life.

Is John Paul greater than me because he may have died? Of course not. Then most importantly – was John Paul any greater than me when we were both alive? Again, the answer should be **NO**. For those who think that John Paul was greater than Francis William when both were alive, thankfully, they are mistaken.

Why is John Paul not greater than Francis William? Because both equally have God. People have this idea that John Paul is going to God when he dies and that God is going to welcome him home. As a matter of fact, I think that's true in a way, but not in the personal way that John Paul thinks – or thought – it would be. God will not be standing by to take John Paul by the hand in death anymore than God was leading John Paul by the hand in life. God does not lead people by the hands – or by any other part of the torso. God is in everyone. **It is because God is in everyone that John Paul and Francis William are equals.**

My Catholic friends are probably calling John Paul a saint. They are right. He was and is a saint, but so am I and so are you and so is every person who has ever lived and will ever live. Saint John Paul? Why not? Saint Francis William? Why not? And Saint Whoever You Are! Certainly! The trouble is that most people do not know they are saints. Why? Because they have a cockeyed idea in their heads that God is out there some place and a saint has to appeal to the God "out there."

Yes, John Paul is going to God, but he is also coming from God – and so are you and so am I. The truly sad thing about life on this earth is that 2,000 years after my friend, Christ, died on a cross to show that death has no power, people are still using Jesus to power themselves over others. That included my friend, John Paul – or includes him. The difference between John Paul and me is that I try to empower people. John Paul tried to power over others. There's the difference – **empowerment** by one and **power over** by the other.

What can I say? When people have the idea that God is outside of them, then it is easy to step toward a notion that God can favor some and not others. It is because of this outside God thing that people imagine that God is calling them to some service or other – and with that service – they think they have some authority or responsibility to speak for God.

I sit here alone at my pc typing these words – and I have as much real authority on the face of this earth as did John Paul – which is *none*. I have no authority from God and neither did John Paul. As wonderful a person that John Paul was – and I know he was as wonderful as there has been on this earth in terms of caring for others – it is truly sad that he thought he deserved more power than me. He did not. No one deserves power over another individual because all are equal in God – or God is equal in all. The only way that you should have more power than me is that one of us has God and the other does not. Thankfully, we both have God equally. Accordingly, neither of us should have more power than the other.

Can John Paul perform miracles? Maybe; but if he does or can, that does not mean he performed them through some special power bestowed upon him by God. Maybe John Paul will be part of a gang of souls – or spirits – who can lend their spirits to a soul in a body and that lending might bring about a cure. Who knows about such things? I do not. If others are healed by virtue of some outside intercession, that does not make it from God. People have ideas that miracles come from God alone and that if a so called cure is performed, it has to come from God. I doubt it. If God is in everything as I think God is, all forms in life are great as they are. If that is the case, no cures are necessary because, in fact, no one is ill – related to God.

We have this idea that sickness is bad. Well, it is. I do not want it either; but just because it is bad for me does not mean it is bad for God. We think we should be well; and so we should be; but being sick does not mean to be without God. God is just as much in a sick person as a well person. So it stands to reason that sickness or wellness has no bearing on the presence of God. If my sickness is not because I lack God, then a cure could not be because I got God. Right?

See how simple it is? In truth, there is as much God in *Debbie Does Dallas* as there is in *Father Knows Best*. Quite often, Father doesn't know best and quite often, Debbie does. The key to really appreciating life is to realize that Father does not necessarily know best and that Debbie might have something worthwhile to offer. The key is to see God in Father and in John Paul and in Debbie. One does not have more of God than the other.

So, as we say goodbye to a good friend and a good soul, John Paul II, let us realize what he failed to realize – we are all equal in God and no one of us has any right to claim authority from God. John Paul and so many like him believe in authority from God. It is just that kind of belief that prevents this world from acquiring the freedom it deserves because in giving others authority over us – related to God – we are refusing our own empowerment. *We should all have the same power*. Don't you think?

*Thanks for listening!*

Francis William Bessler

## **I DON'T KNOW WHERE I'LL BE**

By Francis William Bessler

Written April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2005

### ***Refrain:***

***I don't know where I'll be – this time next year.***

***I don't know where I'll be – I may be outa here.***

***I don't know where I'll be – with someone or alone,  
but one thing's for sure – my heart will be home.***

I may just pack and leave – there's nothing keeping me.

I've insisted all my life – my soul must be free.

I try to love everything in life – make everything a friend.

So, no matter where I go – there's friends at every bend. ***Refrain.***

It's kind a fun to think about – my soul entering this world.

It must have been wonderful – choosing to be a boy or a girl.

I'm delighted to be what I chose – but I could have chosen otherwise,  
and, if, in fact, life chose for me – I'm having a great life. ***Refrain.***

When time comes for my soul – to leave the body I have loved,  
it will be fun to say hello – and reach for the stars up above.

It should not matter where I am – if peace follows where I go.

The wonder will continue – and friends I'll always know. ***Refrain.***

## LOVING EVERYTHING

By Francis William Bessler

Written April 13, 2005

### *Refrain:*

*I'm loving the day. I'm loving the night.*

*I'm loving my life with all of my might.*

*I'm loving the boys. I'm loving the girls.*

*I'm loving everything in this whole wide world.*

People say, you can't love everyone.

They say, only some are worthy.

But, as I see it, everyone's God son,  
and that makes everyone deserving. ***Refrain***

People say, you can't love everything.

They say, only some things are good.

But, as I see it, everything's in God's ring,  
and all is a great brotherhood. ***Refrain.***

People say, not all is Divine.

They say, there is evil in some.

But, as I see it, if evil I find,

I just haven't looked for love. ***Refrain (a few times).***

# POPE JOHN PAUL II and President Bush

By  
Francis William Bessler  
Laramie, Wyoming  
April 15th, 2005

As I write this, Pope John Paul II has passed away. I guess we all know that. Millions turned out for his funeral – including lots of dignitaries, like our very own President Bush and his father, another President Bush, and the former President, Clinton. Why did they go?

It was in part to pay tribute to a man they honestly loved. It was in part to represent a nation. But it was also in part to applaud so called *leadership & authority*. In showing tribute to another of appreciated authority, they were applauding their own.

I think something happens to those who lead. They assume roles of authority because leadership implies authority. In the end, it would not make much difference if their authority spoke to deciding about what fertilizer to use on the west lawn – or should we send troops to Iraq? It is authority they seek because they think it is expected of them. Leaders make decisions – theoretically for the rest of us; but therein is a humongous danger.

Granted, decisiveness is a wonderful human quality, but there becomes a great danger when too few people decide for many. I think I have never enjoyed a greater sense of honor in my life as when I have decided my own fate. Deciding for myself has been the single most important facet of my life. I can't say I have always decided in my favor. Sometimes, in fact, I have decided very poorly; but the decisions have been mine – and I am extremely proud for having made all the decisions I have in life; and once more, I am looking forward with great anticipation to deciding a lot more.

Pope John Paul became a leader of his Church – my former church, by the way. One of my great decisions in life was to leave that Church. Think of how evil, in a way, it would have been if I would have had to stay with my Church – even when I disagreed with its teaching of the evil of man. At one time, I believed in the evil of man – or that man is evil by nature – as my Church taught me. Right or wrong, in time, I decided that was not a view of which I approve. I have since flip flopped and have decided the exact opposite. Now I believe that man is inherently good, not evil.

But I could have decided to stay with Catholicism – or I could have decided to leave. It should have been my decision. So I decided in favor of leaving and I have become like a mountain rising from the bottom of a sea. That first decision to leave the Church I loved opened the door to a freedom I never dreamed of enjoying. But what if I could not have left the Church? What if I had to stay and any attempt to leave would have been met with force to make me stay? Would I have grown as a soul? Maybe a little, but I don't think I would have grown as a soul near as much within the Church as outside of it.

That was my decision – and it should have been. I could have chosen badly. I think I chose wisely. Others may disagree. Many of my family probably think I chose badly; but I chose. It was my right to choose – and I chose.

Pope John Paul chose to stay with the Church I chose to leave. That was his choice – and it should have been. I think he belonged to his choice. In time, I realized I did not; but it is the right to choose that is at stake here. Choosing makes us stronger as souls – and the more we allow our rightful choices to be delegated to others, the more we lessen our own statures to choose and be a free people.

Pope John Paul believed it belonged to his chosen office to decide matters of morality for others. There are many Catholics and Christians who agree. He had the office to decide many issues for the rest of us. It was for him to decide if priests should marry. It was for him to decide if a pregnant lady should be allowed an abortion. It was for him to decide if gays should be allowed to marry. It was for him to decide if man should march off to war. It was for him to decide a whole lot of things. But with every decision Pope John Paul made for me, I was not allowed to make for myself. That is, if he had his way.

President Bush loved many of the decisions that John Paul made, though he did not like that one about it not being right to go to war in Iraq. He put a check mark by that decision and decided against the Pope on that one. Had it been my decision, I would have sided with the Pope on that one; but that is entirely the intent of this article. Each of us should be allowed the greatest freedom possible to favor or disfavor any one thing in life.

Why should I allow President Bush or anyone decide for me if I should allow an abortion? It is not for another to decide what individuals should decide. Why should another decide for me about marrying another man? It should be my decision – not that of another. Why should another decide if I should be allowed to leave this life? That is a decision that should be mine. To take it from me is to degrade my humanity and my human will.

I would not approve of abortion personally, but I do not have the right to decide for my daughters on the issue. They have minds. Let them choose. It will make them stronger as souls. I would not marry another man; but if one of my daughters were to choose to marry another lady, it should be her choice – not mine; and by choosing, she would become stronger as a soul. I do not know what I would do if I became despicably ill. I might choose to pop a cyanide pill into my mouth and say – *Goodbye, Great Life! It has been a great adventure!* But it is me who should be allowed to make that choice – not some delegated authority who represents some number who think they know better than me about the issues of life.

Well, enough said about that, I guess. I think we need to be really careful in this world about letting others choose for ourselves. **Choice – and the right to choose – is an inherent quality of being human. The more we allow others to choose for us – regardless of the issue – the more we allow ourselves to become robots with no conscience of our own and no freedom to become all that we should be.**

*Thanks for listening!*

# WHAT IF HENRY WALLACE HAD NOT BEEN DUMPED?

(5 pages)

By

Francis William Bessler

Laramie, Wyoming

April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2005

From a PBS program, last night I learned something I had not known before – President Franklin Roosevelt had a Vice President by the name of Henry Wallace. Did you know that? I didn't. It turns out that this Henry Wallace had figured greatly in the New Deal offered by Roosevelt. I was quite amazed to learn that. Ignoramus that I was – and I guess, am – I did not even know that Henry Wallace ever existed – and yet, it turns out that as Roosevelt's Secretary of Agriculture in 1932 – long before he became the Vice President in 1941 – Mr. Wallace was very instrumental in trying to save American farms at a time when farming was being challenged to its very core – as early as the 1920s.

I won't go into all of that – mostly because I am still ignorant about the details. I have only become aware that there was a Mr. Wallace and that this good man was instrumental in so much of the good social programs to come from the Roosevelt Administration. It is like he was the best kept secret of a century. His impact may have been as much as any of any American who has ever lived; and yet I knew nothing about him before last night.

That which gained Mr. Wallace his importance to even be recognized by FDR to be selected as his Secretary of Agriculture – even though Mr. Wallace was a Republican and FDR a Democrat – was his development of a hybrid form of corn. Mr. Wallace of Iowa found a way to more than double a crop of corn by coming up with a hybrid corn; but Mr. Wallace had ideas that far surpassed his development of a variety of corn. I won't attempt to go into the details – again because I do not know the details. It suffices for me to merely acknowledge that Mr. Wallace was a very dedicated American who played a great part in many of Roosevelt's eventual policies.

In 1940, Roosevelt chose him as his Vice Presidential running mate – after Mr. Wallace had switched from being a Republican to a Democrat some years before during his stint as the Secretary of Agriculture. FDR considered Mr. Wallace as important a man in his administration as any and wanted him as a friend and running mate in 1940.

Then in 1944, amid cries from many Democrats that Mr. Wallace was too peace minded to deal with a potential Communist threat – even before we had finished with World War II – the Democrats dumped Henry Wallace in favor of Harry Truman – who offered signals that he would deal with any overt threat from Communism or comparable foe with quick military response.

It seems to me that lots of people in this world want war – and even while one is still in process, they can't wait to prepare for the next one. Maybe, though, it is not that they want war. It may be that they can't imagine conflict being resolved without it. Mr. Wallace was sounding off like war was not the way to go – even against the expected

threat of Communism – and for many who can't imagine conflict being resolved without war, a potential President Wallace was too much to fathom.

I am one of those guys who believe that if things go awry in this world, it is because we have not tried hard enough to keep them from going awry. Rather than have a willingness to reason together, we show ourselves as **unwilling to listen to reason**. I am firmly convinced that FDR could have averted the necessity of World War II if he had invited Adolph Hitler to Washington and talked about the affairs of the world as equals – much like Presidents Bush and Clinton could have averted the necessity of the Iraq Wars by inviting Saddam Hussein to Washington and talked about the affairs of the world as equals. If it had just stopped with talk, I agree it would have done nothing to resolve any potential conflicts, but without talking, there is no chance of resolving conflicts peacefully.

When you look at history, it is so clear it could have happened otherwise. FDR and Adolph Hitler came to power at almost the same time – in the early 1930s. They could have bonded instead of becoming enemies. Germany could have been handled carefully after its terrible defeat in World War I and not humiliated like it was. Humiliation of the defeated is never a platform for a lasting peace – and is very likely but a preface for another war. FDR could have reached out to Adolph Hitler; and Adolph could have lost his bitterness of defeat. It could have happened. It should have happened. Likewise with the Emperor of Japan. FDR could have visited the Emperor or the Emperor could have visited with FDR in Washington; but maybe they did meet and I am just unaware of it. I am talking personally now, not through governmental diplomats.

Near as I can tell, however, FDR did not want to talk to Hitler and made no attempt to talk to him as an equal – thus making confrontation that much more likely. People do not like to be snubbed, just as people love to be respected. **Snubbing** always leads to more conflict like **Respect** always leads to less conflict. In the end, FDR probably wanted war with Germany – and maybe Japan too - for whatever reasons he chose to see it as some particular delight – just as Presidents Bush wanted war with Iraq for whatever reasons they chose and choose to see it as some particular delight.

But back to Mr. Wallace and what might have been. In 1940, FDR chose pacification minded Mr. Wallace as his running mate; but in 1944, he dumped Mr. Wallace for a less pacification minded Mr. Truman. Mr. Wallace wanted to try and get along with Joe Stalin and was convinced that it was the way to go. If Mr. Wallace had become President Wallace, it is likely he would have invited Mr. Stalin to the White House and tried to iron out conflicts that might lead to war; and maybe the so called Iron Curtain would have fallen in the 1950s and not have waited for collapse in the 1980s. I am absolutely amazed now to learn that America was only one short presidency away from what has actually transpired in history – war and more war. Even while one world war was still in progress, the powers that be in Washington – and more importantly, general America – decided for more war and less peace.

Just look at history! Henry Wallace was dumped as Vice President for his talking about getting along with others and Harry Truman replaced him. Instead of getting a President Wallace in 1945 when FDR died, we got instead his counterpart – Harry Truman. And what did President Truman eventually do? Exactly what should have been predicted – he looked for a way to plunge America back into war. If President Wallace had been in charge, it is unlikely that Korea would have ever happened; but when people



are of the mind of wanting wars – or of the mindset, they are useful - be certain they are going to find them.

So, as it has turned out, when FDR dumped Wallace under Democratic pressure, he also dumped Peace in the world. President Truman promptly got us right back into war after our having been depleted by World War II. In 1952, Ike campaigned on a message that he would get us out of the Korean War – and he won; but amazingly, he chose as his running mate someone who had agreed with resolving conflict by war – Richard Nixon. Ike wanted out of the war, but this time due to Republican pressures, he settled for a man to be vice president who actually disagreed with him on world affairs. Amazing!!!!

So what did Vice President Richard Nixon and cohorts do? In 1954 or 1955 – forget which at the moment – they started the Vietnam War. Here we were not even healed from the idiotic Korean War and Nixon and parties were already laying the foundation for another war. How did they do that? By flaunting respect for others once again and making enemies where none should have been made. Under the influence of the anti-Communist haters, Nixon led the parade by voicing disapproval of allowing the crisis in Vietnam to be settled peacefully. I wonder who in the hell was the real President. I guess Ike must have been taken up too much with his golf game to lead as he should have led. He tried to lead us out of the Korean War – but allowed himself to be used to lead us into the Vietnam War. Or so it seems to me in retrospect.

How did he do that? By allowing his Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, to agree for American presence in an internationally supervised election in the Vietnams in 1955 or '56 or so – and then when it came time for the actual election, Ike, Nixon, Dulles, and America were absent because a Communist would be the likely winner. Remember a fellow by the name of Ho Chi Minh? He was very popular in the Vietnams, but he was a vile and hated Communist. No election could be allowed to let him in. Instead of peace in Vietnam in the 1950s, we encouraged our favorite practice – war. It all began in the mid '50s, championed by Nixon and confederates – but it would not end for America until the mid '70s – when America would finally withdraw from Vietnam.

To his credit, however, President Eisenhower did try to warn us about the danger of war just before he turned over the reigns to John Kennedy in 1961. He warned that the American complexity is such that war for certain industries has become an attraction and a way of life and that those industries could cause clamor for wars to support the war industries. Makes sense, I guess, and maybe that has been the **real reason** we have been to war since Ike left office. The industries that require war and the making of war have perhaps made it almost impossible to avoid. You can't avoid what you do not want to avoid; and when you make a living by making war, how can you be expected to sue for peace? That would be like asking a Coors Beer Brewery to advertise against drinking alcohol. Not too likely. Is it? And I guess it is equally unlikely that a war industry is going to jump up and down about the prospects of peace – as long as they have a stockpile available to be used.

If the truth were known, before Vietnam was even over, American military strategists and war material manufacturers were already planning another war – especially since the last ones had not gone well at all. It could be considered we lost in Korea and we lost in Vietnam. Thus, we had to have another war to prove we could win. And that set the stage eventually for the wars in Iraq.

Ronald Reagan began his Presidency with a snarl and a pledge to go to war if necessary – against the Evil Empire of Communism - but then a beautiful soul like Mikhail Gorbachev happened and deflated all the wind in Reagan's sails. If it had not been for the real diplomacy of Mikhail Gorbachev, however, who had come to grips that Communism was a failure without the need of threats from without, Ronald Reagan could have picked a fight much easier than, in fact, he was allowed. Amazingly, it took a *mean vile Communist* to lead the way toward real peace between a defaulting Soviet Union and America.

As it has happened, all the wars that we have ever fought against Communism have turned out to be as useless as **trying to suck intoxication from a burnt cigarette stub** – except for the industries that thrive on war, of course. Henry Wallace tried to warn us of the futility in 1944, but for all his warning, he got dumped and war became our legacy – the very thing he warned would happen if we insisted on refusing to get along with our enemies.

That which this article is all about, however, is that decisions can be very impacting. If we learn anything from history, as long as we learn that, maybe there is some good to come from our having lived through crises. Just think of how the world might have been different if FDR had had the foresight to stick by his friend, Henry Wallace, in 1944 and not dumped him for someone else – Harry Truman. It is just possible that none of that which has transpired would have happened.

With a President Wallace at the helm in 1945 when FDR died, we might have had a better chance at peace in the world. President Wallace may have invited Joe Stalin to Washington and together they might have found a better way. Then offshoots like Korea and Vietnam may have never happened; and if failures like Korea and Vietnam had never happened, we would not have been so gung ho to have Iraq Wars – and God knows what other wars may be in our future if we do not start listening to the Henry Wallace types of this world.

If a President Wallace had been in charge, the Palestinians may not have been evicted from their homeland in the late 1940s and we would not now be going through hate skirmish after hate skirmish in Israel. We may have learned to get along with Fidel Castro and may now be celebrating 50 years of friendship rather than 50 years of avowed hatred of one another. We may not have had Iranian and Iraqi crises. We may have been able to avert them too. We could have been friends with Saddam Hussein and never made enemies with an Osama Bin Laden – because an Osama would have never evolved from the mess of world conflict.

But steadfastly and consistently, we have chosen the Roosevelts and the Trumans and the Johnsons and the Nixons and the Reagans and the Clintons and the Bushes to lead us into war and not away from it. The only real difference between Bill Clinton and George W. Bush is that with the Presidency of Mr. Bush, a 9/11 happened. If such an event had happened during the Presidency of Bill Clinton, the reaction would have likely been the same. Why? Because while he had the chance, Mr. Clinton never tried to get along with Saddam Hussein, thus making war and a confrontation with Saddam only a matter of time.

Again, though, it should be important to be aware that for certain Americans, wars may be intentional because they may be profitable. Unfortunately in our free enterprise system we have allowed war equipment manufactures to not only make a living at it, but

to make a fantastic living at it. We have actually allowed free enterprise war equipment manufacturers to charge far more from government purchasing agents than they could get from private purchasing agents. We have actually made war profitable for a lot of industries; and so it should come as no surprise that our leaders are not too bent out of shape if war comes along to use the equipment their friends manufacture.

**It is one of the sad things about freedom. People who are free are very often free to abuse the system as well as defend it. There is but one way around that – somehow remove the profit out of making weapons and making war. If we make war an unprofitable and unattractive venture, then maybe we can avoid it; but as long as war is so profitable to so many, I suspect the Henry Wallace types will continually be discredited; and wars will be here to stay.**

***CHILD OF HUMANITY  
SERIES***

(49 Pages)

By  
Francis William Bessler  
Laramie, Wyoming  
- 2005 -

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Laramie, Wyoming. U.S.A.  
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# INTRODUCTION

This series is based on a title I came to know in 2004 – and absolutely love. In my favorite new book of 2004, **THE GOSPEL OF MARY**, I was introduced to the concept of “*child of humanity*.” Thus, I have named my series of 2005 after that notion. In brief, Jesus offers that I should look to the “*child of humanity*” within me to find the “*good news of the kingdom*.” I will explore that concept in essay # 5 of this series; however, in general, this series merely discusses the topics listed below as I see them. Along with **THE GOSPEL OF MARY**, I will also make significant reference to **THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS** as I explore the various topics included within my series.

About **THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS**, it was lost for over sixteen centuries, after being banned by the governmental and hierarchical institutions of the 4<sup>th</sup> Century. Prior to its being banned, it was one of many gospels that various people of the day referenced to gain an impression and understanding of Jesus; though, of course, there could not have been many copies of anything in those days for the lack of printing materials. Let us just say that some ancient texts did exist and were the source of impressions about Jesus.

To the dismay of some, there was some conflict among the existing gospels. After Constantine came to power early in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century and became the Emperor of the Western World, he declared Christianity the state religion, but did not like the conflict among his bishops about the various impressions of Jesus. So, he bid his bishops to decide on those gospels that suited the power ones among them – since he was all about power himself – and then declared that all other gospels be banned – and even burned perhaps.

In the ensuing drama, the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were selected to be the reigning gospels and all conflicting gospels like that of Thomas and Mary were charted to the dump heap. Though the various dumped gospels enjoyed their own individual dramas, and I suppose some were trashed as directed, some monk or other stashed **THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS** and some other banned material in a big jar and hid the jar in a cave off the Nile River in Egypt near what is known as Nag Hammadi. There that jar remained, unknown for centuries until a peasant in Egypt stumbled on the jar in 1945. That peasant had no idea of the contents of that jar, but it turned out to be some long lost and long hidden ancient manuscripts – among which was **THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS**. Theoretically, this Thomas is considered by many experts to be none other than Thomas, one of the twelve apostles of Jesus.

Though it is only speculation on my part, I suspect that Thomas may have written his work as notes he took down from Jesus during the life of Jesus. Since his work is nothing more than a bunch of *Jesus said* statements, it lends itself to being the possible note book of a student taking notes. Perhaps later, the others – Matthew through John – copied somewhat from those notes and then expanded them into a narrative. That is only a thought, however.

The ancient text of the work by Thomas, greatly deteriorated over the years, was written in Coptic, an Egyptian language. The original work was likely written in Greek since it has been speculated that Thomas was Greek. Perhaps Thomas was a student from Greece, just chancing upon Jesus – or perhaps Thomas knew Jesus from an earlier age – perhaps before the so called public ministry of Jesus. Before that public ministry from about the age of thirty, nothing is offered about Jesus in the regular gospels, except a few boyhood references. Perhaps Thomas knew Jesus before Peter and the others knew him, though the regular gospels offer Jesus meeting Thomas after the start of his public ministry. It is hard to say.

Since the finding in 1945, there have been numerous translations I suppose; but my first look at the Gospel of Thomas came in 1979 from a book copyrighted in 1959. To my knowledge, the source I have used is likely the first translation. It was translated by a team of scholars headed by a fellow named A. Guillaumont. I like to think Mr. Guillaumont's translation is the most authentic, being the first and being without subsequent corruption of original text.

Like any process of translation and interpretation, verses tend to change ever so slightly with each process. As an example, in Verse 37 (of 114) of Mr. Guillaumont's translation, Jesus is asked by his disciples when he will be known. To that question, Mr. Guillaumont's edition has Jesus answering *when you take off your clothing without being ashamed*. I do not have the name of the translator handy at the moment, but one translation I read had Jesus answering that question with **when you strip yourself of shame**. I may be wrong, but I suspect Mr. Guillaumont's translation tried to translate the Coptic words as found, but the other translation chose instead to interpret the translation – not actually translate the words.

And, of course, that is a major problem with various translations of any foreign text. We may not get a translation of the text itself, but an assumed interpretation of a translation. Why would the second source offer that we would recognize Jesus when we strip ourselves of shame and not offer the original text of *when you take off your clothing without being ashamed?* Probably because he did not want to get into a discussion about nakedness. He assumed that Jesus was only offering that we have to be without shame to recognize him and that really has nothing to do with nakedness, per se; however for one, I disagree completely. I think Jesus meant exactly what Mr. Guillaumont had him say. All Jesus is saying is that shame is not recognizing the divinity of nakedness. That is, in my opinion, that is so. How can you talk about the divinity of nakedness or the shamelessness of nakedness without referring to nakedness itself?

Well, many think you can – and so they do. Perhaps it offers a good lesson about accepting what we find in any translation. How in the world can we know a translation is literal unless we are familiar with the source foreign language? I cannot. I must admit that. I have no knowledge whatever of Coptic. For all I know, the second source may have had it right and the first source, Mr. Guillaumont, may have been the guilty one of offering nakedness as an expression of shamelessness. Still, the greater likelihood is that the earliest translation is probably the most literal because initial scholars are far more interested in translating words rather than ideas. Until I know different, I will always retain the 1959 translation as the first and most authentic of all translations of **THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS**.



Concerning my other favorite long lost gospel, **THE GOSPEL OF MARY**, according to my source on that one, Marvin Meyer - who included **THE GOSPEL OF MARY** within a general work that deals with all the gospels that may have had some bearing on Mary Magdalene – **THE GOSPEL OF MARY** was probably banned and hidden like **THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS**, however the site of hiding was not Nag Hammadi. I have no idea where it was hidden, but as early as the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, it was found in something called the Berlin Gnostic Codex. Mr. Meyer does not offer it was found in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century in his work called **THE GOSPELS OF MARY**, but it is my understanding from some other source I read that such is so. Like **THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS**, **THE GOSPEL OF MARY** was also found in Coptic. The original author of **THE GOSPEL OF MARY** is suspected to be Mary Magdalene – and it may have been written in the late 1<sup>st</sup> Century or early 2<sup>nd</sup> Century, quite likely again in Greek.

Mr. Meyer's work was copyrighted in 2004. So, it is very new – unlike the 1959 copyright of **THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS** or **THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THOMAS**, authored by Mr. A. Guillaumont and team. Mr. Meyer offers in his work that some earlier texts of **THE GOSPEL OF MARY** may have been in Greek – and there seems to be some fragments in Greek somewhere – but the most complete version was in Coptic. Even so, that Coptic version is missing several pages at the front and also several pages in the middle – perhaps due to corruption of aging.

The dating and actual authorship of any gospel, however, is largely a matter of speculation. Who is to say for sure who wrote what and when any of it was actually written? As earlier noted, some scholars speculate that the gospels of Thomas and Mary Magdalene were written in the late 1<sup>st</sup> Century or early 2<sup>nd</sup> Century; but, if so, it would be almost impossible that the actual authors could have been the Apostle, Thomas, or the Apostle, Mary Magdalene because they would have been much too old for such authorship. They would have had to have been near or over 100 years of age. How likely is that? It would be conceivable, however, that others could have written the gospels using the names of Thomas and Mary Magdalene while copying from some earlier jottings of Thomas and/or Mary. Who knows? But who knows when and by whom any of the gospels were written?

I have noticed, too, among several “interpretations” of the Gospel of Mary, a similar disparity between translations as I found in separate versions of **THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS**. In the translation (interpretation) offered by Mr. Meyer, Jesus offers that we should look for the *child of humanity* within us to find peace. In a different – and again unknown – source, the translation of interpretation has Jesus offering that we should look for the **son of man** within us to find peace – not Mr. Meyer's *child of humanity*. Why would one call it the **son of man** and the other call it *child of humanity*?

Who knows? But I identify with *child of humanity*, not **son of man**, because I see a very important lesson in the term. It is not that I could not get my lesson out of **son of man**, but I think it is clearer understood as *child of humanity*. Since Jesus often referred to himself in the regular gospels as **son of man**, it is better to go with the more generic term of *child of humanity* so as not to confuse it with Jesus.

Be that as it may, you now have a glimpse at the meaning of the discussions offered in this series of essays. Essentially, I will be looking for answers among the **Gospels of Thomas and Mary** as I pace through the topics I cover. The version of **THE GOSPEL OF MARY** I will use will be that offered by Marvin Meyer in his work **THE GOSPELS OF MARY**. I hope he does not mind. If I thought it is an infringement on his copyright of the translation I use, I would not use the text in his book without his permission, but as I see it, any ancient gospel ought to be public domain. The same goes for my use of Mr. A. Guillaumont's work of **THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THOMAS**. Those texts do not belong to just some, but to all because they were probably written for all – though because of the accident of certain history, they were kept away from the public for centuries.

With that in mind, the various subjects explored in the series are:

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I will feature the various essays almost exactly like I featured them in separate essays that I shared with some as I wrote them – from January to August of 2005. For this work, I have added the previous **INTRODUCTION** to introduce the **Gospels of Thomas and Mary**; but from here on, the essays are as I wrote them originally.

# 1

## **Returning to a Circular Christianity**

Written: Jan. 2, 2005

Imagine, if you will, a round table with four legs holding up the middle and making a bit of a square in the center of the round table. Now, imagine that some carpenter arrives at the scene and decides to make the round table a square table and cuts off everything exceeding the square in the middle of the table, including an extra four legs stationed underneath the borders of the round table top. Instead of seating twelve people around the table, the new table only seats four.

Now, imagine that the table top represents Jesus; and the legs represent the various visions or interpretations of Jesus. With the carpenter making a much smaller square where previously a larger circle existed, the table of Jesus takes on a completely different look and a completely narrowed vision. Only the visions of Jesus represented by the square in the middle remain; and with the restriction of visions or interpretations of Jesus to just four, Jesus himself takes on a new look in general.

In my opinion, this is what happened to the table of Jesus and Christianity in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century when only four books offering an interpretation were selected. By restricting any vision of Jesus to just the four seemingly in the middle of the former circle of Jesus, we – the world – lost a lot of table space and a whole lot of the full picture of Jesus. Those in the middle, of course, hold that the extended visions or versions of Jesus were not acceptable to them; and, thus, they do not miss them; but what about all of those who represented what might be called an “extended” vision of Jesus? They were dismissed to the cold and told they did not matter. Most importantly, however, by cutting off the legs of some of the former circular table, Jesus himself became like a body amputated of some of his limbs. The result is we have suffered a kind of corruption of Jesus in terms of some of the visions and interpretations that once existed were suspended.

In a rather figurative fashion, I think this is what happened in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century. Previous to Emperor Constantine deciding to make Christianity the state religion, it was a circle with lots of different visions of Jesus allowed to sit around the table. When Emperor Constantine decided to reduce the table in order to make it more manageable from a ruler’s standpoint, at least half of the total makeup of a former Christianity was lost. Under the guidance and directive of Constantine, various interpretations of Jesus were outlawed. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John – the alleged four pillars in the middle – were retained; and many legs like those of Thomas, Mary Magdalene, Philip, and various others were lopped off.

Currently, I belong to the Unitarian Church. In this church, we are permitted to have many different views of life. I suspect it could be said that none of us holds the exact same opinions about life as the next person, sitting around what is a circular table; but our differences are not only allowed, but encouraged. The *Unitarian Experience*, if it could be called that, is proof to me that we can all get together and get along and not have to hold the same views.

My particular love is of Jesus, but others don't find him all that appealing. Perhaps some of my fellow Unitarians might wish that I would sit down and shut up about Jesus. Well, I may sit down, but I will not shut up. And if I did shut up, the very wholesome greater experience of Unitarianism would not be fulfilled. My fellow Unitarians need for me to still speak up for my vision of Jesus to offer a part of the general picture of various visions of life; and I need for them to speak up for their views as well. In the end, it all works fabulously well.

Restricting the discussion to Jesus alone, however, by the acts and decisions of King Constantine and his selected bishops who decided that the canon of the **BIBLE** should be restricted to the four of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John - for many centuries, Jesus has been lost. He has been lost because a fuller vision of him with all the various possible complexities about him has been outlawed.

When I was growing up, I had no idea that more than four versions of Jesus had ever existed. I belonged quite cuddly to that four square thing in the middle of a former circular table. Not knowing there were any additional versions, I was wonderfully happy dealing with the Jesus who was taught to me by my church - Catholicism. Later in life, I discovered a great truth. Originally, the table of Jesus had been much larger than anything I could have imagined. That table of Jesus was so large as to even allow the unthinkable to a four square gospel person such as me. Some who had known Jesus actually found him not to be the redeemer I had been told he had to be. Some who had known Jesus actually challenged the concept of what is called in traditional Christianity, original sin - the very center of the Christianity that was allowed to survive.

Many might say - that's preposterous! Surely, you can't possibly claim that something as fundamental to Christian thought as original sin might not be true. How could a Christian possibly believe in the lack of original sin? Did not Jesus come to expose and dispose of original sin? Well, that is one version of him, yes, that belonging to the four square proposition in the middle of a former circular table. But, yes, it is actually true that some who believed themselves to be as Christian as the four square people in the middle actually took issue with original sin - the very heart beat of traditional Christianity. At least, such is implied, if not expressed, to me in one of the gospels, commended to the trash heap by Constantine and his disciples.

In the forbidden **GOSPEL OF MARY**, Jesus is asked about sin. To clarify Mary, it is widely believed that this Mary is none other than Mary Magdalene. My, My! If the author of the **GOSPEL OF MARY** is really Mary Magdalene, one of those declared by Constantine and his disciples to be a heretic is none other than perhaps one of Jesus' best friends, Mary Magdalene. Anyway, in the **GOSPEL OF MARY**, Jesus is asked about sin. His response: *There is no such thing as sin, except that you create it, as in adultery.* You may think of that as a rather flippant and irrelevant claim, but imagine the consequences if it is actually true.

What now happens to the favored idea of Jesus being some kind of needed redeemer to save us from a terrible sin that, in fact, we do not have? That rather upends the whole notion of Jesus. Doesn't it? If I am to believe that a gospel of Mary actually existed, however, that is entirely a possibility. If it is true, would you not agree that such a thought could have an unbelievable impact on Christianity? Think of all the souls - like myself now - who could actually go with that program rather than the issued program of original sin we have all inherited.

If Mary really got Jesus right, though others are free to interpret her gospel differently, Jesus probably believed that inherited sin is nonsense. He probably believed that sin exists alright, but as products of our own creation, having no essential dependence on being inherited. If Mary is right, for instance, Paul is wrong. Paul says that we are all born in sin and inherit it and only Jesus can expel it from us. Then Mary, sitting at the edge of the table, says, in paraphrase: *I disagree. My master never believed we are all born of sin and are in an inherited state of sin. He believed that sin is not an inheritance, but rather a creation of ourselves.*

Down through history, however, the various churches of Christianity have dictated that no one has a right to not believe in original sin. It has been considered the very center of Christianity and Christian thought. Until I discovered that other gospels about Jesus existed that were banned and damned by 4<sup>th</sup> Century rulers, I had no idea that it could be possible. **Now, the cat is out of the bag.** Call it a product of our "information age." Now we know the truth. Originally, before the amputation process of Constantine and his disciples, Christianity contained vastly more interpretations of life than was allowed to pass into the 5<sup>th</sup> Century.

Somehow, not all the versions of Jesus that were banned were actually destroyed. In 1945, some ignorant peasant stumbled, completely by accident, on some jars hidden in a cave off the Nile River in Egypt. These jars contained many ancient manuscripts written in Coptic, an Egyptian language – including the gospels of Thomas and Philip. That is supposedly Thomas, the Apostle of Jesus. And with the new unearthing of Thomas and many other interpretations of Jesus, the once circular table of Christianity can now go back to its size, prior to Constantine and his disciples.

Anyway, that is my vision of the future. I see it happening – not because I am writing about it, but because I am somewhat part of the huge process that is now taking place. Like the *Unitarian Experience* proves, we do not have to believe in the same doctrines to get along. We can return to the yesteryear of Christianity and begin to take back what Constantine and his disciples took away. We can expand Christianity from its long allowed four square restricted table to its former circular table; and with that allowance, we can start to sit twelve around a table where heretofore, only four have been allowed to sit. The *Unitarian Experience* proves it can work; and as I write here today, I hope – and think - it is happening.

Where will we go with a restored *Circular Christianity*? Eventually, everywhere perhaps. I do not know. All that I know now is that with the loss of what might be termed the gospels of an extended Christianity, we have probably been missing Jesus for a long, long time. In the debate over who the real Jesus was, it was arbitrarily decided that Jesus should be defined as necessary redeemer, the fulfillment of a promised Jewish Messiah. It was one of the views of Jesus, but it was not the only one. I think it would be extremely useful to restore the full discussion - welcoming Thomas and Mary and Philip and others around the table - and let those of the current age decide the issue once again.

# 2

## Sin

Written: Feb. 4, 2005

I am not one to beat about the bush. I am convinced that humanity, but especially Christianity, has been way off the beaten path in terms of ideal virtue – or practicing it. That which I would call a betrayal of Christianity, or if you will, Christ – and true virtue – began and still continues with a **misunderstanding of sin**.

Correct me if I am wrong. According to traditional Christianity, sin can be defined as **a transgression against God**. Am I right or wrong? Surely we can agree that if sin is not really a transgression against God, almost all Christian religion has been based from almost the beginning on a false premise. I maintain that is exactly the case. I maintain that the very definition of sin as traditionally understood is wrong – and not only wrong, but tragically so. If we cannot even get the real definition of sin right, what in the world are we doing pretending to get virtue right?

Can sin possibly be **a transgression against God**? I would say it is possible only if God can be violated. Would you not agree? If God cannot be violated, then neither can anyone sin against God. Right? So, it seems to me, an initial burden of a thinking person is to resolve for him or herself the matter of **violation of God**. What can be a violation of God? If I violate you, I take away something from you. Could it be different with God? If I violate God, then it must be that I take away something from Him or Her or It.

Assuming that you have such a power to take away something from God, tell me what it could be. You say I can violate God. That means I can steal something from Him. Think about it. If God is everywhere, as most people claim God is, how could God lose anything? If you think of God as being a being that is another being – though a **“Supreme Being”** – then I suppose you could conjure the possibility of God being able to lose something. In practice, that is exactly what most folks who believe in the traditional concept of sin do. They define God as **a Supreme Being**, implying that God is a being over all other beings, but inside of none.

In my current view of the matter, however, any *supreme being* that is not also in everything is not a God, but only a god. Thus the Jewish/Christian God is not a God, but only a god – from which potential property can be stolen. In truth, however, God is not a god from whom a possession can be stolen. God is really an Infinite Presence from which nothing can be stolen. If God is not a **supreme being god**, merely better than all other beings, but is a God that is necessarily in everything, then sin as defined as **a transgression against God** is null and void.

What did Jesus have to say about the matter? It is hard to say if you are asking that question and expecting an answer from any of the canonical gospels. Matthew through John talk a lot about sin, but never define what it is. Look for yourself if you doubt me. Sin is merely portrayed as any conduct that might violate what may be called the **Kingdom of God**. That kingdom is never defined as such either. It is no wonder that humans have lived for thousands of years hoping to belong to a kingdom for which they have no real clear understanding. It has been like we have been on some kind of journey

toward some unknown destination for which assumed maps have been provided by anyone who wants to claim that he or she knows the way to the kingdom. Yet none of us have actually been to the assumed kingdom in order to be sure of the way to it.

If an acceptable definition of the **Kingdom of God** cannot be found in Matthew through John of the **BIBLE**, is there some definition somewhere else in some other gospel that might provide a lead? I think so. In **THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THOMAS**, Jesus says in Verse 3: *the kingdom is within you and without you. If you know yourselves, you will be known and you will know that you are sons of the Living Father.* The other gospels say this in some degree, too, but they also take great pains to point out that Jesus was a **special son of the Living Father** and even go so far as to say that Jesus was and is *the only son of the Living Father.*

Assuming that *the Living Father* of the Gospel of Thomas is really referring to God, Thomas has Jesus telling his disciples that they (and we?) are all sons of the Living Father. He makes no claim whatsoever about being an **only son**. He does, however, emphasize our need to know that we are sons of the Living Father. If we know ourselves, we will know we are sons of the Living Father; but not knowing that we are sons of the Living Father does not make us **outside the kingdom**. It only makes us ignorant of our true status; but it does not deflate our true status.

In Verse 3 of the Gospel of Thomas, Jesus says the kingdom is *within you and without you*. That is only to say *the kingdom is everywhere*. If the kingdom is everywhere, then there can be no place where the kingdom is not. If that is so, being already in the kingdom we seek elsewhere, we probably will never find it anywhere.

In another verse of **THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THOMAS**, verse 113, Jesus says: *the kingdom of the Father is spread upon the earth and men do not see it.* Why? Because the kingdom of the Father – the Kingdom of God – is everywhere. What does this nice little idea do to the idea that sin is **a transgression against God**? For me, it completely annihilates it. How can anyone transgress against God – or the Kingdom of God – if no one can ever be expelled from it? And how can anyone ever be expelled from the Kingdom of God if that kingdom is everywhere?

I hope we have proceeded to decide that the traditional idea of sin cannot be correct. That is really an important step; but if sin is not **a transgression against God**, can it be something else?

Once again, we just happen to have another of the expelled gospels coming to our rescue. In **THE GOSPEL OF MARY (Magdalene?)**, Jesus is asked about sin. In Verse 1 of that outlawed and forbidden gospel: *Peter said to him, “You have explained everything to us. Tell us also, what is the sin of the world?” The savior replied, “There is no such thing as sin, but you create sin when you mingle as in adultery, and this is called sin.*

It has been taught down through the ages of Christendom that sin is inherited all the way from Adam and Eve. **In this verse, Jesus clearly repudiates that notion.** As importantly, however, Jesus in the Gospel of Mary tries to clarify that sin has to do with finite relations only and at least implies it does not have anything to do with a relationship with the Infinite or God. We sin when we mingle, as in adultery; but our sin is only against a fellow creature, not God.

We have already determined that no one can sin against God because no one can steal anything from an omnipresent God. It seems to me that the Jesus of Mary is telling us what sin is, not what sin is not. **We sin when we mingle improperly.** That is what he is saying. Mingling, as in adultery, I think can be taken as *improper mingling*. **Adultery is an example of improper mingling.** But at least we now have a real definition of sin. No longer are we out there flailing against the wind trying to figure out how we have violated a God that cannot be violated. If nothing else, that is tremendous progress.

The hints of this lesson have been there all along in the gospels of Matthew through John of the **BIBLE**. Jesus constantly warns against that which I call *improper mingling* in that he constantly emphasizes the need for compassion. If you have true compassion for all beings – not just human - then you cannot violate another individual. Compassion – true compassion – the main dictation of the regular gospels – says what needs to be said; but in stripping all members of life of divinity, except Jesus, compassion has been much harder to come by.

If we want to call it a sin, perhaps the greatest sin of all has been conducted by those in life who have based their entire livelihoods on a lie that not all are divine. The reason this is such a great sin is that by leaving us without a sense of true esteem, we have been led to act just like the senseless, sinful, rebels the sin mongers have accused us of being. Their great sin is that we have lived up to the reputation they have defined us as having. Though they do not sin against God, anymore than any of us can, they sin against the world by leading the world to believe it is less than it is.

And what is the world? The world of Nature, that is. Every single item, every single son, every single daughter, every single thing is a *son of the Living Father*. To be unaware of such a great heritage and identity is to act in blindness, living in the middle of a Paradise that is never known. What is sin? **It is believing and acting like one is sinful by nature. It is believing and acting like one needs salvation from divinity. It is believing and acting like there is inequality in divinity and that somehow God can choose some to be more divine than others.** That is sin. **It can be forgiven only by replacing it with virtue.** No other forgiveness is needed or useful. True forgiveness of sin is only finally recognizing what it really is – and stopping it. Begging for pardon and imagining its deliverance is not forgiveness. That is only a continuation of sin.

What is virtue? The opposite of sin, of course. ***It is believing and acting like one is holy by nature. It is believing and acting like one is dressed in divinity because all things are dressed in divinity, being all in God. It is believing and acting like there is equality in all beings because all beings are equal in God.*** Let us always be mindful that sin is an act and a belief, not a condition.

Like Jesus says in the canonical gospels – *Now, go and sin no more!*



# 3

## Heaven

Written: March 1, 2005

Without sin, there is ? What is the answer to that? Of course, one has to define sin in order to be able to answer the question. So, let us retreat to the previous article for a definition. Others may have their own definitions of sin, but since I am the one talking about it here, then it should be according to my definition.

What is sin? **It is believing and acting like one is sinful by nature. It is believing and acting like one needs salvation from divinity. It is believing and acting like there is inequality in divinity and that somehow God can choose some to be more divine than others.** That is sin.

Well, that is how I put it then. In the previous article, I argued that there is no such thing as sin – as Jesus would have put it – except that we create it in our minds and give it life. Anyone with an imagination can do that, you know. Anyone with an imagination can bring something to life and make it exist in mind – even if it does not actually exist in reality; but that which exists in the mind may as well exist in reality for the individual who thinks it because for him or her, it is reality.

When it comes to sin, it is something that cannot exist in reality in terms of there being an actual possibility of a separation between God and anything. God is Infinite; and, as such, must be everywhere. Since sin is traditionally understood as **separation from God**, if sin exists at all, it can only exist in a virtual mode. It can only exist in the minds that may think about it. It cannot exist in reality – insofar as it being defined as a separation from God.

Now, back to our original question: Without sin, there is ? How would you answer that question? I would answer it – **Heaven**. Without sin, there is Heaven. It naturally follows then that if there can be no place where there is sin – or an actual absence of God – there can be no place that is not Heaven; for Heaven is only being in the Presence of God.

As Jesus says in the Gospel of Thomas, ***The Kingdom of the Father is spread upon the earth and men do not see it.*** The Kingdom of the Father in this instance is Heaven. What more can be said about it? It is what it is. Heaven must be right where I am sitting right now. Heaven must be right where you are sitting – or standing – right now. As Jesus might say, there are many different rooms and a variety of life in those many rooms, but all of those rooms, as various as they are, are Heaven because God is in them all.

People, I think, have a very mistaken notion about morality, in terms of thinking that Heaven is dependent upon it. Many, if not most, are convinced that morality is a God imposed thing. God imposes a rule that all must obey and immorality is, in essence, defying the rule of God.

First of all, there is **no rule of God** as such that any finite thing can define – other than the overriding rule that ***God must be everywhere.*** If there are rules that are advanced to mankind via any so called prophet, you can be sure that if they offer any kind of a threat that suggests that anyone can be exempted from God or that God can

dismiss anyone, you can be sure it is only a god that is speaking through a prophet and not God. **A god is a being separate from another that acts to own or control that other.** God is not a god because It is not separate from another, though by nature, all beings are under the control of God in that all things are just as they are created to be; but most importantly, God is not a god because It is not separate from another that may be within It's control.

I am often criticized for sticking to the use of the word God for referencing the Infinite One. I don't know what other word to use. So I stick with God. I see "God" as an abbreviation of "Good." I do not know if the originator of the word God meant it that way; but practically speaking, that is how I see God – as **That Good or Goodness from which all things come and in which all things reside.** It is perhaps a bit unfortunate that some do not mean that definition when they refer to God; but it is my definition and I intend to stick with it.

Continuing with a little discussion of immorality, in effect, **immorality is only doing that which is hurtful to myself.** I am immoral when I act in a self-destructive manner. I may also act in a way that destroys another; but, per se, it is not my destroying another for what that does to the other that is immoral – related to my self. Immorality should be very self centered because it is not what I do to another that matters most in the end, but what I do to myself; but – and here's the crux of it – what I do to you, I do to me.

If, with premeditation, I kill you, it is an expression of my trying to kill something in me. I am only using you as a tool to get at me. I am dealing with myself by using you as a substitute for myself. Otherwise, I would not set out to kill, no matter what the motivation. If I am concentrated on some other intent – like to be kind at all costs – then there is no way I can want to kill you, no matter what you may have done. **If people want to kill, in the end, it is because they lack motivation to be kind.**

There are many gods, but only one God. Gods (gods) can pretend to be of God; and they often do in order to restrict behavior to a desired pattern; but people should not be fooled by gods claiming to represent God. Many gods make rules that may form some sort of morality – or impose some sort of morality; but if God is everywhere and in everything, there should never be a question of pleasing or displeasing the only God as an expression of a morality. In a sense, God is immoral in terms of anything that might be expected of any created being. Creation itself is a Divine Thing, but creation is not caught up with the individual behaviors of created things.

Just look at general creation if you do not know of that which I speak. God creates a lion and God creates a deer. The lion eats the deer; but that does not make the lion immoral related to God. It only makes the lion immoral related to the deer. Between the lion and the deer there may be some sort of morality in terms of one dealing with the other; but since God made – and makes – both the lion and the deer, related to God, there is no immorality when the lion eats the deer.

Likewise, you may kill me; and for me, that is an immorality in that something is happening to me that I do not like; but it may also be an immorality for you because you may be doing far more harm to yourself than to me by killing me. If you kill once, you may kill again because by killing once, you are establishing a pattern. The real judgment of any morality is that patterns established must be continued. If you kill me and do it for no reason other than anger, chances are you will not see behind your anger and you will kill again – and again – and again – and again. **Keep in mind, too, that anger in itself is**

**a form of murder.** So by being angry now, you will likely retain your anger the next moment – and the next moment – and the next moment – and the next moment; but the one you are murdering most is yourself because it is you that you have to abide.

Keep in mind, too, as Jesus pointed out, our virtual reality is much more a thing of thought than deed. Accordingly, if I hate you, but do not kill you, I am still guilty in a way of killing you because that is the trend of my thoughts. It does not matter if I kill you or not. If I want to kill you, the law of virtual reality says that I am guilty of doing what I think about. It is my disposition that is my judge; and my disposition is mostly a matter of mind. It matters little if I actually do what I am disposed to do. It only matters that I am disposed to do it.

Not to be sidetracked, however, Heaven has nothing to do with any of that. Heaven is merely the presence of God. You can be in Heaven and not know it; and most folks go through their lives, I think, failing to realize that they are in Heaven. They think of Heaven in terms of reward for some morality. Well, people have a right to define Heaven as they like, but for me, it is **not reward for morality**, but *merely a Presence of God*. Moral or immoral, related to any supposed regimen, I am in Heaven.

Now, if you want to talk about sin related to some artificial morality, imposed by some god or other, be it Christian, Jewish, Islamic, or whatever and offer that Heaven is the reward for obeying a morality, then you have a different Heaven than I. That which you call **Heaven**, I may simply call *Home* in terms of where my soul wants to reside and with whom it wants to reside. But my *home* may not be your home and your home may not be mine – even as both your home and mine are in Heaven.

*Heaven is where God is.* That is my definition of it. It is not where some god is. Heaven has nothing to do with such a one. It is simply where God is. Since God is everywhere, then Heaven is everywhere. Home, in terms of any given disposition, is where you are and where those who love you are. By your disposition, you choose your home, but by your disposition, you do not choose Heaven.

That merely indicates how important it is to choose the right home for you. Your soul, like my soul, is attracted to like souls. If I want to be an angry soul, all I have to do is be angry; and presto, I will be surrounded by angry souls. Then anger becomes my home and the home of all my companion souls. Most people, I think, have a bad sense of judgment in that they think it will be delved out by God or a god; but the truth of it is, we delve ourselves our own judgment by choosing a disposition; and, as it is often put, *we reap what we sow*. If we go forward with a kind disposition, then kindness will be our disposition. If we go forward with an angry disposition, then anger will be our disposition. It is really straight forward.

I think it is good to keep all this in mind as we pass through life. Life itself is filled with mystery; and because it is, many gods like to pretend to be God in offering some explanation of a mystery with but one objective in mind – to gain control of another soul. Since children of God, in general, are not aware of the details of any mystery, any god who wants to impose some arbitrary rule or other and claim it comes from God can often get away with it.

*Show me your credentials!* That is what we should demand of anyone claiming to be of God. How do I know you are from God and not just from some god pretending to be God? If they answer, I am from God because I am in the spirit of God, well what can

I say? *Everyone is in the spirit of God; and being in the spirit of God – or the presence of God – is no excuse for claiming divine rule.*

Most importantly, however, for this issue of my **CHILD OF HUMANITY SERIES**, Heaven is only *being in the presence of God*. Knowing that, if we are smart, we will begin this very moment to stop waiting for Heaven to happen. It is already happening because God is already here. There is no need to wait. Look at yourself and see the miracle you are. You are no different than me in terms of being an individual miracle of God. We are different in our individuality, but in God we are the same. God is the Father or Mother or Parent of us both. Assume that – and life can be made easy because *if you fill your heart with gratitude for what you are, you can have no room for dissatisfaction and unhappiness.*

*Heaven is where you are – and where you will be. Why not enjoy it?*

**Brother Jesus**

Written: April 4, 2005

**Preface**

**The rules have changed.** We have progressed since Jesus walked this earth 2,000 years ago. It is not that Jesus has changed. It is that we have changed. In the 2,000 years since Jesus walked this earth, **God has evolved.** That is, our notions of God have evolved – at least for many of us. When Jesus walked this earth, we had the idea that man and God were separated. With that idea, we felt we needed some kind of bonding agent to stick us together – or back together. Naturally, having a sense of separation from God, we needed a messiah. We needed someone who could heal the division. We needed someone who could resolve the impasse. We needed someone who could make us one with God. So, it was only natural with our thinking that we were separated from God that we needed a Jesus to be our messiah – to save us from the Godless dungeon of a divine less jungle.

**Well, things have changed.** We no longer think we are in a divine less jungle – at least many of us do not. Now we realize that if God is really Infinite, then God must be truly everywhere. What does that do to the separation idea upon which we formulated our need for a messiah ruling? Of course, it tosses it out the window. It throws it under the trampling hoofs of a runaway herd of bawling cattle – racing not to the edge of a cliff – but out to a brand new pasture. This is the world we have today. No longer do we feel God is “out there.” Many of us at least have God in our hearts and in our chests and in our minds and in our gardens and in our wives and in our husbands and in our children and in every single thing. So if we are no longer separated from God – or have progressed to the realization that whatever God is, God is not gone from us - no longer do we need a messiah. The truth, of course, is that we never did need a messiah because there never was a breach between God and man; but be that as it may, mindfully at least, we live in a different world now than the world in which Jesus walked.

**That means we have to find a different realization for Jesus** – if we want to keep him at all. I want to keep him because I have long believed he was falsely miscast as a messiah in the first place. I want to keep him because I get the sense in the Gospel of Thomas that he begged his fellow Jews to not cast him in the role of savior – the role of messiah; but the Mel Gibson directors of the day wanted him as their main star and they would have nothing else. So when Jesus died, they ignored his pleas to not make him a messiah and called on the ghost of Jesus to star as **The Messiah** – even though the real, throbbing, living Jesus begged to be excluded from that role when he was alive.

In the Gospel of Thomas (Verse 52), one of those who wanted to cast Jesus as messiah said to Jesus: **Twenty-four prophets spoke in Israel and they all spoke about (lit:in) Thee.** That was their way of telling him that he was chosen to play the lead in their Messiah Play. Did Jesus answer that he wanted the role? Judge for yourself. **He said to them: You have dismissed the Living (One) who is before you and you have spoken about the dead.** The Living One, of course, is Jesus. Jesus did not want to be linked to the “dead” because by doing so, he was being dismissed for the true

independent teacher he really was. Who could have been the “dead” that Jesus was referencing? That has to be “the twenty four prophets.” Right? The twenty four prophets had no idea that God and man are one. They lived with the idea that God is outside of us and that they needed to sacrifice dead animals to their god in order to keep their god somewhat in their presence – to keep him from straying too far a field.

But Jesus begged us not to cast him in the lot of the twenty four prophets who thought they needed a messiah. He knew that God is not outside of us and he knew there is no need of a messiah; but those who bowed down to the twenty four prophets and their demand for a messiah had no such perspective. They needed a messiah – and damn it – Jesus could not refuse the role. He had to play it. So *when Jesus died, his ghost was given the role that the living Jesus denied in life.*

Such is the prelude to this week’s issue of my **Child of Humanity Series**. We have evolved now from the time of Jesus. We have grown to realize that the living Jesus was right – the twenty four prophets of Israel are dead and they should remain dead. We are not to listen to them anymore. We have a new realization of God – and with our new realization of God – we have a brand new Jesus. With that, with the need of a brand new Jesus, let us carry on the discussion about who Jesus really is. The God and man separation issue has drained down the sink now like a litter of ten day old stinking garbage. With the stench gone forever from our lives, let us proceed.

### *Looking for a New Jesus*

Was Jesus a king? For the many familiar with the alleged life of Jesus, there was a title placed over his head on the cross on which he died. That plaque read: **JESUS – KING OF THE JEWS.**

How little we know of Jesus to think that he was a king – or could ever be a king. Kings control. Kings rule. Jesus could not control; and Jesus can never rule. If, in fact, Jesus was crucified, he was crucified because he could not rule. He was crucified because he could not power himself over another to prevent it. If he died as they say he did in the gospels, he died without resistance to save himself and to show us the true nature of salvation – which is only another word for *freedom*. He did not die to become a king – not then or ever.

Let me offer you a little exercise. I want you to take your left hand, curl those fingers toward you. Now take your right hand and curl those fingers toward you. Then put both hands in front of you with arms extended outward and let the curled fingers of both hands clasp each other. Now, without relaxing, pull one hand from the other. If you are doing as I am asking, given that the strength of your left and right hands are equal, you will not be able to pull them apart. What does that say? Is your left hand free? Is your right hand free? No! Of course not! And that is what happens when one soul controls another. Neither the controller nor the controlled one is free.

**If I hold you to me, I am not free – and neither are you.** To be in control or to be a ruler of another is to be without freedom. There has never been a king who has ever been free because kings control; but in controlling, they are controlled by the ones they control. This is the amazing truth of freedom. No one can be free who is either controlled by another or controls another. Like a left hand pulling against a right hand, neither hand is free.

Now, tell me, do you think Jesus would give up his freedom to control you, to rule you? Little do you know Jesus if you think that Jesus would give up his freedom to become your king. It is terribly sad to say that in the days of Jesus almost no one knew him for the champion of freedom he was. Jesus came to challenge those who think they have a right to impose a rule over another – like the Jews of his day. The Jews were embossed in law – and bossed by it. Many who have no inkling of who Jesus really was think that Jesus came to perfect the law – or to complete the Jewish law with some kind of a kingly rule. Jesus did not want to be a king, never has been a king, and never will be a king. To do so would be to compromise the freedom that he loves so much.

Next Sunday, in a million churches around the world, the masses will be sitting in pews and chanting **Praise The Lord!** How little they know what they are doing. They will not make Jesus a lord by chanting it, but they will continue their servitude to slavery to others who are more than happy to claim to represent Jesus. Lords, like kings, rule. If you think that Jesus is going to yield his freedom of soul to become your lord, think again; but there are many who are willing to be the lord you want. When you chant in the name of Jesus, **Praise The Lord**, you won't be getting Jesus, but you will be getting a lord.

How did it all go wrong? That is very easy to tell. It went wrong because people have always wanted lords. In fact, people have always demanded lords. How else do you think cruel kingdoms can exist on this earth? Because people want to be ruled. It's easy to be ruled if you want to be ruled. The people in the days of Jesus wanted to be ruled. They wanted Moses to rule them. They wanted David to rule them. They wanted Jesus to rule them. Not Moses, not David, not Jesus could have ruled them except they wanted to be ruled. It was to a world that wanted to be ruled in which Jesus was born.

**Jesus – King of the Jews!** Why was it written? Because they needed a king. But they did not want the king they had – a Roman king. They wanted their own king. The trouble is they picked on someone to become their king who could not and would not ever become one. Sadly, we are doing the same thing today. Sadly, we still want to be ruled; and sadly, we still think that Jesus will be our king. But Jesus will never be a king – let alone our king. How little we know of Jesus to even begin to suspect that someday he will relent and put a crown on his head so that we as willing subjects can rule over our alleged enemies.

You see, we were not offered the truth about Jesus because those who wrote about him did not know him. They wrote fanciful stories about someone they hoped would be their king someday; and they probably made up a lot of their stories. They could not have an impotent king. So they wrote him as performing powerful miracles and raising dead people to life. **But Jesus was not about power. He was about freedom.** They did not know that then, though; and for the most part, we still do not know it. We are still looking for the same king that they were looking for – but as they never found their king in Jesus, never will anyone.

In **THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THOMAS** (Verse 81), Jesus said: **Let him who has power renounce it!** But, you see, you did not get that gospel. Did you? No! That gospel that has Jesus renouncing power was suppressed by the “kings of the day.” No king wants to be challenged. Any king worth his salt must offer to the people ideas that lend to control of others. What king would go about telling his subjects that all with

power should release it? That would include him – and there would go his kingdom. And what bishop who revels in power would denounce it?

**Sadly, people who want power are using Jesus as a claim to power when Jesus was never about power.** But people who are caught up with power are unawares of what they are doing. Sincerely, power people think that Jesus was about power because it was a “powerful Jesus” that was given them as a legend. Truly, they expect to rule with Christ in the end. **They are not pretending. They are only deceived.** But for whatever reason they believe that they will someday become a member of a power kingdom of Jesus, it can’t be. Again, the day that Jesus agrees to be their king just because they want one is the day that Jesus will lose his freedom.

I love Jesus. I find in Jesus a very kindly companion – or in thoughts of Jesus. Jesus said that I should be kind to all. Now you should know why. **Unkindness to one who is unkind only makes two who are unkind; but being unkind is to control.** Tell me how you can possibly be unkind to another and not have him or her in your service or control? The very nature of unkindness, regardless of reason, is to control another. Can you imagine Jesus being unkind to another? If he were unkind, then he would have been in some control of that person. **You cannot be unkind and still be free.**

Is America being unkind to the unkind in the current war in Iraq? Of course it is. So we are controlling Iraq – or trying to control it. What is it getting us? **By trying to control it, it is controlling us.** When people wake up and realize that putting their energies to any kind of control of others is to lose their freedom, then maybe true freedom will begin to have a chance in this world.

Is President Bush free? Ask him. But President Bush and all those who want power have not an inkling of their jeopardizing their own freedom by wanting the power they do. It does, however, irritate me a tad when power people use my friend, Jesus, to stake their claim to power when my Jesus would have none of it. But if it weren’t Jesus that they would use, it would be something else. They only use Jesus because it is convenient. Everyone knows Jesus in America. So you use what people know. Right? Make your claim to power by virtue of what the people expect.

**Love one another!** They said that Jesus taught that. That makes sense. I think he did; but I also think that the reason Jesus said we should love one another and refrain from any kind of unkindness is because he knew that unkindness impacts and negates freedom. **If I don’t love you, then there goes my freedom. It is as simple as that.**

**Brother Jesus** – not Lord Jesus! Jesus will never consent to be your lord – or mine – because to do so, he would lose his freedom. Stop calling him a lord and start calling him a brother; and you will begin to realize why he taught as he did. Realize the reason for what you do; and it will be a lot easier to do it. **Love is easy.** There is nothing hard about it. **It is easy because with it there is no control of another.** You cannot control another and love that other at the same time because true love is letting another pursue his or her own adventure. **If you claim to love another and then impose a rule upon him or her, it is not love you have, but domination.**

Between us, I do wish that people would stop dominating others in the name of one who refused to dominate others. That is my Jesus – and your Jesus if you will dare to claim freedom for yourself. Jesus was a brother, one like us, not one over us. It is Jesus who said that we should love one another. In the Gospel of Thomas, it is Jesus who told us to renounce power over others. I think I am in good stead in following the course I do



– whether Jesus taught it or not – but knowing why I must love makes it so much easier to do so.

### *Climax*

It was only a few days ago as I write this that we had a Good Friday. Next year at this time, we will celebrate a new Good Friday; and two years from now, a whole lot of us will celebrate another Good Friday – and forty years from now, another Good Friday will be cast in the ongoing drama that started 2,000 years ago. We cannot have an Easter without a Good Friday. Such is the script of the ongoing saga of the tale of man and God divided.

**Those who are honest who thought that a crucifixion was needed for an Easter to happen should realize that their Good Friday changed nothing.** It was supposed to bring God into our lives and erase the previous division; but it did nothing. God and man are still as divided now as they were when the Mel Gibson directors decided that a Good Friday had to be part of the great play of life and death. They allowed a little room at the end for an Easter, but only a moment – and then it was back to gearing up for next year's Good Friday.

**How man loves the idea that he or she is separated from God!** The very thought that there is no division and never has been is just too galling to admit. It is just too damned embarrassing to have to admit we were wrong – and so we continue being wrong and we continue looking forward to next year's Good Friday. And we continue living our lives like someday in some great beyond we will finally look up and see God face to face. Oh – that wonderful day! It will have made all the Good Fridays that we had to suffer worth it. Finally – we will be home!

***Me? I will erase the Good Fridays from my calendar of years – and I will have only Easter.*** There is no need for me to suffer in order to drain some kind of misplaced notion of unworthiness from my liver and kidneys and heart and mind and soul. I do not have an unworthy liver. I do not have an unworthy set of kidneys. I do not have an unworthy heart or mind or soul. ***All of me is worthy right now.*** I do not have to wait beyond some mistaken Good Friday of the future before God and me are finally one. ***My God and me are one today!*** I can't see his face except in my own and in every other entity – alive and otherwise; but that is saying one heck of a lot. Isn't it?

# 5

## ***Child of Humanity***

Written: May 4, 2005

***“Peace be with you. Receive my peace. Be careful that no one leads you astray by saying, ‘Look here’ or ‘Look there.’ The child of humanity is within you. Follow that. Those who seek it will find it. Go and preach the good news of the kingdom.”***

Does the quote above make sense to you? It makes a lot of sense to me; and it is for that reason that I take it to heart. It comes from the 1<sup>st</sup> verse (of 5) of **THE GOSPEL OF MARY**. It is guessed that the Mary of authorship is Mary Magdalene – a lady who walked with Jesus; however, I do not want to discuss the legitimacy of authorship of the verse – rather just the verse itself. Mary attributes the quote above to Jesus. I tend to believe that Jesus may have said it, but as I look at life now, I look for ideas that may help me appreciate life. In the end, it should not matter if Jesus said it or if George said it or if Harriet said it or if Wilma said it. The question is, regardless of its source, does it make sense?

Let us just say that I think the one who offered the above verse was a sage – a very wise person. In this world of widespread folly, it is always nice to bump into wisdom; and, for me, excellent wisdom just oozes from the above verse.

First of all, the author of the statement claims to be a person of peace. ***Receive my peace***, he says. Then before offering us a definition of his peace – or how he may have attained his peace, he offered a warning that we should ***be careful that no one leads us astray by saying, ‘Look here’ or ‘Look there.’*** That is really the same as telling us that we should watch that others do not tell us that we can find Peace or Salvation over here or over there – in terms of a place. Assuming that the author of this quote is Jesus, and I do believe that is a fair assumption, Jesus is warning us about trying to find Peace in a place – here or there – in the sky or in a forest – or wherever. It – Peace or Paradise - is not in a place. It is in a mysterious image he calls ***the child of humanity*** within us.

I do not know about you, but - Wow! **That is really good news!** Jesus offers that we should find the child of humanity within us; and that is the key to finding the peace he offered at the beginning of the verse. ***Receive my peace***, he said, and then after warning us that his peace could not be found here or there as in a place or person, it can be found by chasing the ***child of humanity*** within us.

It becomes, then, as a riddle. Know what the child of humanity within us is, then appraise it and praise it – and presto – Peace. Can it really be as simple as that? Jesus – or the Jesus of Mary – seemed to think it is. So, let us go stalking the child of humanity within us. What could it mean? Jesus did not tell us what it is. So that means if we are to find it, we have to first discover its meaning.

Assuming then, that we are looking for a really simple idea, might we find the meaning of ***child of humanity*** by transfixing the term to say ***humanity as a child***. In other words, we are looking for a ***child that is humanity***. That would certainly be simple. Right? Again, we should ask, could it be as simple as that?

What is a child? It is only an offspring. Right? So, let us rephrase our *child of humanity* into *offspring of humanity*. But if humanity is an offspring, of what is it an offspring? In general, I think, we could say *NATURE*. Right? So now we have proceeded to see humanity itself – or the species of humanity – as an offspring of Nature. Now, go find yourself in that – **and you have found peace.**

In other words, to find peace, stop looking at yourself as only an individual, and start looking at yourself as **an image of an entire species**. When you do, you become lost in your own humanity. Humanity itself, then, becomes your prime focus – and not just yourself within humanity. **Look for the child of Nature that is Humanity within you.** This, I think, is what Jesus may have meant when he urged us to find the *child of humanity* within us. ***It is to find the child of Nature & God that is humanity within us.***

Now, test that notion for peace. Does it make you peaceful? Does it dress you with a sense of awe? Does it urge a feeling within you that you belong? Of course, you have to answer that question for yourself. It may not lure you into a sense of peace; but it does me. Whenever I think of myself as only one of a wonderful species that we just happen to call *humanity*, I become totally lost within a sense of security. No longer am I merely an individual. ***I am now all of humanity.*** When I look at myself now, I see first and foremost, a species. After finding the species that is me, then I can identify the me within that species; ***but the real key for finding peace is to first locate humanity within you – and then the individual human.***

It takes all the guesswork out of having to deal with life, doesn't it? No longer do you have to measure up to some civilized regimen in order to know your meaning. You can find your meaning simply by looking at your humanity. Never mind all the divisive competition among humans that we humans seem to think belies our meaning. To hell with having to compete with my fellow man. I am now man in general; and what man, in general, has a need to compete with himself – or herself? When I look at me now, I do not see Francis William Bessler at first. I see all of humanity as reflected in me. Francis William Bessler can be reduced to FWB and then to fwb and then to fw and then to f and then – **oops – gone!** But not only gone – **but gone in peace.**

Am I really gone? Of course not! I am very much alive – in fact, far more alive than I have ever been before. I do not lose my personality by finding my meaning in belonging to humanity. **I merely find my meaning by losing my identity within humanity** – and beyond that – **within the animal kingdom** – and beyond that – **within Nature in General** – and beyond that – **Within God**. I do not stop with my humanity. I only start there; but what a wonderful place to start?

The ***good news of the kingdom***, then, seems to be something entirely different than **salvation from Evil**. The regular gospels would have us believe that Jesus was all about saving us from some mysterious thing or force called Evil. From the concept of *child of humanity*, I get a very different message. Evil goes away. **Evil becomes impertinent.** I never have to fear this thing called Evil if I pursue the *child of humanity* within me because I become immune to Evil, if it exists at all. **I become immune to Evil because I no longer focus on it.** If it exists, I could care less. My focus is now on loving the humanity that is me; and with my new focus, any former obsession disappears. Like Jesus allegedly said elsewhere, **Get behind me, Satan!** In other words, be gone from my focus and my sight. ***Get the hell out of my life – and get hell out of my life!***

Now, go look at yourself in the mirror. Look for humanity and no longer yourself. Look at your husband beside you. He is no longer your husband, but humanity. Look at your wife beside you. She is no longer your wife, but humanity. Look at your child standing there between you. She or he is no longer just a child – but far more importantly – **a child of humanity**. Look at your neighbor. He or she does not exist. Humanity exists in his or her place. By looking at the **humanity child** that is in you and in your neighbor and in every single person on this earth, individuals, though extremely important, go away and humanity itself takes their place.

How can you lose by seeing it that way? How can you not be at peace? Of course, it takes doing it – and not just speculating about it. Nothing is ever ours unless we do it, unless we practice it, unless we live it.

Does God go away with this perspective? It can if you wish I suppose. I don't wish, however; and so God will not go away with this new perspective for me. Humanity itself has to come from something. Doesn't it. Nature itself has to come from something. Doesn't it? **Well, for me, that something is God.** I don't lose God by asserting my humanity. In fact, I find God in a much more peaceful manner than ever before by declaring to myself that my humanity itself is from and in God. The mystery that is humanity does not become solved with my equation of myself to it. That wonderful mystery still lingers; **but I become lost in the mystery without ever needing to resolve it.**

So, there it is, my idea of really what the **good news of the kingdom** that Jesus offered is all about. Kingdom in this sense becomes the **Kingdom of Humanity**. The Kingdom of Nature and the **Kingdom of Humanity** itself is the **good news**. Any government or “kingdom” within humanity becomes mostly unimportant – and any kingdom or government outside of humanity becomes mostly unimportant. Who should care what there is outside of humanity – in terms of assumed greater importance? It is humanity itself that becomes important – and peace is only recognizing that for any of us who are human, **humanity itself is the crown jewel. Despise your humanity; and you will never find peace.**

Does that mean that each human should somehow sacrifice him or herself for the good of some greater humanity? Absolutely not! Humanity is not a god. Humanity is only a species child of God. No one need sacrifice anything for it. Humanity cannot grow because someone thinks he or she owes something to it. Humanity does not depend upon my adoring it. It just is. Humanity is just as much one as it is a billion. It does not depend on numbers. **To know one human is to know all of humanity.** I do not have to explain it to love it. Peace – the Peace of Jesus – can be attained by respecting humanity as a mysterious **Child of God** – or even merely a **Child of Nature**. I become at peace by recognizing that little bitty me is part of that wonderful mystery we call **humanity**.

**Gratefully belonging to humanity and not finding fault with it, I think, is to find and love that mysterious child of humanity Jesus talked about in regard to peace.** Pretty simple, huh? And yet many of us have grown up accepting that Jesus taught that he wanted to save us from our humanity – our lovely humanity - because Satan made it evil. How utterly and absurdly Anti-Christ that turns out to be. **Jesus could not have considered humanity Satanic or evil – or he would have never suggested that we pursue it to find peace. Could he have?**

If we are souls that are visiting humanity and then leave to possess some other kingdom somewhere, then, fine, then that new kingdom becomes the important kingdom – but for the same reason that humanity itself was a kingdom for us. In it, we can lose ourselves; and in it, we can find God – for no matter what the kingdom of which we may be part – human, animal, or maybe, angelic – being the ultimate source of all things, God always remains the Grandfather or Grandmother of all that is. **In loving the kingdom in which we reside, how can we not be loving God – the ultimate source of that kingdom?**

**And if we do not love the kingdom in which we reside, peace will always be absent;** for how can anyone attain peace if he or she considers war with a kingdom of residence proper? Again, Jesus would not recommend being at war with our membership within humanity because he urged us to love our humanity. *Look for the child of humanity within you*, he said, and *follow that. Those who seek it will find it. Go and preach the good news of the kingdom – The Kingdom of Humanity.*

Are we listening?

## The Key for Finding Peace

Recitation with Refrain

by

Francis William Bessler

### *Refrain:*

*What is the key for finding peace –  
if you're human like me?*

*Well, Jesus told us long ago –  
if peace we should like to know,  
we can find it if we seek  
within us – the child of humanity.*

A long time ago, Jesus said – please receive my peace;  
but don't be led astray by those who know it not.  
If someone says it's here or there – or beyond where you can see,  
do not be fooled. I'll tell you how it should be sought. **Refrain.**

Then Jesus said, listen to me – I'll share with you my ways.  
It is not near as hard as you may think it is.  
You cannot find peace by looking in that which rusts or decays.  
Look within your image – to find that which has no sin. **Refrain.**

Jesus then continued to tell – look for the child of humanity,  
but do not look for it only in someone else.  
The child of humanity is within you and can make you free  
if you'll just look at it – and find an image of yourself. **Refrain.**

Then Jesus said, listen here – I'll tell you of my good news,  
but the idea doesn't just belong to me.  
For anyone who is human, humanity itself is the truth  
For everything is from God – in your image, find Divinity. **Refrain.**

So, let us, one and all – preach the good news of the kingdom,  
realizing it has always been within our reach.  
The good news of the kingdom is that we are equally human.  
If peace is what we want – only that can we teach. **Refrain.**

# 6

## ***Freedom***

Written: May 23, 2005

***“Peace be with you. Receive my peace. Be careful that no one leads you astray by saying, ‘Look here’ or ‘Look there.’ The child of humanity is within you. Follow that. Those who seek it will find it. Go and preach the good news of the kingdom. Do not lay down any rules other than what I have given you, and do not establish law as the lawgiver did, or you will be bound by it. When he said this, he left them.”***

My last article was on the ***Child of Humanity*** that Jesus offered that we should seek within in order to find peace. It was my determination that the ***child of humanity*** that Jesus suggested we follow as the ***only rule*** necessary to find peace is really nothing more than ***humanity as a child***. Humanity itself takes on a new special importance – as if it should be our main focus while we live as souls within it. That makes a lot of sense to me because I see my soul as occupying a human vessel for its usefulness. So why should I go through life ignoring the humanity I chose when incarnating into this world? While I am here, I should not only revere humanity itself, but love the human that is in me.

This month, I am talking about ***freedom*** as related to the goal of peace. We have determined what we should do to find peace. Now, let us pursue freedom through that concept. Though it is almost never presented as such, I think that the very best definition of ***Freedom is Peace***. For me, the two are interchangeable. Freedom is Peace and Peace is Freedom. Why? Because being free for me is only feeling content with my life. To the degree that I do not sense contentment, I lack freedom. It may be something other than that for others, but ***freedom and peace equals contentment*** for me.

I think it was that way for Jesus too. I think Jesus saw himself as free because he knew himself as content. When one is content, one is merely satisfied with oneself – without relating to others. If my satisfaction is dependent upon my relationship to others, then I will never be free because I will never be content. Keep in mind that we are all human. ***To respect the humanity in one should be to respect the humanity in all***. Thus, by merely isolating myself as my own representative of humanity, I can honor the ***child of humanity*** or humanity itself strictly through me.

I repeated the initial part of the 1<sup>st</sup> Verse of the ***Gospel of Mary*** that I offered in the last article because I think it establishes the true nature of freedom. ***It is looking for something within me without having to look toward someone else to find it***. That is the real essence of freedom. The opposite of freedom, then, would be having to depend upon a relationship with another to become satisfied with life. The more we depend on others outside ourselves for our contentment with life, the more we lack true freedom. ***Finding peace through self-contentment is the true essence of freedom***. If that is so, then finding peace or freedom by dependency on others becomes the antithesis of freedom and peace.

In the last article about finding the ***Child of Humanity*** within me, I did not include the remainder of the verse about the theme, but I think that conclusion is due now. How

did the Jesus of Mary say it? ***Do not lay down any rules other than what I have given you, and do not establish law as the lawgiver did, or you will be bound by it.***

Would you not agree that translates into law being the very antithesis of freedom and peace. Why? Because law is bound within relationships. It stands to reason, then, that if peace and freedom cannot be achieved except through self-contentment, attention to satisfaction through others and essentially, law, becomes the greatest obstacle to freedom.

I am so pleased that a **Gospel of Mary** was found because it just so happens to state my case very well. **Law is the very antithesis of freedom and peace because it conditions its results on the cooperation of many.** Some degree of satisfaction may result from the cooperation of many, but the cooperation of many can never lead to the ideal of peace and freedom.

The Jesus I know offered this warning against law and not the message he has been accused of offering – that peace and contentment can only be had through him as a needed personal savior. Jesus insisted on each of us depending upon ourselves for any virtue we might attain – and not what he has been accused of insisting – that we must depend on him for our virtue. Jesus insisted that we ignore any law of old that purports to be a requirement for salvation – and not what he has been accused of advocating – that old law can only be perfected with new law.

Old law/new law was out for Jesus because he knew full well that any law cannot assure self contentment. Law by its very nature is two or more oriented. Peace and/or freedom by its very nature is solitary oriented. **It only takes one to be free, but where there are two or more by requirement, law sneaks in and destroys freedom.** When two must relate to find peace and contentment, then conditions are interjected into the picture; and wherever there is a condition, there can be no freedom.

***Do not establish law, as the lawgiver did, or you will be bound by it.*** Perhaps it is different with you, but being bound by any rule that I cannot find within myself is not my idea of freedom. I am free only to the degree that I am independent of you, not dependent upon you. We make law to regulate ourselves because we think that intelligent beings must do that, but the laws we make bind us to one another and prevent freedom. That is what Jesus knew; and yet the traditional churches of Jesus have offered the exact opposite of that – that the way to peace and freedom is paved with law and restriction. How often have we heard? **Narrow is the way to salvation, but wide is the way to perdition.** Thus we have seen fit to make of Jesus a lawgiver whom we must obey or suffer eternal damnation by another – amazingly, by Jesus himself as the “Son” of a very judgmental God. Jesus a lawgiver? Nothing could be further from the truth.

When I listen to the **rule** of finding the **Child of Humanity** within me as the **only** moral guide needed for my soul, then any law is not only useless, but necessarily obstructive. If I have to pay attention to something other than loving the child of humanity within me, then loving the child of humanity within me becomes insufficient. I suppose there are many who think it is insufficient, but having lived the notion, I think, I find it indeed sufficient. Moral laws exist all around me, of course, but having decided that no law is necessary, I ignore them all. Thus, as Jesus would argue, I am not bound by them either.

In reality, you can only be morally bound by something you say yes to. If you agree that some law is needed, then you are bound to it – and bound by it. I am speaking morally now – not civilly. There is no question I should obey all civil rules laid down by



man for the greater security of society – or pay the price for disobedience by imprisonment or fine at the very least. Civil law should not be construed as equivalent to moral law. **Moral law is that law which is imposed on me for the safety of my soul – not my body or person.** It is not my argument that I do not have to obey civil laws. **It is only my argument that if I choose some moral law to guide me and restrict me, then I am automatically constrained within that law – or laws.**

Recently, I read a fascinating book dealing with the existence of an astral world – or perhaps astral worlds. I need not go into details, but essentially there may be many expressions within the astral world – or spiritual world – that reflect the many different options of soulful obedience. Theoretically, there are many different layers of what could be called consciousness within the astral world. Regardless of it being called an “astral world” or “spiritual world” or “consciousness world” or whatever, I do think it makes sense that each so called “level” is comprised of souls who command themselves according to some spiritual regimen.

If I agree to submit to any norm of obedience, then I am – de facto – part of that norm. In the way that Jesus may have said it, I am bound by the laws to which I agree. You might have a level 1 in the astral or spiritual world of belief in and attention to Christian Law. You might have a level 2 in the astral world of belief in and attention to Judaic Law. You might have a level 3 in the astral world of belief in and attention to Islamic Law. And perhaps levels 4 through 9 represent some other established regimen of behavior. Then on a level 10 are those who pay no attention to any law, but are safely secure within the notion of *Child of Humanity*.

Does that not make sense? Isn't that the way it would likely work? Isn't that the way it would likely work in a so called spiritual realm because that is exactly the way it works within a civil realm? I do not choose Chinese Law – whatever that is – and therefore, I am not bound by it. I do not choose Islamic Law – whatever that is – and therefore, I am not bound by it. I do not choose Judaic Law – whatever that is – and therefore, I am not bound by it. I do not choose traditional Christian Law – whatever that is – and therefore, I am not bound by it. All of those laws oblige others who recognize them; but they do not oblige me because, in essence, I am outside of them. I am restricted by no law – only by one rule – *to love the humanity (or humanity child) within me.*

Should I not love that child, then it is only love that I lack. Having given myself to no law, I am bound by none of it. This is what is so terribly important about the Jesus we have missed. He knew this – and he taught this, if we are to believe in the **Gospel of Mary**. I think that the regular gospel writers of the **BIBLE** – if you want to call them that – did not understand the most crucial of issues that Jesus tried to teach. He tried to teach that no law is useful to the soul that wants to find peace and freedom because all law is many oriented. Old law – no good! New law – no good! And yet, very sincerely, Peter and Paul and all their partners mistook Jesus as a lawgiver. Jesus could not have been about any law and still have been about freedom because freedom, by nature, is only solitary oriented.

In Verse 75 of the **Gospel of Thomas**, *Jesus said: Many are standing at the door, but the solitary are the ones who will enter the bridal chamber.* Why would he say a thing like that? Because he was trying to tell us that laws regarding two or more are

absolutely worthless in the search for peace and contentment and freedom. If you do not find it within, you will never find it in another – even if that other is Jesus himself. That was the Jesus that was – not that lord the others proclaimed as a new law directing to a new heaven. **Law, in general, is about as Anti-Christ as you can get.** Those who obey will automatically be bound within it; but freedom will never be the result.

In Verse 70 of the **Gospel of Thomas**, *Jesus said: If you bring forth that within yourselves, that which you have will save you. If you do not have that within yourselves, that which you do not have within you will kill you.* Again, the now totally logical emphasis on **find meaning within yourselves** because you can never find it in anyone else – given that you are trying to find something in another that is not in yourself. That is the only way that moral law makes sense – that my meaning cannot be found within myself alone, as representative of all things natural and divine. If I see myself as inadequate, I will live life that way; and I will be bound to the lords of all worlds of law to which I yield.

So, what is freedom? It is really obedience to a single rule – that whatever is in me is all that is needed for virtue. **I am free to be complete in me.** I need no one else because all they are, I am. If I need something in you that is not also in me, then I am not sufficient. The Jesus of Thomas and Mary would not agree. If I have to depend on you for virtue that is actually found in me, then if you withdraw from me, even though the virtue I want is in me, that which I do not realize is in me will kill me. Why? Because that is my mind frame; and when it all comes down to it, each of us is obligated to the rules or laws of our mind – not to the rules or laws of anyone else. I am talking spiritually now – not civilly. **As we believe it – so it is; but as we cooperate with others in the same belief, that becomes our community.**

That is probably how it works in the spiritual world because that is how it works in the civil world. With those with whom we join hands in some common agreement, they become our community. It probably works that way because God is equally in everyone. So, community cannot be defined related to the presence of God since every community has an equal presence of God. We are not separated in life by virtue of a different presence of God. We are separated by virtue of a different vision of God perhaps, but not by any real different presence of God. Our vision of God may well play a part in the laws we make for ourselves, but regardless of reason for law, in the end, we will only be bound together – or freed together – by a common bond of belief.

In Verse 5 of the **Gospel of Thomas**, *Jesus said: Know what is in thy sight, and what is hidden from thee will be revealed to thee. For there is nothing hidden that will not be manifest.* Relating this to law, how does it apply? In the world that I can see, I note bunches of people relating to and obeying an Islamic Law – and presto, they are being bound within it. Others who are Christian are not being bound by those laws. Are they? In the world that I can see, I note bunches of people relating to and obeying Christian Law – and presto, they are being bound within it. Others who are Moslem are not being bound by those laws. Are they? In the world that I can see, I note bunches of people relating to and obeying what might be called a Buddhist regimen. Others who are Moslem and Christian do not feel themselves obligated to such a regimen. Right?

So there it is. **Know what is in thy sight, and what is hidden from thee will be revealed to thee.** There in front of us is the evidence. People are bound by the laws they choose for themselves; but others outside a regimen are not bound by the laws others

choose. And Jesus and me and hopefully you – we are bound only by loving **the child of humanity** within us. Wonderfully, that **frees** us from having to attend any of the laws that bind.

Why does it work that way? Because there are lords who make it happen. Keep in mind that law is socially oriented. That means that laws are made by some who expect others to obey. When I give myself to a law, I give myself to the lords of that law. Thus, those lords and their lieutenants will stand by to enforce their law. That is the sad part of it. If I give myself to any law – made by some lord or other – then I will see myself as having to account for myself in front of that lord. It matters not who the lord is. It only matters that I think I am obligated to obey him.

This probably does not change when we die. The same lords who invisibly contracted us to obedience while we were in the body will be standing about to receive us when we leave the body. Amazingly, we may not even know there has been a change from one world to the next. We will expect to see lords; and they will gladly oblige. That is probably the way it works after death because that is exactly the way it works before death. Isn't it? And make no mistake about it. For those of us expecting to see a Mohammed as lord, we will see one, though it may not be Mohammed himself – but an impostor. For those of us expecting to see a Jesus as lord, we will see one, though it may not be Jesus himself – but an impostor. We will know no different, though. **People realize what they expect.** It will not even occur to a Jesus fan that it is not Jesus standing there, bidding him or her to more obedience; and the blind soul will continue to bow and serve. To each, his or her own, but that is not my idea of freedom.

**When he said this, he left them.** That is how the 1<sup>st</sup> Verse of the **Gospel of Mary** ends. The “he” of reference, of course, is Jesus. Where did he go? Who knows? Did he stick around to be crucified? I think there is a good chance that was his ending, but that is the story the others told. They looked upon Jesus as a lord. They acted like Jesus was a lord; and they may have fabricated a suitable ending for a lord. I do not know about that; but assuming that Jesus was crucified, that fits in well with my image of him as one who preached self-esteem.

You see, for one who depends only on his or her self-esteem, nothing anyone else does or does not do can infringe upon one's freedom. Death is an illusion in a way. For the soul, it does not really happen; but one with true self-esteem cannot be affected by death. No one can harm your soul but you; though there is plenty of harm that one can do to oneself – just by virtue of one's beliefs.

As you believe, so it is for you – be it in this life or the next. If Jesus had lashed out at his persecutors, he would have demonstrated an anger and not a peace; and anger stems from dissatisfaction with others; but Jesus did not lash out because he was happy with himself; and happiness with self always overrides any dissatisfaction with others. For me, the crucifixion of Jesus – though admittedly it may not have actually happened – only climaxed a story of true freedom. In life, Jesus was free. Through death, Jesus remained free; and so will any of us who loved the freedom that Jesus loved.

Consider it the greatest of all moral rules. It is not a law – but a rule. No one will punish you if you fail it. You will only punish yourself. What is that rule? **Be happy with what you are.** Many violate that rule and go searching for an excuse in some fashion of law or power that extends outside themselves. They want law to make it right;

but whatever the law that might seem to override it, no law really ever does. They want power over others to show themselves that they do not have to be satisfied with themselves; but inevitably, the powerful reflect their true impotence because happiness was never seeded in power to make over either oneself or another, but with contentment with oneself.

If I am happy with what I am, regardless of the dimensions, then I can change those dimensions and still retain the happiness; but if I am unhappy with what I am and change the dimensions to make myself happy with a new me, in time, the new me will become as the old me and a new make over will be needed. If you want to change yourself, first make sure you are happy with what you are, and then you can change yourself to your heart's content and love every form that results; but if you begin with self-dissatisfaction, you will always end with it. **You will always find a reason to be unhappy.**

## LOOKING FOR A NEW ME

By

Francis William Bessler

May, 2005

### *Refrain:*

*I am looking for a new me, but where will I find it.*

*I am looking for a new me, but where will it be?*

*I am looking for a new me, but how shall I find it*

*If I don't begin being happy with me.*

Some look at life like a field of power  
with others to serve them as their slaves.  
They have no meaning all by themselves  
and their favorite word in life is "estate."

I look at life like a garden of flowers  
with maybe some weeds thrown in too.  
Regardless what it is, everything's still a plant  
and every plant has its own beauty to view. *Refrain (2).*

Some look at life like they must improve  
the nature they find that's so full of sin.  
They do not like the lives that they have  
and they measure all by a sprint or a win.

I look at life like an opportunity to find –  
to find my own soul in a body of flesh.  
Others are nice, but are not important.  
All I need is in me, my soul to refresh. *Refrain (2).*

It doesn't seem to me hard to understand  
the key to happiness is a thing called pride.  
If you have it now, you will have it later -  
and what's in yourself cannot be denied.

I look at life like everything's perfect  
and that change is only enjoying it all.  
As long as I love everything I am,  
I can change completely and still be enthralled. *Refrain (3)*.

**Independence**

Written: July 3rd, 2005

Would it be more correct to say – **poor, poor Jesus** for our tragic misunderstanding of him – or **poor, poor us?** If anyone answered that question by saying it is more correct to say **poor, poor Jesus** – in my opinion, they have a very poor understanding of Jesus; and if anyone answered that question by saying neither response is correct because Jesus was not misunderstood, well, to each, his or her own, but anyone who doesn't believe that Jesus was misunderstood, to put it bluntly, such a one is *far from the kingdom*; but it is us that are poor for the misunderstanding – not Jesus – because in our misunderstanding, it is like we walk right by Paradise everyday without ever setting foot inside it.

Why is there so much violence in the world? Why is so much of the violence of the world tied to Christians who have been clearly taught that Jesus championed kindness and forgiveness at all costs? Why have there been **conquistadores** down through history all the way to the current day who have marched and plundered and killed in the name of Jesus? Why? *Because Jesus was misunderstood.*

Personally, I think the basis of that misunderstanding is a false connection of Jesus to the **Old Testament**. Even today, many so called Christian services drop back to the **Old Testament** to get a pre dating of Jesus. They are convinced that Jesus came from the **Old Testament** like Moses came from Mount Sinai. Moses did not come from Mount Sinai originally, however. He only visited there; and Jesus never came from the **Old Testament** – though he, too, may have visited there with some of his teachings.

In truth, you cannot find Moses on Mount Sinai because he existed as he was before he went up the mountain; and you cannot find Jesus in the **Old Testament** because his living had nothing to do with all the unholy blunders that are depicted in those works. I think the biggest reason we have misunderstood Jesus is that we have tied him to the **Old Testament** and therefore, expect a certain sanctification of **Old Testament** ways in the process.

Where does **an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth** come from? Of course, the **Old Testament**. Where does **thy enemies are my enemies** come from? Of course, the **Old Testament**. Where does **God hates the evil doer** come from? Of course, the **Old Testament**. On and on and on, it goes. The sad thing is that most folks who think they know Jesus are absolutely sure that Jesus has no meaning outside the **Old Testament**. The **Old Testament** prophesied Jesus; and Jesus had no meaning except to fulfill those prophecies.

How many times is it pronounced in the **New Testament** that such and such happened to Jesus *in order to fulfill the prophecies of old?* Jesus was born of a virgin *in order to fulfill the prophecies of old*. Jesus was three days in a tomb between death and resurrection because it was necessary *to fulfill the prophecies*. Jesus was taken down from the cross before the normal expenditure time of criminals crucified because it was necessary *to fulfill the prophecies*. Remember – Jesus was three days in the earth like Jonah was three days in the belly of a whale. All this constant tying of Jesus to the **Old Testament** is, I think, the biggest reason we have misunderstood him.

If God can hate, so can we. That is the general lesson we get by tying the **Old Testament** to the **New Testament**. Never mind that God can't hate; and the **Old Testament** is flat out wrong about that and a million other things. What is hatred? *It is wanting to deny another life. Can God hate?* Can God Who or Which makes us all want to deny us life after He or She or It has gone to the trouble of creating us? The **Old Testament** constantly affirms that God can hate when nothing could be further from the truth.

Why do **conquistadores** act like murder in the name of God is OK? Why? Because the **Old Testament** condones it; and if the **Old Testament** condones execution in the name of God, then if Jesus is the fulfillment of the **Old Testament**, then Jesus, too, must condone **righteous execution** of God's enemies. Never mind that it is clear that he taught that just thinking about murder is to murder. Never mind that it is clear that he taught kindness to all – including one's enemies – is the first and only commandment necessary for a soul. Never mind that it is clear that he taught that each of us must forgive the other *seven times seventy times*. Never mind all that. Look there! Can you see it? Moses and Jesus coming down from Mount Sinai hand in hand with each patting the other on the back and with each justifying what the other has proclaimed.

What that has done is **Kill the Independence of Jesus**; and with the death of the true independence of Jesus, every one of us who have been taught about Jesus have been misled. Sadly, for those of us who have a liking for Jesus – and I admit to be in the vast number of those who qualify – by Jesus losing his independence from the **Old Testament**, we who are his students have lost our independence as well.

Many, of course, think that Jesus did not want independence from the **Old Testament** and did not want us – his students to be independent of either the **Old Testament** or him; but I sense a different story. I detect a Jesus who believed in independence of the individual upon anyone outside the individual for a sense of worth. It is my reading of Jesus – especially via the Gospels of Thomas and Mary – that primary for Jesus for himself and for his students was and is a state of independence. I think the real Jesus taught that we all have intrinsic worth because, as he would offer it, we are *sons (or children) of the Living Father*. Being sons of the Living Father – or God – we are exactly as we should be. Our problems in this world is that we do not believe we are really *sons of the Living Father*.

In Verse 3 of the **Gospel of Thomas**, *Jesus said: If those who lead you say to you: "See, the kingdom is in heaven, then the birds of the heaven will precede you. If they say to you: "It is in the sea," then the fish will precede you. But the kingdom is within you and it is without you. If you will know yourselves, then you will be known and you will know that you are the sons of the Living Father. But if you do not know yourselves, then you are in poverty and you are poverty.* For me, this is the real Jesus – teaching me that I am fine as I am. He did not say I am only fine with him. He said I am right now a *son of the Living Father*. Right now, the kingdom is within me. It is not a future thing. It is a right now thing.

Where do you see in the above quote any need whatsoever to be instructed in the **Old Testament**? Where in the above quote is there any sense of intrinsic sin within me – or you? Where in the above quote can you find anything but a sense of individual worth without any need of any additional grace to fulfill me – or you? He is telling us that we already have the kingdom within us; yet the **Old Testament** & the **New Testament**

pretend that we are evil to the core and need some additional grace to make us complete. The Jesus of Thomas or Mary do not say that. The quote above tells me that Jesus is offering that if I really know myself, I should be very much aware that I am a *son of the Living Father*.

I do not know about you, but that is news for rejoicing. Why should I hang my head after hearing such good news and pretend that I am not a *son of the Living Father* just as I am? I am not making myself. The Living Father is. This Jesus of Thomas (and Mary) is not suggesting that I need him for a sense of worth. In fact, he is saying just the opposite. I am now – right now – the son I should be. I do not need a makeover; and anyone who thinks I do need a makeover is listening to a false Jesus. I am **independently holy** – right now – because I am right now a *son of the Living Father*. I do not need redeemed. I have never become estranged from God. The **Old Testament** teaches that I have become estranged from God, but the Jesus of Thomas is telling me – in essence – the **Old Testament** is wrong.

I am sure I have offered elsewhere in these essays that Jesus tried to divorce himself from the **Old Testament**. In Verse 52 of the **Gospel of Thomas**, *His disciples said to Him: Twenty four prophets spoke in Israel and they all spoke about Thee. He said to them: You have dismissed the Living One who is before you and you have spoken about the dead.* That is to say, I think, please do not crowd me in with all those dead prophets of the **Old Testament** because if you do, you will be dismissing me for the **Independent One** I am.

Why didn't they recognize him for the **independent** one he was? Number 1, because they did not want **independence** from the **Old Testament** and number 2, because they did not want **independence** from the world. In truth, no one can recognize independence unless they want independence. Why couldn't the so called disciples of Jesus see him for what he was? Because they wanted him otherwise. They wanted him to fulfill a role of promised messiah; and for that reason, they could not recognize him for who he really was. Likewise, all of those who insist on needing Jesus as some kind of personal savior blot him out as anything other than messiah. They are not interested in Jesus except that he is the completion of the **Old Testament**; and so, like all the blind Jews of the days of Jesus on earth, they will continue to see only what they want.

When I see you, what do I see? I see a *son (or daughter) of the Living Father*. Because I see you as such, without the need for any additional grace, I also see you naked. I see you naked because I see you as whole without need of additional ornament to make you acceptable. You are acceptable as you are. Nakedness is not primarily a sexual thing for me. It is primarily a worth thing for me. If I am a *living son of the Living Father*, then I am good just as I am – and you are good just as you are.

In Verse 37 of the **Gospel of Thomas**, *His disciples said: When wilt Thou be revealed to us and when will we see Thee? Jesus said: When you take off your clothing without being ashamed, and take your clothes and put them under your feet as the little children and tread on them, then shall you behold the Son of the Living One and you shall not fear.* In this verse, Jesus is telling us that we can not see him as the person he really is unless we can embrace our nakedness without shame. That is certainly not a message we receive in the regular gospels, is it?

To be honest, all my life I have loved nakedness because I have loved independence from evil. **Evil – all evil – begins with a downplay of life.** Evil happens when we do



not love what we see. That which we do not want to see we banish; and banishment is a result of seeing evil. Sadly we can see evil where there is none and therefore banish what we should not. I have long refused to banish my life because I have seen such a refusal as being tantamount to admitting imperfection where there is none. I see myself as perfect – not from a worldly point of view, but from a human point of view. I am as perfect as I can be in terms of my humanity.

In the quote above, Jesus at least implied that he was comfortable with his own nakedness and that we should follow suit and be comfortable with ours as well. Did Jesus pounce on Mary Magdalene when he was naked? Of course not. Even if Mary was naked with him, the Jesus I know and try to practice would not engage her in any act resulting in dependency – with the one exception of natural conception. If Jesus agreed with Mary to conceive a child, of course, he would allow female dependency on him to allow her to get pregnant, but outside of that, I doubt it.

My argument here is that I think Jesus approved of nakedness for its being virtuous of itself – not for its advantage of sex. Perhaps it is only a mindset, but it is the mindset I have had all my life – or at least, most of my life. When people tell me that nakedness for the sake of virtue is unrealistic, I want to tell them that unrealistic or not, it has been my own reality. Maybe it is unrealistic for the common herd; but for those of us intent on achieving the greatest of personal virtue we can achieve in life, it is far from unrealistic. **In fact, for us, sexual dependency is the most unrealistic of all conduct because it makes of true independence of soul nothing but a hope or a wish.**

**Poor, poor Jesus** – for being misunderstood? No! Jesus is not poor because we have been given a false image of him. We are poor for having believed the false image we have been given. The traditionally understood Jesus has not yielded us the **independence** from the **Old Testament** he wanted us to have. The **Old Testament** was not banned as Jesus would have wanted; and consequently, our lives remain as jumbled and distorted as they were within the hands of the old prophets. Jesus wanted us to follow him – not the **Old Testament**; but we did not understand him. Thus, we think it is **Christian** to act as **conquistadores** and to live in dependence on some additional grace we have been led to call **The Holy Spirit**.

**Poor, poor Jesus?** No! *Poor, poor us* for even suspecting that a **Holy Spirit** is needed to turn us into a *son of the Living Father* when all along we have had **independent worth** because all along, God – *our Living Father* – has been in us. *What a wonderful mystery we have been all along! What a wonderful mystery we are! And what a wonderful mystery we will always be!*

## **I Believe in Independence**

By

Francis William Bessler

June, 2005

I believe in independence, especially from law.  
I believe in independence, starting with my thoughts.  
I believe in independence because we are all the same.  
All you have I do too. So, let us celebrate our fame.

People think they need one another for that which they lack,  
but in truth, no one lacks that which all others have.  
It is a game people of power play to get us to agree  
to join with them in some ploy and give up being free.

Just look at the lonely and see how they complain when alone.  
That's because they pay no attention to the beauty that they own.  
No one is an island. We all share the same humanity.  
There is nothing that you have that is not also found in me.

It is also the very same way for each of our souls.  
We are the same and all have to attend the same rules  
but the rule of the soul is that each should be free  
of other souls who try to control and refuse them liberty.

Souls are born into bodies to practice what they believe.  
The body is only a lab by which we can use to see –  
to see what we might be doing to other souls if we could.  
The wise soul will not treat self or others as a piece of wood.

Wood is something that humans use to build and to mold,  
but it is dead, not alive, unlike a soul created to be bold.  
When people use others as if they were only blocks of stone,  
then light turns to darkness and souls in their bodies moan.

So, let us one and all, pledge to see ourselves as whole,  
having all the beauty of our Creator in ourselves alone.  
Let us know of our true worth and then let us all commence  
to never let others keep us from loving our independence.

I believe in independence, especially from law.  
I believe in independence, starting with my thoughts.  
I believe in independence because we are all the same.  
All you have I do too. So, let us celebrate our fame.

# 8

## ***Perfection***

Written: July 31, 2005

Nobody's perfect! That is a statement and philosophy of life to which I do not subscribe. I consider the opposite to be true: ***Everybody's perfect***. I think too many souls are caught up with imperfection when they should be focused on perfection. Anyone can find a flaw if he or she insists on finding one; but the mature soul does not go through life finding flaws. The mature soul goes through life being grateful for whatever gift of life with which one has been blessed. Every aspect of life should be considered a blessing. So why go through life pining so called missing blessings when time would be so much better spent being grateful for the blessings you do have?

What is perfect? In my opinion – everything. **Everything is perfect because Nature is perfect; and Nature is perfect because it is of God – or God is in it – however you want to look at it.** We look at two forms in Nature and two forms may look alike, but no two forms are exactly alike. Perfection, then, may involve similarity, but never identical expression. All things in Nature vary. That's just the way it is. Perfection for a soul, then, is accepting it the way it is, assuming quite properly that the Master, Nature, is in proper command.

If I have but one eye, I should look at my life like everyone has but one eye and be happy with the one eye I have. If I have but one leg, I should look at my life like everyone has but one leg. If I have but one arm, I should look at my life like everyone has but one arm. Why do different? **Anyone can find a flaw if they seek one; but in Nature, there is no such thing as a flaw.** I can have one green eye and one brown eye and consider myself imperfect because my condition is out of the ordinary. I can have two wonderful breasts but one is a little smaller than the other and I could consider myself imperfect because my two breasts are not equal.

Anyone can find a flaw and consider themselves imperfect because of it; but the truly mature soul does not look for flaws and realizes variation is not flaw. The mature soul looks at whatever one is and is grateful for the blessing. To do otherwise leads to sickness of soul and that often translates into sickness of body. We can always make ourselves sick just by insisting on finding flaws in life; though for Nature itself, there is no such thing as a flaw. **There is only variation.** If flaws are our focus, however, if they do not exist before we look for them, they are likely to appear because we expect them. The key is to be content with what you have and focus on what you do have – not pine what you think you lack – be it something in yourself or a companion.

Several years ago, Tom Hanks starred in a movie called **CASTAWAY**. I believe I am correct with that title. It was all about some lad who went down in a great ocean as a passenger of a small airplane. All the crew was lost, but the Tom Hanks character managed to survive and find a nearby island. Much of the rest of the movie was about a forlorn character pining his loneliness and isolation from the rest of the world. He was there for years, but always dreaming about someone finding him and rescuing him. Eventually, he does make a wooden raft from tree wood on the island and floats out to sea and after days of drifting on the open sea, he is finally rescued by a cargo ship.

It was a very good story. I loved it, but I could not help but wish the story had been written allowing the character to fall in love with himself and his small world. Instead, this script had him always dreaming and planning about rescue. In real life, if a person is so occupied, all he will be is unhappy; but it never has to be that way. If it had been me on that island, chances are good I would have never looked for a way to get off of it – unless I thought I was in danger by staying; but in this story, the island was unoccupied by beast and was very friendly – lots of sunshine and lots of fish and coconuts to eat – and probably a lot of other tasty things too; but the Tom Hanks character pined for being back in civilization and, in my opinion, blew a tremendous opportunity to find completion in himself. He considered his life a flaw without another to share it with him.

If it had been me, I would not have spent a day with clothes. Having the great opportunity I had, I would have wanted to merge with my surroundings. For Heaven's sake, why not? I would not have done what the Tom Hanks character did and "pretend" that I was a civilization of one. Not once that I know of did the movie show Hanks even swimming naked in the ocean. I cannot imagine my swimming in any other way – even if people are around.

I have long felt that the greatest mistake that men and women of humankind make is to insist that we are somehow "different" from the rest of nature and then pride ourselves on being different. As far as I can see, I am not in any meaningful way different than the rest of nature. So, why in the world should I pretend to be?

That is not to say I should not love variety. It is, in fact, a love of variety that should allow me to enjoy being a one armed or one legged or one eyed human among other humans who have two of each. For a mature society of souls caught up with a variety of individual perfections, it should not matter than one among us has one arm or one leg or one eye. What difference should it make? If I am happy with what I am, why should I insist that you must be just like me for me to associate with you? Why can't I embrace you for your own perfection, unique perhaps, but as definite as my own in whatever way I am also perfect?

In the **Gospel of Mary**, Jesus says: *be of good courage. And if you are discouraged, be encouraged in the presence of the diversity of forms in Nature.* Diversity does not just include the so called "normal." It should also embrace the abnormal as if the abnormal is normal. If we would only do that in this world and not insist that each of us must be just like the other, we could revel in our variety and fall in love with the total world in which we find ourselves. **Regardless of what form any of us assumes for the gift of life bestowed upon us, each of us should see our individual form as perfect, not imperfect.**

My vision of Jesus is that he was like that too. I see him as a man who valued the solitary, but his solitude was knowing and acting like he is one with Nature and God. Jesus did not look for flaws within his body because he viewed his body as being one with Nature and God. Jesus did not stand alone all by himself. I think he stood with Nature and God – as if he were part of them; and as Jesus acted, we should too.

In the 78<sup>th</sup> Verse of the **Gospel of Thomas**, *Jesus said: Why did you come out into the desert? To see a reed shaken by the wind? And to see a man clothed in soft garments? Your kings and your great ones are those who are clothed in soft garments and they shall not be able to know the truth.* This verse suggests to me that if Jesus had been the Tom Hanks character on that island, he would not have been found "clothed in

soft garments." Like the Tom Hanks character, Jesus was alone in the desert as the Hanks character was alone on an island. Jesus did not pine about being away from civilization and found himself enthralled with being with God and Nature – and for that he had no use for clothes. Why would he? He offers that in the world our kings and great ones are the ones who are dressed in soft garments and almost for that reason, they can not know the truth.

I think that is true. I think that when we close ourselves off from God and Nature, insisting that we are flaws of both God and Nature and insisting on our being “different” from the rest of nature, we automatically close ourselves to wisdom because **true wisdom is not noting how different we are, but how much alike we are – even as we revel in our variety as well.**

I know my Jesus is not the ordinary Jesus. I realize that many who think that Jesus was primarily socially oriented would not agree with my impression of him as one who would have been found naked in the desert or naked on an isolated island or even naked in a crowd; but my impression of Jesus is what I have found in the Gospels of Thomas and Mary. It is that Jesus that has been the content of these articles and not the Jesus of the Jews of the regular gospels.

In the end, we must all choose the Jesus we believe in – if we find Jesus interesting at all. The Tom Hanks character in **Castaway** should have had copies of the Gospels of Thomas and Mary with him on that island in the Pacific when he was marooned there. If he had, he would still be there, pondering his meaning as a single person and a single soul – and not wandering the streets of Memphis “back from the dead” and choosing to walk among the living dead in search for meaning outside themselves.

**Conclusion of the series:**  
*Was Jesus*  
*Holistic or Messianic?*

I began this series with a mini discussion about what we may have lost when Constantine closed down the avenues of the gospels. With the onset of Constantine as Emperor of the Western World in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century, many gospels were banned. Some of those banned gospels have somehow survived their condemnation. It seems that now in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, we are being allowed to continue the discussion about Jesus that was interrupted so long ago.

Looking at the opinions about life and Jesus like a pie of varying sections and varying content, perhaps one could look at that pie as being one half of one ingredient and the other half of being of another ingredient. When Constantine bid his bishops to decide only for what might be called the **power gospels** of Mathew through John for their investment in authority and for some kind of “divine right” of some to rule others and to ban those that might not be very conducive to power by authority, it could be perceived that he and his obedient bishops lifted the meat portion of the pie of life and Jesus and discarded it while saving only the non meat half of the pie.

For comparison purposes, let us say that the non meat portion of the pie is what might be called the **messianic** perception of Jesus and life. The meat portion that was eliminated, then, is the **holistic** perception of Jesus and life. We say something is **meaty** if it is substantial. **To believe that life itself is meaty and substantial of itself without need of additional grace is certainly what I would call a holistic view of life.**

What is a **messianic** perception of life and Jesus? **It is a view that holds that mankind has actually been separated from God and needs to be united – or reunited – with God.** For that union or reunion, a special emissary from God is needed. That emissary for traditional Christians is Jesus. Jesus, then, came to save mankind from a separation from God and unite – or reunite – mankind with God by virtue of being from God Himself. That is the **messianic** view of Jesus and life. That perception of Jesus was retained with all the gospels and epistles that eventually became what is generally referred to as the **New Testament.**

Lost from the discussion, however, has been the **holistic** view of life and Jesus. What is that? It is the perception that mankind was never separated from God, though it may have thought it has been. Having never been separated from God, then no person or event is necessary to unite – or reunite – mankind with God. Mankind is essentially **holy** as is. That is what I would call the **holistic** perception of life and Jesus. **The holistic perception of life is based on the notion that life itself is Divine because God is inside of it, not outside of it.** God has to be **in** life because God is **infinite**, virtually meaning **everywhere**. If God is in life, then life is Divine. It is as simple as that.

The **holistic** perception was, however, banned by Constantine. Gospels like those of Thomas and Mary were banned along with the condemnation of a **holistic** view of life and Jesus. **It is my view that Jesus was not a messianic disciple of the Jews, but**

**rather a holistic apostle of humanity in general.** It has become somewhat clear to me that the **messianic** bunch carved Jesus into being one of them; but I do not believe he was one of them because I do not believe that, number 1, a messiah was needed in the first place because there has never been a separation between mankind and God, and, number 2, because it appears clear to me via the **Gospels of Thomas and Mary** that Jesus, himself, had a **holistic** perception of life. If Jesus really was of a **holistic** mind and not a **messianic** mind, then how could he have been a **messiah**?

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> Verse of what could be called the **Holistic Gospel of Thomas**, Jesus says ***If you know yourselves, then you will be known and you will know that you are sons of the Living Father.*** This is not the statement of a messiah intent on restoring us to God, but rather the statement of one who believes we are already in God and God is in us. This is a statement about who we are now, not what we might become if, allegedly, we accept Jesus as our personal savior. ***We are sons of the Living Father – just like Jesus – and it has nothing to do with Jesus.***

I do not think Jesus came to convert us into something different because we lacked some wholesomeness for lacking God, but rather he came to make us aware of what we are – ***sons of the Living Father.*** Male and female, we are all sons in this sense because we are all born of the Living Father. There is equality among us all. That is the lesson of Jesus. We have no sin in us by nature because we are divine, although we can sin. ***Sin is not a condition. It is an act by which we fail to note our divinity and act accordingly.***

In the **Gospel of Mary**, ***Peter said to him, “You have explained everything to us. Tell us also, what is the sin of the world?” The savior replied, “There is no such thing as sin, but you create sin when you mingle, as in adultery, and this is called sin.”*** Indeed, that is sin. It is that which we lack within ourselves, but not that which we lack naturally, but that which we lack, vision wise. It is seeing evil in Nature where there is none. It is powering over others and doing what we please and calling it “God’s Will.” It is failing to love your enemy for not seeing God within him and calling it “God’s Justice” when you kill him. It is being just and killing the infidel and calling it “God’s Judgment.” It is all these things, but it is not “God’s Absence” – for nothing can be absent of God because God is Present in All.

***The opposite of sin is kindness to all.*** Everyone who claims to love Jesus knows that Jesus taught unconditional kindness as the ideal of life; but being kind to one’s enemies is impractical. Justice appeals to those who rule. Kindness does not. Justice is practical. Kindness is not. Justice can find advocates among those who believe they are rightful authorities. Justice is good for kings and queens and emperors and religious leaders. Kindness is not very useful for any who love authority. The real Jesus had to be **deformed as a prince of kindness and reformed as a chair of judgment** in order to work in the world of rulers. No ruler in his right mind could embrace kindness over justice; but just the same, the real Jesus probably advocated kindness over justice. Why? Because, as he said again and again, ***my kingdom is not of this world.***

**What is his kingdom? We are all guessing about that, but my guess is that it is a communion of souls who practice unconditional kindness because all are equal.** It is my guess that many qualify for that kingdom who actually choose kindness to all – whether they are aware of Jesus or not. It is also my guess that many who prefer justice over kindness can never enter the real kingdom of Jesus – whether they claim Jesus as Lord or not.

That is not to say those excluded by attitude are doomed to Hell. Not at all. Just because one does not earn membership in the kingdom of Jesus does not mean they won't gain some admission to some degree to what might be called Heaven. Virtually speaking, *Heaven is only being aware of the Presence of God*. I suppose it is possible to be aware of the Presence of God and still not center on kindness to all. That is not for me to judge; and Thank God, I do not have to judge such a matter.

In truth, *judgment is really only continuing what we begin*. It has little to do with another's judgment of you or me. It has mostly to do with our judgment of ourselves – and as we judge ourselves, we will continue. That's judgment. If we are mean, we will continue to be mean – until we stop being mean. That's judgment. If we are kind, we will continue to be kind. That's judgment. If we are non forgiving, we will continue to be non forgiving. That's judgment. If we are champions of justice, ignoring kindness, we will continue to be champions of justice. That's judgment. We decide our course. That's judgment. As we sow, we will reap. It has been said many times that such is so; and it probably is. It makes sense. Doesn't it?

And perhaps the worst kind of judgment may be commitment to law as a way of salvation. This kind of judgment is truly sad because when you commit yourself to a law of salvation, you expect reward for obedience and punishment for disobedience. As you expect, there will be others more than willing to accommodate you; but your reward may not be the reward you expect. Once another gets you into his corral of justice, you may be caught within a web very difficult to escape because you will have no other vision telling you that you have a right to escape. Your judgment may be that you turned over the right to determine your own judgment to others; and when that happens, you may become truly lost – not even recognizing the possibility that you do not deserve what others are handing out.

We covered the idea in a previous essay. In the **Gospel of Mary**, Jesus said: *Go and preach the good news of the kingdom. Do not lay down any rules other than what I have given you, and do not establish law, as the lawgiver did, or you will be bound by it*. The “good news” was previously offered as seeing the *child of humanity* within us. That was the rule that Jesus laid down – no law – just one rule – to respect the child of humanity within us. To violate that rule merely ends in failure to belong to his kingdom of peace; but there is no punishment by others for violating it.

And then Jesus admonished us not to establish law – which does allow for punishment by others for disobedience – because if we do, we will be bound by the law we embrace. It works that way. If I submit to a law made by you and obey your command because I think you have rightful authority over me – even though you do not have rightful authority – I will still be bound to you because I believe you had the right to be a lawgiver. It is this respecting another's right to make law and your responsibility to obey it that may amount to the cruelest judgment of all because by releasing yourself to another's whim, you may be lost in ways that will be hard to escape. **How can one escape that which one doesn't think one should escape or has a right to escape?**

I think the lawgiver that Jesus was admonishing us about was Moses or any of the like who have listened to other lawgivers, bidding us to obey or suffer penalty for disobedience. Moses had to obey his lawgiver because he believed in him - just like others had to obey Moses because they believed in Moses. Moses thought his lawgiver was authentic; and the followers of Moses thought the same. In the end, Moses and his



people had to wander about in a desert having sand for desert and sacrifice for entertainment all because they listened to lawgivers that were not from God as they claimed. Jesus was very aware of the danger of submitting to another and getting lost in a sandstorm of another's making. That is why he admonished us to be careful about establishing law. **Law can be a trap and the judgment of that trap can be devastating.**

Difficult as it might be, however, in the end, it is our choice – freedom by independence from law and respect of the child of humanity within us all – or commitment to law and all its normal consequences; but regardless of any of it, it is all Heaven. Like Jesus says in one of the canonized gospels of the **BIBLE, My Father's house has many mansions.** Heaven is as wide as the world is wide because it is really only the Presence of God; though virtually speaking, it is **awareness of the Presence of God.** If we are unaware we are in Heaven, though we actually are, virtually speaking, we are not in Heaven; but actually speaking, since God is really everywhere, that makes Heaven also everywhere.

As Jesus says in the 113<sup>th</sup> Verse of the **Gospel of Thomas, the Kingdom of the Father is spread upon the earth and men do not see it.** Again, however, if I am unaware of my being in Heaven, then virtually speaking, though I am really in Heaven, if I think I am in Hell, then Hell will be my home.

In the end, too, by our chosen conduct and attitude, we choose our own communion of souls with whom we wish to assemble. If in life we insist on justice over kindness, then it will be those same kind with whom we will associate in any life to come. The irony of that may be that we may be companions of the ones we killed and they of us because neither of us will recognize it will be our bitterness that will have brought us together.

For sure, the debate will go on – or at least, it should go on. With the discoveries of the previously banned gospels (and still banned by most traditional Christian voices) of Thomas and Mary, the meat portion of the pie can now be returned to the pie of life. In life, Apostles Thomas and Mary Magdalene – alleged authors of the gospels in their names - probably knew Jesus in one way – and Peter and his subordinates, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John (and Paul) probably knew him in another.

With some degree of confidence, many of us who have come to believe that Thomas and Mary knew Jesus better than did Peter and his subordinates and who have slid off the **messianic** ship of life and Jesus to board the **holistic** ship of life and Jesus can finally get on with resuming our long, long interrupted lives. We have been banned for centuries. The **messianic** clans of mankind have held complete power – though there have been a lot of squabbles among them as evidenced by the zillion and one different churches of **messianic Christianity.**

What lies in store for **Holistic Christianity?** I hope many will aspire to it and live by its rather easy and simple principle that **Life and God are One.** In the end, it will be to each, his or her own – just like it should be. I hope this little series has been somewhat helpful in the discussion. I know I represent only one small part of a huge discussion. I am no more essential to that discussion than anyone is. Still, I am glad I could be even a small part of that discussion. It is a discussion that is rarely conducted, but is, I believe, a discussion that deserves at least as great attention as the **messianic** view of life does.

In my opinion, we live in a world in which we are being suffocated as souls, compared to what it could be. As Jesus may figuratively say it, we are like a flower garden inundated with weeds. The problem is that we can't tell the difference between the weeds and the flowers. Make no mistake about it. There are a heap of flowers in the garden, but there are also a lot of weeds that look like flowers; and the weeds seem to be much stronger than the flowers. That is because they are far more gullible. It is easy to grow a weed because it doesn't take much nutrition. Flowers require more, as it were; and so that is probably the biggest reason the weeds outnumber the flowers in the current world. Ask any weed, though; and you will be told he or she or it thinks it's a flower.

And so it is, too. Be it a weed or a flower, it all comes from God in that God is the source of all existence. For God, a weed is a flower because the same wonderful divine energy that goes into a flower also goes into a weed. It is not from God's point of view that there are weeds. Indeed, for God, there are only flowers; but for those of us souls struggling to make our lives ones of freedom, well, it stands to reason that there cannot be near as much freedom for a flower in a patch of weeds as is in a patch all its own.

In time, perhaps, weeds will disappear. Perhaps souls will choose to be born as flowers, having come to realize that for the sake of free souls, that is the way it is supposed to be. There is no reason why there has to be weeds, suffocating and strangling flowers. When the weeds of the world finally realize their time would be much better spent as flowers, free of strangulation and suffocation, then the flower population will grow; and, who knows, in time, maybe only flowers will exist.

Needless to say, in this series, my opinions have been my own. As I have had my own opinions and have tried to offer some of them, I hope that others will enter the fray on the side of *Holistic Christianity*; and: **Together, maybe we can add to a Movement, that interrupted or not, has always been around – and will forever be so.**

## SONG OF MY DIVINE NATURISM

By

Francis William Bessler

June/July, 2004

### *Cantation:*

*I'm in love with life and God as if the two are one.*

*I have no doubt whatever that whatever is – is God's son.*

*God is the Divine – and Nature is God's Prism.*

*That's why I call my wondrous belief "Divine Naturism."*

As I watch from a window, I see a cloud go by.

I'm amazed at it all and wonder how it can all be so fine.

As I ponder the sun and its generous sunshine,

I have no doubt in my mind that all that is – is Divine

But it is not only life that has the spark of Divinity, you see.  
Even the sand must contain the wondrous mystery.  
For life itself springs from the sand – as if therein is the seed.  
God is present in it all – just as It is - in you and me. *Cantation.*

People ask me, where is God, and I answer “everywhere.”  
God is not a person, but rather a Creative Presence of Infinite Care.  
There is nothing that can exist that can exist on its own.  
God is the wonderful principle by which all that is – is sown.

People have this idea that when they die they go to God.  
But if God is in everything, then now should begin the applause.  
God is not something that can only come to some of us later.  
It must be something that right now every single being can savor. *Cantation.*

And God can't be in the business of judging me and you  
because a judge has to be outside that which is viewed.  
God is inside of all that is and therefore cannot be a judge.  
That leaves it up to each of us to live without a grudge.

Judgment is only having to continue as I begin.  
I am my own judge and it is for me to determine what is sin.  
Virtue is only embracing that which sets my soul free.  
So I choose to love all that is like all that is – is me. *Cantation.*

I am asked many things, but one question is, do I have a soul?  
I say I don't know for sure, but it's only smart to act like it is so.  
If I do have a soul, then it can only serve as a record of me.  
It is then up to me to make sure that I keep that record clean.

Assuming that I have a soul, it makes sense that I fill that vessel  
only with that I'd like to recover – and for me, that's only the gentle.  
Surely, it is to each, his own, but however we fill our soul,  
we will have to inherit later all that we put into our bowl. *Cantation.*

I have but one rule that I think Jesus tried to get all to mind.  
It's really not very complicated. That single rule is – Be Kind.  
Kindness is its own reward because by being kind, I'm always at peace.  
It doesn't matter where I go, what I do, or who or what I meet.

People tell me that you can't be kind to those who are unkind.  
They say that justice demands that that they must pay the price.  
But being unkind to the unkind only makes two who are fools.  
No one who is wise would ever attend such a school. *Cantation.*

Jesus tried to teach kindness to all two thousand years ago,  
but the rulers of the day claimed it to be an impossible way to go.  
And anyone who would ask it must be put up on the cross.  
Otherwise, they thought, society at large would reap tremendous loss.

And so it has continued down through the many, many years.  
Justice over kindness has shed a jillion tears.  
And today, mankind still loves to go to war and fight  
and find in their claimed acts of justice that which they think is right. *Cantation.*

The beat goes on. It cannot stop until mankind stops punishing the kind  
and allows the Heaven they want sometime later to be here in time.  
When Jesus said that Heaven is at hand, he did not mean tomorrow.  
If you put off until tomorrow, all you'll gain is endless sorrow.

Heaven is something that is ours once we come to realize  
that Heaven is only being aware that everything is Divine.  
Life itself can only be a mystery, but the results of it need never be.  
As the twig is bent, so it will grow – and the twig that grows is only me. *Cantation.*

# ***CHILD OF HUMANITY SERIES***

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## ***THE END***

# **KNOWING CHRIST**

(31 Pages)

By  
Francis William Bessler  
Laramie, Wyoming  
- 2005 -

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Laramie, Wyoming. U.S.A.  
September, 2005

## Introduction

This work was originally written in 1985; at least, much of it was. I called it *QUIET PASSAGE* then for its emphasis on our needing to be ready to die or quietly pass on to the next adventure. This current work will mostly be what *QUIET PASSAGE* was, although this one will end with a brand new chapter I call *Beyond The Grave*.

What is this work about in general? I would offer that is a bit about knowing Christ. Thus – the title: *KNOWING CHRIST*. In part, in a very personal manner, I will analyze those supposedly closest to Christ as allegedly “directed” by Christ to carry on in his stead. In other aspects, I will speculate on some death related events of the life of Christ and ponder their meanings – like the crucifixion and the resurrection. I will also throw in a short fantasy conversation between Christ and two others. I will let you get to the chapter of that conversation to see who the other two beside Christ are.

When I say this work is about knowing Christ, I do not mean knowing about Christ. I mean truly knowing. Of course, it can only be speculation about anyone’s really knowing any other person; but as I see it, true knowledge of a person in terms of agreement with what one knows requires imitation of the known person. In other words, we can review Peter and Paul and anyone who claims to “know” Jesus and determine the extent of their real knowledge by comparing their conduct with the alleged principles of Jesus. If any two matches reflect true imitation by virtue of principles that Jesus set down, then one can be relatively sure that one who claims to know Jesus really does know him. If a Peter or a Paul clearly acts different than how one would think that Jesus would have acted in the same circumstance, then one can conclude that a Peter or a Paul or a whoever did not really know Jesus; and if they did not really know Jesus, only a fool would put stock in anything they might have led us to believe – like Jesus hand picked them to lead the rest of us.

Well, as we might say “Out West,” I reckon that ought to be enough to get us going. It is only speculation that I offer. It is yours to consider as you wish; but I thank you for letting me offer it. Life is much too important to lead it without reflection and to follow the advice of others just because those others claim to have known Christ or God or whatever. If, in fact, those others did not know Christ and we assume they did and follow their trail because of their claim, then the range we may end up in may not be the real range of the real Christ, but a corral without a pasture intended to be a holding cell to keep us safe for being slaughtered into steaks for others – both in this life and in life *beyond the grave* as well. As Christ might say, *let him or her who has ears, hear.*

Respectfully,

Francis William Bessler  
Laramie, Wyoming, U.S.A.  
September 17, 2005

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## # 1

### The Road To Damascus

Anybody who is familiar with Christian tradition knows about the story of Paul, who before his conversion to Christianity was named *Saul*. This man Saul has been numbered among the millions of souls who have at sometime in their lifetime experienced a vision or some so called *paranormal* experience – meaning *outside the norm*. I do not choose to begin this work by denying the legitimate experience of another or call him crazy because of his experience; but like any other being, Paul, or Saul, could only interpret his experience within the scope of his own vision of life. We are all so limited. We are limited by our experiences.

So, what was Paul's interpretation of life? Who was Paul? Allegedly, he was a firm Jewish believer who was rather extreme in his love for God. Paul's vision of life, then, was magnified by a love for God. It was an extreme love for God that commanded him to hate God's enemies. When he saw the Christians as God's enemies, he hated them. When he saw the Christians as God's friends, he loved them. Paul was a true believer in God, or what he conceived or perceived is God. His vision of God dictated his actions.

So, we have this picture of a stern Jew before us, riding with some fellow soldiers, Jewish soldiers, to Damascus, a Syrian town across the Jordan River from Israel. Paul had heard Jewish Christians were settling there and he requested permission from the Councils in Jerusalem to go fetch them and bring them back to Jerusalem for trial. Paul was a purist; and Jewish ways stood to be corrupted by this radical wing of Judaism which taught that the anticipated Jewish Messiah had come at last.

I sincerely believe that the trouble with early Christianity was that it failed to accept its separate identity from the mainline religion. As so often happens, if you stay within a sect in order to correct its perceived erroneous ways rather than establish a completely separate order of things with another institution, you are vulnerable to correction, punishment, and even excommunication or execution by the members of your own church. You'd be better off saying, you go your way and I'll go mine, but I'll not claim your roof any longer.

This the early Christians did not do. They tried to remain within the Jewish structure; and understandably, that Jewish structure rebelled. In this light we find Paul, totally dedicated to the mainline religion and extremely suspicious of a lack of orthodoxy within the structure. Something had to be done with the errant Jews who claimed that the promised messiah had come. Saul volunteered to be a Jewish (& Roman) general and was on his way to Damascus when he had his experience that led to his conversion. He was blinded by a bright light and then he heard a voice. *Why do you persecute me?* Paul responded: *Who are you?* And the voice declared: *I am Jesus whom you persecute.*

I dare say Paul quickly decided this Jesus was not so errant after all; and the rest is history. Paul went on to become one of the hard core Christians and was probably one of the first to try and steer Christianity away from being a leg of Judaism and a separate religion with a constitution all its own.

But what was the experience of Paul when he was struck off his horse by the blinding light with a voice? Was he experiencing an illusion or hallucination? Personally, I doubt that. Paul was a fierce pragmatist, a legal jurist; and fierce pragmatists are not prone to hear voices unless those voices are real. Paul's voice was real alright, but still he would not have been able to hear it unless he was dedicated to listening. Paul was, above all, a listener, mostly to tradition, but still a listener, a soul yearning to belong to the just God. Very likely, Paul heard a voice and received a command; but was it Christ, or Jesus, as the voice claimed?

Hearing a voice does not render the speaker valid, although it may very well render the listener gullible. Have you ever heard where a *hearer of voices* has challenged the claimed origin of a voice? And almost always, it's God or a henchman of God. Is it any wonder that the receivers of "God's Word" down through the annals of history have been intense listeners and not insistent questioners – from Moses to the Ayatollahs of Mohammed? They all know they talked to God because the voice claimed as much – or at least implied as much.

The problem with being an intense listener is that you lay yourself wide open for this sort of thing. It may have been Christ who spoke to Paul; and then again, it may not have been. If there are souls outside the body, and most of us who have ever lost a loved one believe there are, then it stands to reason that some of these unseen visitors will try to talk to us – or communicate with us in some way.

Perhaps I am a bit narrow minded, but I have one rule, among others – **don't listen to any voices or spirits without bodies**. It keeps me out of more trouble I'm sure than it gets me into. Otherwise, I might end up a Paul of Tarsus or a Moses or a Mohammed or a Pope and go wandering off after a voice.

**As I see it, God must be infinite or there is no such thing as infinity.** If God is truly infinite, that means that God must be everywhere – and everywhere equally. If God is everywhere equally, then God must be just as much in me as in Paul or anyone; and that includes any souls or voices without bodies who are speaking or trying to speak to others with or inside bodies. None of those voices have any more or less of God than I. So to follow after them under the pretense they have more of God than I is to follow after a fool who is actually more blind than I; for I see God in me and them and they do not. You've heard the saying, *If the blind follow the blind, both fall into the pit*. I don't like pits; and quite frankly, the best way to avoid them is to see with my own eyes and understand with my own mind.

Many have said to me – **I need Christ to see for me. Without him or his voice or his counsel or his spirit, I am blind and deaf and dumb**. No, Friends! And Christ would be the first to agree. It is with another's sight and voice and spirit that you are rendered personally blind and deaf and dumb. There are an awful lot of people in this world listening to voices or to voices that heard voices. Consequently, they are blind and deaf and dumb in terms of understanding anything for themselves.

***Many will come in my name. Watch for them.*** Christ said that – or so it has been said by the writers of the Gospels that he did. Was Paul one of the first to hear a voice and ignore the counsel of Christ? It's very possible that the voice that Paul heard was not that of Christ, but some mischievous soul pretending to be Christ. Being an intense listener to commands of others, Paul was certainly vulnerable.

## Ananias & Sapphira

As Paul was an intense listener, Peter was not. In fact, Peter was not a very good listener at all. Supposedly, Christ had to speak to him in multiples to make sure he got the message. Peter and I would have made a great duo because people have to repeat things to me too – all the time. **What's that, you say? I'm sorry. I was not paying attention.** And yet the real important stuff in life I do hear, I think.

Our friend, Peter, owed it to all of us who were not there to listen better than he did, however. Apparently he wasn't listening again when Christ spoke of the blessed life and the blessed way which is nothing more than the way of peace. If Christ said anything, he said again and again and again these words: **Judge not** and you shall not be judged. **Condemn not** and you will not be condemned. **Forgive** and you will be forgiven. This was his definition of love. **Don't judge, Don't condemn, and Forgive!**

Peter heard these words, these commands, these rules, but apparently he didn't get the message. In fact, Peter must have so misunderstood the message of forgiveness that he was rather confused. He even asked for Christ to clarify himself in more concrete terms. Let me paraphrase. **Tell me, Lord. Spell it out to me. Surely there is a limit to this forgiveness idea you promote. How many times must I forgive my brother before forgiveness becomes unreasonable? Give me a number, something I can relate to – seven times?**

And Christ turned and said to Peter – again in paraphrase. **Peter, read my lips if you won't hear my words. No! Not seven times, but seven times seventy. Life is not a numbers game, My Friend. It's a heart affair. I tell you, Peter, that if you should have something against your brother and find yourself offering a gift at the altar, stop and go make peace with your brother before you continue your offering.**

Peter never listened, but evidently he was convinced he heard Christ tell him that he, Peter, would be responsible for taking charge if Christ should ever be rendered impotent. **I heard him say I was to take charge.** Peter never listened, but he heard that. Apparently, the others agreed; for after Christ was rendered impotent, they looked to Peter for leadership. At least, many of them did. Was it any wonder that Peter led like he listened – totally contrary to the Master's counsel?

I think that few could have been chosen to lead Christianity who were more unlike Christ than Peter. Peter was a man of **discipline** in terms of demanding obedience – regardless of understanding or a lack thereof on the part of the obedient one. Christ believed in **disposition** and saw no value in obedience without understanding. Peter was a **realist** in that he was aware of the financial requirements of a movement. Christ was an **idealist** and was not interested in the financial aspect of anything. Christ was more concerned with forgiveness and gratitude than with how much money is in the till. Peter was a **pragmatist**. He was very aware that it takes money to run an operation. Christ was a **mystic** in that he was almost totally

soul oriented; and souls do not need money or need to be financed. Peter was a **crude fisherman**. Christ was a *gentle carpenter* – most of the time; however I will note a major exception of the gentleness aspect later. Peter was a **stern judge**. Christ *forgave*.

When I see the terrific difference between these two men, I feel compelled to ask a question. **Did Christ really leave his movement in the hands of Peter? Or did Peter simply arrogantly take charge?** Personally, I think the latter. That Christ could leave his work and his mission of peace and love and forgiveness in the hands of a complete opposite seems a bit unlikely to me; and yet I cannot fault Peter for taking charge like he did. He, too, was limited by his vision of life. He never did understand that the *Kingdom of Christ* is one of the heart, not one of chartered memberships and royal staffs. Peter was a **bishop** who sought to command others. Christ was a *priest* who sought only to serve.

Peter, the bishop, did not handle things as would have Christ, the priest. One day he heard that two new members of his fledgling church had compromised his **sell what thou hast and give the earnings to the church** attitude. The new members names were Ananias and Sapphira. The young married couple had sold their property and had only given half to the church; but Peter wanted it all, not just half.

Peter, the stern bishop, forgot the counsel of Christ, the priest, and sat in judgment of this rather generous husband and wife. Read about it in the 5<sup>th</sup> Chapter of *Acts* of the **BIBLE** if you like. He accused the couple in the harshest of terms for – what he called – **lying to the Holy Spirit** – for admitting to only half of their wealth. That’s really putting ten percent tithing to shame. Isn’t it? And yet even half of their wealth was not good enough for Peter. Where in Heaven’s name was his head – and his heart? He should have been grateful for just one percent, but not Peter. He wanted it all. The scene that followed is almost too unchristian to bear.

Peter, an **anti-Christ** for completely discounting the Christian principle of *Judge not*, so concerned with finances and the submission of others to his views, admittedly sincere within the scope of his own ignorance, did what the Master forbade. He stood there and not only judged as Christ, the priest, would not have done, but he also condemned as an anti-Christ. Both Ananias and Sapphira were so terrified by the fire of his scolding that they died instantly, presumably of heart attacks. Peter, the bishop, had totally overruled Christ, the priest.

**Or do you think the gentle priest would have acted that way?**

### # 3

## Easter

***He's not here. He has risen!*** If Christ was anything, he was intangible; and he taught that Heaven is likewise, understanding Heaven as a ***kingdom of peace***. Heaven can also be understood as simply ***the presence of God*** and I often refer to Heaven in that light; but for this work, let us define Heaven as a ***kingdom of peace***. Regarding the conclusion of the life of Jesus, it makes no difference if he rose from the dead or not. Only those who don't believe in the immortality of the soul should be impressed by anyone's rising from the dead. **Death is an illusion.** Christ never really died in the sense of his spiritual or soulful identity. Consequently, he never had to be resurrected. None of us do.

That's not to say that Easter is nonsense. Far from it; but if there is a lesson in Easter, and there certainly is, it's that life is its own reward. Let life go naturally as it will, and life will do right for you. Christ knew this; and it is that belief that life and true reward are correctly intangibles that gave him his individual command of spirit or soul. ***You have no power over me, except that which I give you.*** The truth is, though, that he never yielded his power, his real life, and his resurrection proves it.

It amazes me how many people walk through life and never find what resurrection really means. It is indeed a misnomer because **living again** is what resurrection implies, but **living still** is what it really means. ***You never die.*** That's the essence of the lesson of Easter. If you try to capture life, you'll lose it. If you let it go, you will find it – or perhaps more correctly, it will find you. **You are a member of the maze. Surrender to a happy participation; and you will find peace.**

I think it is interesting that myriads of souls think of Heaven and see golden streets in a town that is definitely confined. Outside of the town of Heaven is a narrow gate and guards positioned there to restrict the membership to only the worthy; but really, ***Heaven is not a gate into, but a lack of a gate.*** ***“He who will lose his life will find it. He who will find his life, in terms of hold onto it, will lose it.”*** You can't hold onto life, Friends, in terms of try to confine it or control it and attempt to make it what it is not. Let it go – and it becomes a friend. Try to make it do what you want it do and not what it wants to do – and it becomes your enemy.

Peter stands at the gate with a bucket in his hands and says: **to get in here, you must pay your dues.** And Paul stands on the other side to enforce the rules of garment. **No lady should enter without a scarf. No man should enter with one.** This Heaven they have constructed divides male from female and confiscates earnings before entry. Those of us outside the gates leaving Peter and Paul happily surrender our earnings, although we really don't claim any earnings in the first place. As happy members of the maze, we only participate in the overall wealth of Life's Gift. Those inside the gates and dutifully members of the Governments of Peter and Paul are also dutifully taxed.

So, what is the meaning of Christ after suffering? *Do not touch me for I have not yet ascended to my Father.* What does it mean? It means, **don't touch me for I must be free to go where I will.** I must be free to leave the gates. I must be free to move and to join my Father (or Mother) from whom I came as a soul. I must be free to join with my parent soul just as you will be free when you die to join yours. If you touch me, you will distract me from going – and you will keep me from my purpose, my reunion with my spiritual tradition from whence I came. What else could it mean?

Who moved the stone? Who cares? It is of no significance. **It is only a symbol of the world's illusion it had taken the life of Christ to save the multitudes from having to free their own lives.** Christ could not be held. He was, and is, un-hold-able, in terms of being capable of imprisonment. The very meaning of Christ is his intangibility and his teaching is that we, too, are intangible as life is intangible. To grab onto life is to lose it. To possess it is to smother it. To subdue it is to kill it.

What is grabbing onto life, rather than losing it? What is possessing it? What is subduing it? When are we guilty of doing these things? We do these things when we attempt to make life tangible, when we attempt to define life as ours and proceed to act like we have the right to label everything about us with a possessive “my” – my body, my feet, my penis, my vagina. It's alright to talk of my body, my feet, my penis, and my vagina when simply distinguishing mine from another, but to get so wrapped up in the “my” and not be able to substitute “my” with “Nature's” is what possessing life, in terms of trying to control it, is all about.

The ideal is to lose yourself into Nature and see Nature in control. That's when life becomes tremendously beautiful. Too often, we act like we created our own bodies and are not just enjoying them as gifts of another for a time. Who among us can say we created our own body? Yet we stand in front of a mirror and say: **I have such a beautiful body, as if saying, didn't I do a fantastic job in creating it?** Just look at me. Look at the perfection for which **I** am responsible. Look at **my** beautiful legs. Look at **my** beautiful face. Look at **my** beautiful sex.

When we lose ourselves into Nature, we experience a proper perception that we are only *participants in the Grand Design*. It's not **MY** body. It's **NATURE'S** body. It's not **MY** legs. It's **NATURE'S** legs. It's not **MY** face. It's **NATURE'S** face. It's not **MY** sex. It's **NATURE'S** sex. We are not our own architects. Perfection, for each of us, is to realize that and be thankful that if we let ourselves be lost into an already beautiful and masterful design and enjoy it sumptuously, Heaven will be ours for as long as we do so; and we will be saved.

Hell is insisting on being in command, or at least that's one version of it. We should take care of our bodies, but always as gifts to be appreciated and loved, not as properties to be controlled and ruled. Seeing our bodies and lives as properties to be controlled and ruled, or denounced and rejected as if trash, is trying to possess life and be its commander. Seeing our bodies and lives as gifts of a *Miraculous Creation* and enjoying them and appreciating them and using them according to design is yielding to life, not possessing it. **The difference between possessing and yielding is an intangible; and only those who recognize it, I think, can be truly happy.**

So, if you want to be happy, you should yield to life. Let life go and do its thing – and you should just go along for the ride. You should praise Nature, both in times of solace and in times of distress. Nature is always your friend, even when you are hurting.

Hurt is only Nature's way of saying, *hey, we have a problem we need to resolve*; and when it's resolved, the hurt will go away; but don't expect it to go away if you keep on doing whatever it is that's causing the imbalance in your system. Given respect and trustful cooperation, Nature can heal itself – or natural things can heal themselves. In times of health and distress, you should praise Nature; and you should ponder the idea that your praise is really a praise of God, the *Miracle Stuff of all Existence*.

Did Christ appear to Mary Magdalene and the men who later called themselves his disciples after his death? I think he did; but I suspect they did not recognize him then anymore than they had in life, or what they perceived him to be before death. Again, he never died. None of us will. **That is, of course, our souls will never die; and our souls are us.**

**And after he made his final exit, they returned to worship the stone that had been miraculously moved. They were sure he was the Son of God for he had moved the huge stone; but they failed to realize – his soul was never behind it.**

What happened to the body of Christ? I do not know; but I doubt that any of the Gospel writers did either. Perhaps the mysterious Joseph of Arimathaea knew, but his voice has long been silent. Perhaps he, or Pilate, had the body deposited in one place and then led the followers of Christ to believe that his body had been deposited elsewhere. Why? Who knows? Maybe Pilate felt a bit of remorse, or maybe outrage against the Jews for allowing the conviction of an innocent man. Maybe he took the body and gave it a private "Roman" type burial. How was he to know that Christ would subsequently materialize from spirit form and offer the impression that his body had come back to life?

What can I say? Speculation on this matter is only that – speculation. **No one knows what happened.** None of us were there; and the accounts of the Gospels are so disjointed as to be almost unbelievable. One account (Matthew) has bodies of saints in general rising from their tombs upon the death of Christ and actually appearing in town, or about town. The other three accounts fail to mention this momentous event. Matthew also tells of earthquakes happening at the time of Christ's death; but the other three apparently did not see that as significant either – for they failed to mention it.

One account (Matthew) has Mary Magdalene seeing an angel sitting on the stone outside of Christ's tomb, directing her that Jesus is not there. Another account (Mark) has Mary going into the tomb and encountering a "young man" who tells her that Jesus was not there. The third account, Luke, has Mary seeing not one, but two "men in shining garments" telling her (and the other Mary) that Jesus was not there. The final account, John, has Mary finding the stone moved, then running to tell Peter about it. The first three accounts don't tell of this "running to tell Peter" about the stone being moved, but the final account does. Peter then verifies a missing body and leaves. Then two angels appear to Mary as she looks into the tomb and Jesus appears from behind. Jesus does not appear at the grave site in the first three accounts, but he does in the final one.

Friends, with accounts like these, as confusing as they are, who knows what actually happened? Who moved the stone? I don't know. I'm not even sure there was ever a tomb.

No one likes to be the victim of a lie, but when four guys all tell the same story and tell four different versions, it's hard to believe any of them. Who was right? Why did they all come up with different accounts? Many will say it does not matter; but for those of us who insist on the truth, it does matter. Why tell me a story if it isn't true? For what



reason do you tell it? If you tell it because you want to share the truth, then you are obligated to tell the truth and not just some imaginary yarn and claim it is the truth.

Regardless of the stories, though, it's good to believe that we will in some way survive death; *and that is the real lesson of Easter.*

# 4

## An Easter Letter

Written March 23, 2004

### Greetings from your friendly Easter Bunny!

I'd like to share with you a tale. Once upon a time there was a fellow who was born with the initials ***FWB***. Just imagine for a moment that person was me. It could have been you, however. It could have been anyone. But just say it was me. Now this ***FWB*** whose middle name is "William" had an account opened in his name and into that account was deposited a million dollars. Let's just say that this "William" knew that a million dollars had been deposited into his account. So he was aware that he was very wealthy.

Now suppose that this William's parents later decided to change his name to "***Ferdinand***" or some such. Now, this fellow has the initials of ***FFB***, instead of ***FWB***. Wow! There goes that entire fortune that ***FWB*** thought he had. Poor ***FFB***! He just knew he had a million dollars in his account, but when he goes to the bank, not only does he not find an account opened in his name under the initials of ***FFB***, but there is no trace of his million dollars. Now, this ***FFB*** considers himself a very smart fellow and concludes to the obvious – somebody stole his million dollars. Of course, all of us bystanders know the truth, don't we? If our proverbial ***FFB*** would change his name back to the original ***FWB*** and get back to the original William, lo and behold, he would still find his million dollars in the same account in which it had been deposited long ago.

My Friends, your friendly **Easter Bunny** is here to tell you that is exactly what has happened to the human race in general. It has long had a million dollars in its account, but due to a little snafu, someone tried to change the middle initial of ***W*** to ***F*** and the world has since been lost in thinking it lost its original value or deposit. But all the time, that million dollar trust has been there in the name of humanity. Humanity has never lost its million dollars. It only thinks it has lost it because someone changed a middle initial from something to something else.

Perhaps this tale could be seen as the ***W*** standing for ***woman*** which might mean "***with male***" and the ***F*** standing for ***female*** which might mean "***from male.***" It's quite a story. Isn't it? Do you suppose that when man changed his idea that woman is supposed to stand for "with male" to the idea of his having not a woman but a female, the whole tale of humanity became undone?

Well, for what it's worth, I think that is what happened – in a way. Initially, man and woman were equal. Woman was not from man, but ***with*** man. But then somebody got the bright idea that woman originated ***from*** man – or at least without man, could not have been created – and thus, females were born; and with that bright idea, the entire human race was turned upside down. The million dollars it thought it had disappeared. The account was no longer. Dastardly thought! Isn't it?

Now, let's get real. It is only a thought, not a reality. Woman has always been woman and never female and the **W** has never been **F**. No million dollars has ever been lost – or worse – stolen. The human race has only been under the illusion that the account was pilfered. In reality, it is still the same as it was. The trouble is that the human race has become so comfortable with the illusion that it has structured its very institutions around the illusion. In one way or another, the illusion is the foundation of many – if not most – of the institutions of mankind. The **female** has been lifted up for all to see; and **woman** has disappeared. More than likely, way back when, man wanted to subjugate woman. So they engineered a story that had woman coming from man and therefore making woman dependent on man – like a child depending on a parent because that child comes from the parent.

There have been a good many down through history that have recognized this tale for what it is and have tried to correct it, but **illusive institutions** – or institutions based on illusion – do not like to be challenged. It undermines their **power**. At all cost, necessary illusions must be retained, **lest the entire fabric of humanity be dissolved with the dissolution of the illusion**.

I think Jesus was one of the wise ones down through history who have tried to put the **woman** back in place, as **equal to** man and not **from** man. This **from** business has always been an illusion – or better put – a fiction. Woman never did come from man. If anything, man had to come from woman because woman has a **womb** and man does not. **Realistically, if one gender originated from the other, it had to have been man from woman, not woman from man.**

Jesus may not have told it quite like that – but the result is the same. Jesus knew that the illusion that man and woman are unequal is false; and therefore, all institutions based on the inequality of male and female are false as well. We, as humans, think we have lost a million dollars when in truth we have not because we have been under the illusion that inequality is supposed to be. As long as we insist on sticking to that story, we will never know that ours is an open account and nothing we can do can ever drain it. Our account is always full because we are always full of God. This million dollar account we have is no usual account. No matter how much we take out, like magic, nothing ever leaves. Now, that's quite a fairy tale. Isn't it? The truth is, however, there is no **fairy** to it. This is no tale of fiction. This is a tale of fact.

Why is it fact and not fiction? Because God is Infinite. That means there is no end to God; and if it is God that is really the substance of our account of life, how could it ever empty – or be emptied?

Jesus tried with all his might to tell this tale many years ago, but man was too much in love with female to let it happen. So the illusion has continued and institutions have multiplied. Someday, like Jesus offered, all of man's institutions not founded on rock and instead stuck in sand will flounder. It is only a matter of time. Waves will wipe up against any institution built on sand and it will be wasted away. How could it be different?

People are under the illusion that Jesus came to restore an account that was pilfered. That ignorance abounds. Jesus did not come to restore an account that was damaged, but rather he came to tell us our account was never damaged. There is a big difference. Jesus did not come to die to somehow restore a lost account. He died to save the original account from further discredit.

Equality sometimes comes at a huge price. Jesus died to demonstrate equality, not to pacify God into forgiving man. Forgiveness may indeed be useful, but it comes automatic with a sense of equality; and without a sense of equality, nothing is really ever forgiven. Forgiveness can also be an illusion, stacked on top of all the other illusions that mankind has decided to uphold. **Forgiveness is not so much an act as it is a state of mind. I don't forgive you. I live in a state of forgiveness.**

Anyway, Jesus died to prove to us that come what may, nothing we do in life is more important than living a sense of equality. Those who sense they are equal to others cannot empower over others because that is an expression of inequality. Accordingly, Jesus preferred retaining his sense of equality and refused to strike out at his captors. The result was his captors took his life. Let's just say that Jesus was caught in a trap. He could not strike out to defend himself – lest he power himself above others; and thus he was struck down by those who understood him not.

And today, we continue the practice. We continue to “strike” Jesus every time we strike at another human being in whatever name we do it – including justice. Nothing has changed. The rules are still the same. Illusion remains illusion; and truth remains truth.

But – as we all know – there can be a wonderful climax to every story, to every life, no matter how based on illusion it has been. We can all change – or stay the course as Jesus did. If our course is not that of Jesus, however, fiction will continue to be fact; and souls will continue to think that their million dollar trust has been raided. With the Resurrection of Jesus, he was released from his old pain. It did not last – as he knew it would not because it could not. The pain is only temporary for those who pay attention to *the reality of equality*, though the pain is at least relatively permanent for those who don't. It's relatively permanent until it can become temporary with a change of focus.

***HAVE A LOVELY EASTER, EVERYONE!***

***Your Friendly Easter Bunny – FWB – Francis William Bessler (Will, Frank)***

## Good Friday

Who killed Christ? We are total fools if we answer that question with “The Jews” or “The Romans” or “Judas” or a combination of them all. Christ was at the helm of his own life; and *Christ killed himself* – in that he orchestrated his own death or probably did.

Perhaps Christ was very much influenced by a man called **Socrates**. It has been speculated by some that in the eighteen years between his alleged appearance in the Temple in Jerusalem at the age of twelve and his emergence as a teacher at the age of thirty, Christ may have been absent from Israel and may have been a student in Greece and maybe other lands too. If so, he couldn't have helped but to have been educated in the life of Socrates – or at least exposed to him and his teachings. In my opinion, this is a reasonable explanation for the *missing eighteen years*. Christ may have spent time abroad, as it were, if not in Greece, at least in some land where he could have studied some of the speculation of the sages of his day.

The parallels between Socrates and Christ are quite interesting, even though Socrates preceded Christ by 400 years. Socrates was a philosopher. So was Christ. Socrates inflamed the civil and religious men and leaders of his time. So did Christ. Socrates believed strongly in the immortality of the soul. So did Christ. Socrates was admired as a public teacher. So was Christ. Socrates wanted to prove to his friends that death did not scare him or impede him from the practice of virtue as he saw it. So did Christ. Socrates chose to be executed at the time of a religious festival. So did Christ.

Are these parallels merely coincidence? *Or was Christ seeking to emulate Socrates?* I'd say there is a good chance that Christ knew of and loved Socrates and tried to do for his fellow Jews and with his fellow Jews what Socrates had done for his fellow Greeks and with his fellow Greeks four centuries before. Socrates was a *Christian* through and through long before Christ set a foot upon the earth. What does that do for the dogma that only Christ could correct immoral behavior when Socrates had concentrated on the same thing four centuries before?

**Good Friday may well have been the climax of a yearning Christ to emulate Socrates.** Socrates was condemned to death because he outraged his critics; but Socrates probably outraged his critics, at least at the end of his life, in order to perpetrate the end he received. Socrates wanted to die in the public eye as he had lived in the public eye. He wanted to die with a flair; and so he orchestrated his own execution and would settle for nothing less. He believed in the immortality of the soul and he wanted to show that he did not fear death. Likely, he chose the time of a Greek religious festival for his execution because it would provide the ultimate exposure he desired because crowds would be attending the city when normally they would have been absent in the country.

Socrates was provided the opportunity of an alternative. He could die for his **crimes of corrupting the youth and paying allegiance to false gods** by drinking hemlock – or he could pay a substantial fine. He chose the hemlock when he could have settled for far less.

Christ, too, chose to die when he could have settled for less. He needed the notion of an alternative to complete the drama – or may have. The religious festival of the Passover at Jerusalem not only provided him his Socratic timing, but it also provided him an even more honorable “alternative.” Enter Barabbas!

Being an educated Jew, Christ knew of the tradition to free a convicted prisoner at the time of the Passover. He also knew well how to anger an authority to prefer his death over that of any other alleged “criminal.” How would it have completed the drama if Barabbas or a convicted felon was crucified and Christ was set free? Socrates would not have done it that-a-way.

Think back. What preceded Good Friday? Holy Thursday. And what happened on Holy Thursday – other than the fine dining at the end of the day in a supper room in Jerusalem? Something totally uncharacteristic of Christ.

Christ was ordinarily a meek and quiet man, like Socrates, but on this day he chose to be un-Christ-like and featured himself as a stormy and dangerous rebel by intentionally going into the most revered site of the Jewish world – The Temple – and there flaunting his rebellion for all to see. I doubt that he went into the Temple and turned over the tables of the money lenders there and whipped the priests there because of a respect for Jewish ways. He did – or may have done – what he did to intentionally irritate the authorities so that his conviction for religious and civil insurrection could be assured.

Christ was a remarkable man; and I think none greater have ever lived. None greater have ever walked this earth; but if Socrates was not the Son of God, though clearly he preached Christianity in that he believed strongly in the integrity of the individual, then neither could have Christ been the Son of God for preaching the same. Therein lies the crux of the discussion as to whether Christ was The Son of God – as most Christians claim he was. If he was, then he had a twin brother called Socrates; and Socrates was officially neither Jewish nor Christian. Personally, I think both Socrates and Christ both believed they were sons of God because they believed all are sons of God, but neither believed he is an **only son of God**.

Socrates believed firmly in the soul, though much of society is taught that the soul only has meaning through revelation. How, then, could a considered irreligious thinker have demonstrated boldly and courageously the spirituality of the soul by his open acceptance of death because of a thought that death is only a passageway to another life? What religious saint has demonstrated more? That tends to illustrate that the spirituality of the soul is not merely a religious matter, but a philosophical one as well.

Christ believed firmly in the soul, and like his friend, Socrates, he chose to design his own death to prove to himself and others, the immortality of the soul. Immortality was not merely a thought on the part of Christ. It was deep belief – a very deep belief. He planned to die, I think, and then stick around after death; and he knew that miracles would happen. How much he knew is in question. Perhaps he had to die to

find out; but I think he knew he would survive and would linger long enough after death to prove or demonstrate his immortality.

Can his resurrection be explained philosophically? In the early 1970s, a big commercial airliner went down in the Everglades of Florida. A flight engineer, whom I think was named Dom Comolli, or something close to that, was one of the many fatalities. After his death, Dom appeared to many – briefly – but he appeared, and even spoke once. The **Ghost of Flight 401** felt responsible for the crash and after death volunteered to supervise so that no other flights for that particular airline would suffer the same fate. Thus he materialized as if he were actually still alive in bodily form now and then to warn his airline of some perceived danger. Quite a story.

Though we do not understand how, we do survive death and sometimes we can manifest ourselves in physical form, or perhaps pseudo-physical form, like Dom Comolli, the **Ghost of Flight 401**, or Jesus Christ, the *soul brother of Socrates*.

# 6

## **Work In Progress**

Written March 21, 2004

Thank you, Heavenly Parents, for my wonderful life.  
I awake in the morning, having slept quietly in the night.  
I jump out of bed and run naturally in the house  
to get a feel for living and to make of life my spouse.  
I look in the mirror at the reflection that looks at me  
as I see all I am and to see life springing free.  
The hormones in my body get slimmer as I grow old  
and members act a bit more tired and less and less bold.  
But it's good to know the life I have whatever that life is  
because I'm a *work in progress*, and in me, there is no sin.

But it's just not my gender, I attend to, you see.  
There's more than genitals that comprise the one that is me.  
I look into the mirror and I see a chest there too  
and I know that beneath it, a heart is beating that makes my pulse a truth.  
A person is a fool, I think, who does not recognize  
that life itself is a miracle and should be seen as a prize.  
Every time you look at your self, it should seem like you just won  
the grandest lottery of all, for you are God's son -  
or perhaps God's daughter, for a girl is as good as a guy  
because we are all *works in progress*, spirits energized.

People tell me you cannot accept the person that you are  
because long ago your parents fell and it's for you to stick like tar.  
They say that because your mother may have felt weak,  
when you were born, you inherited her and like her must speak.  
I love my parents, but I know it need not be the case  
that if my father was, in fact, weak, I need not repeat his state.  
Each of us is free to make of life what we will  
and no one who has gone before us need be used as a still  
to make the same wine that our heritage saw fit to make  
because we are *works in progress*, and progress should be our fate.



So let those who think that conduct should be the way it's always been  
stand aside and make room for one who knows no sin.  
I am full of God and there is no room for sin in me to abide;  
for where God is, no sin can be, and if no sin, no reason to be shy.  
I am not creating myself, anymore than you are creating you  
and I have no right to denounce my Creator by feeling blue.  
Life is a gift, but it also comes attached with an obligation.  
If you want to know all you are, then give in to celebration.  
Go natural all you can – to know all you can be  
and know that you are a *work in progress*, born to be free.

It's said that Jesus died on the cross so that I may live,  
but let us never forget, he gave what was his to give.  
The lesson of his death should let us know the reason that he died  
and that was to show himself and us how our souls can be wise.  
You cannot live by taking life – no matter what the reason;  
and those who take another's life are guilty of soulful treason.  
Any time I bid myself or another to swing at you, I swing back at me  
and I punch me in the soul and lose my liberty.  
So, yes, Christ did die for me to show me how to go;  
and, as a *work in progress*, I accept his show.

It is said that Jesus rose into Heaven after he had died;  
but the truth is he was always in Heaven, even in this life.  
For Heaven is more than just a place; it's also a state of soul.  
If one is in Heaven, it's so wherever one does go.  
And so it is too with hell – should that be your direction.  
If hell is your choice now, then hell will likely be your next selection.  
Our lives here in this place are only the beginning  
of where we choose to take our souls and do our soulful spinning.  
I think Jesus lived and died to free souls from hateful captivity;  
and as a *work in progress*, I am being drawn to be free.

Life is perhaps complicated, but it's also simple too.  
We need not know the details to be sure of the simple truth.  
The simple truth is that all are divine for God is everywhere  
and no one need worry about being banned by God in fear.  
God is everywhere and therefore inside of each of us.  
Knowing that is what makes of any life one that is just.  
Jesus lived to tell us that all are equally children of God  
because God is making us all and upon no one does God tread.  
And so I leave you to ponder just what I've stated in these lines.  
Like me, you are a *work in progress*, unfolding in life and time.

# 7

**A Conversation**

- Will:** Well, if it isn't the *Serenity Brothers!*
- Christ:** Hello, Will. Good to see you.
- Socrates:** Are you not one of us, My Friend? Are you not one of the *Serenity Brothers?*
- Will:** I'd like to think so.
- Christ:** Don't just think so. Resolve that it's so.
- Socrates:** That's right, Will. You only deserve what you resolve. Thinking about something is good for a start, but it's the resolution of the issue that counts in the end.
- Will:** You're a Master, Socrates. You tried to resolve a lot through your dialectics, as they have been called, but let me be honest with you, My Good Man, I love your character a whole lot more than your arguments.
- Socrates:** Yes, I did do a lot of talking, but Plato wrote me up as a veritable windbag. Never trust a student to capture the teacher, I guess.
- Christ:** You're right there. My biographers have me saying things I never said and doing things I never did.
- Will:** I must say, they confused me, Christ, but you gave them a lot of room to wonder. How could they know that when you said you would have to be delivered to the authorities and suffer humiliation and crucifixion that it was your personal plan and not destiny's decision?
- Christ:** Maybe it was destiny's decision.
- Socrates:** We are part of a larger plan, you know, Will. I came first to teach that the Goodness of God is in all things and that consequently, everything has Divine merit. I also taught that our souls are immortal.
- Christ:** I came later to reemphasize the immortality of the soul and that the fruits of our lives stem from a disposition to see life in a certain way. Your vision of life determines your conduct. Both Socrates and I directed our

deaths to demonstrate a confidence we would live on, that everyone lives on.

**Will:** Thank you, Friends, for your destinies; but I am a man without a destiny.

**Socrates:** You just stumbled into your role. Is that it?

**Will:** Well, I don't know.

**Christ:** If you don't, who does?

**Will:** I don't know that either. I do know, however, what you guys taught, that the virtue of life is its inescapable goodness and that all goodness is God. I also know that all power of virtue is in the vision to see good. If you see only good, then any so called evil that may be lurking about, imaginary or real, will go completely unnoticed; and being unnoticed, at least for a visionary, it will practically not exist. Though you may walk through the valley of death, you will fear no evil; for your eyes and soul will see only the goodness all around you.

**Socrates:** Sounds like a recording, doesn't it, Christ? But I can see the message has not lost any of its original vigor.

**Christ:** Yes, Socrates, it is the message. There's a lot of hope for a world that's still hearing it.

**Will:** Well, Fellas, I have to go, but before I do, could you give me a hint when I'm scheduled to join you.

**Socrates:** Sorry, Will, you will know the timing when you make the passage over here, and probably not before.

**Christ:** Maybe that's your destiny, My Friend – just live your life well and pleasingly and your passage, when it does happen, will be a quiet one.

**Will:** Like the life I lead, huh?

**Christ:** Yes, My Friend, like the life you lead, if you lead it that way.

**Will:** I'll do my best. Thanks! Bye for now, Guys!

**Christ:** Bye, Will!

**Socrates:** Take care, Will. See you later.

**Jesus/Christ**

Who was Jesus? We are guessing about that, but I think he was a man like any man or woman. In other words, he was neither man nor woman, but person. The name of *person* applies to all and does not distinguish among the sexes. The title of *person* also implies a certain nobility of all, precisely because it does not separate male from female and make one a god and the other a goddess. For people of *person*, there are no kings or queens or lords or servants or slaves. There are only persons, *little masters*, each unto to him or herself.

Who was Jesus? I think he was a man who realized that all are persons and that there are no males and females or children or adults – only persons. He has been called a **savior**. In fact, that is what the name of **Jesus** itself means – **savior**; but Jesus was no savior in the ordinary sense of the term. He did not come to constantly save, but to save once. Any man or woman – or person – who constantly needs saved and thinks that Jesus is there to do that has completely misunderstood the life of Jesus.

In a sense, *Jesus* is *wisdom*, not **grace** – that is, not grace in a religious sense – meaning something given to perfect one from outside that self. Wisdom sets us free to know what to do a next time we confront a difficulty. Grace binds us by keeping us from handling difficulties on our own. **Jesus was not about grace. Jesus was about wisdom.**

On the other hand, Peter and Paul were not about wisdom. They were about grace. They were not about setting people free as persons. They were about keeping people enslaved as men and women and they did their utmost to divide people into this or that. When people sense division, then grace comes to the rescue. When people sense unity, then wisdom liberates them to stand on their own as individual giants of personal integrity.

**Grace is from without. Wisdom is from within.** One with the need of grace is in constant need of others to make sense of him or herself. One with wisdom never needs another to make sense of him or herself. Grace is for male and female in their struggle to come to terms with one another. Wisdom is for persons who realize they have no need for struggle.

It was wisdom that died on that cross at Calvary so long ago – not grace. It was wisdom that knew that the soul survives the body and that no one can take away the soul just because they eliminate a body. It was wisdom that defied struggle against captivity when Jesus was arrested on Holy Thursday night. It was not grace. **Grace would have called for being rescued from execution. Wisdom realized no rescue was needed.**

Peter and Paul stood for grace, not wisdom. Accordingly, they did not stand for Jesus. **They could not have stood for Jesus if they did not stand for liberty among persons because it is liberty among persons that Jesus came to teach.** He

could only teach it, though. He could not deliver it. No man can deliver true liberty to another. He can teach it, but he can not deliver it. ***True liberty of soul requires wisdom from within, not deliverance by another.*** Jesus was not about constantly delivering us from evil as Peter and Paul believed was necessary. Jesus was about recognizing that there is no evil except that we see it and let it control us and divide us into male and female, master and slave, captain and private, devil and saint.

**The saddest thing about Calvary is that the world has allowed it to become – not the font of wisdom that Jesus intended – but the portal of grace he abhorred.** Grace is a wonderful word and when used properly, it reflects wisdom and could be considered another name for wisdom; but the way it has been used, for the most part, it is not wisdom it reflects, but rather blindness and stupidity and surrender.

Literally, ***grace*** means ***gratitude***; and when used that way, it is also wisdom because wisdom generates gratitude. Unfortunately most people do not think simple gratitude when they talk about grace. **They speak of help from without, not wisdom from within.**

**May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be always with you.** That is not intended to say: ***may the wisdom of Jesus Christ be always within you.*** It is to say: **may you always be protected by the Lord Jesus Christ whenever you encounter the devil or evil.** Peter and Paul and all their followers have allowed the true meaning of grace – which is gratitude – to be turned into something it is not just like they have allowed Jesus to be turned into someone he is not.

Yes, Jesus was a ***savior*** and is a ***savior*** if he is seen as a ***sage*** and not a ***lord***. Anytime anyone references Jesus Christ as Lord Jesus Christ, they show they have missed the entire message of his life. Jesus Christ is not my lord like I am in constant need of his services or like he is in constant need of mine. Wherever there is a lord, there is need on both sides of a relationship. A lord needs a servant just as much as a servant needs a lord. But Jesus was not about lords in anyway – in being one or in serving one. He was about the ***equality of personality***, not the ***inequality of lording***.

I have long felt that Jesus had another name, perhaps by birth. I have considered he was born with a name like ***Immanuel*** because the Gospel of Matthew offers that some prophecy (from Isaiah) says the expected Jewish Messiah would be born with the name of ***Immanuel*** – which means ***God with us***. So maybe he was really ***Immanuel*** and only acquired ***Jesus*** as a nickname in time. I can certainly understand such a transition of names. If someone were to come to me and tell me that ***God is with me*** or ***God is in me***, then I would consider such a person as a ***Jesus*** or ***Savior*** if I had not known that before. It is certainly a very ***saving message*** because it is the basis of the wisdom of an ***equality of personality***. ***It is the idea that God is in all that is the liberating idea.***

Sadly, however, it seems the ***Liberator*** was adopted by many who had no desire to liberate others. The ***Liberator*** was adopted by many who believed that constant struggle is the essence of life and the ***Liberator*** was turned into the ***Savior***. ***Immanuel*** became ***Jesus*** and ***Christ*** became ***Lord***; and, as they say, the rest is history; and perhaps it is history that contains the true definition of Jesus as ***savior***.

Jesus did not just come out of nowhere. **He came out of history** – a history that believed in rescue and inequality and all of that. He came from a history that saw ***sacrifice*** as the single most important religious tool. Not only the Jews believed in

sacrifice. I guess they all did – in one form or another. Pagans believed in **sacrificing** to their various gods. The Jews were supposedly not Pagans, but they believed in **sacrificing** to their one god.

As I see it, however, **the only difference between the Jews and the Other Pagans is that they differed only in the number of gods to which they sacrificed.** So the Jews had only one god. They still believed that one god is outside of us. So what does it matter if you believe in a god to whom you must sacrifice? What does it matter if you are called a Pagan or a Jew? It is still all wrong.

Most Christians believe that Jewish sacrifice was right. They believe that the god of the Jews, Jehovah, really did exist as claimed and that the god, Jehovah, did deserve the sacrifices that were offered to him. They believe that Abraham was completely right in being willing to sacrifice his son to the great god, Jehovah. They believe that Moses had every right to sacrifice the Egyptians to the great god, Jehovah. They believe that David had every right to slay Goliath in the name of the great god, Jehovah. They believe that it was useful to slay a lamb and throw it on a fire while offering homage to the great god, Jehovah. If they believe all of that, is it any wonder that they also believe that the great god, Jehovah, deserves homage via the sacrifice of a son of Israel? Enter Jesus Christ as **Sacrifice to Jehovah**, not as **Liberator of Persons**.

If this Jewish Jehovah was really the one and only God, this Jehovah would not have been outside of some and would have been inside of all. The very idea that Jehovah favored one nation over another nation shows that Jehovah was not God; and it also shows that Jehovah was just another of the many Pagan gods. All the Pagan gods had one thing in common. **They all required sacrifice.** They all required that their servants pay homage to them by offering some expression of admiration.

It was into this Jewish/Pagan world that Jesus was born. The Jews, like all Pagans, believed in the right of sacrifice – of offering up to their god something of value. Since the early Christians like Peter and Paul were really Jews who believed in the god, Jehovah, and the right of Jehovah to demand sacrifice, is it any wonder that they would eventually turn Jesus into a sacrifice and refuse him his rightful role as liberator?

Most Christians do not stop and think that Jesus was born of the long tradition of Jehovah – a false god that never existed as God or could not have existed as God and still have been absent in some while about with others. Even with the others he was about, Jehovah was never within. **Jewish Pagans** prayed to a god, Jehovah, outside of them, never inside of them. And, of course, **Christian Pagans** continue to honor the false god, Jehovah, by even beginning to think that Jesus ever belonged to Jehovah.

Peter and Paul believed in Jehovah, though. They believed that Jehovah had a right to demand what he wanted and they had an obligation to give him what he demanded. Thus, they imagined that Jehovah required Jesus to be sacrificed to him; and they never thought twice that their Jehovah is really a false god. And Christians today who believe that Jehovah had a right to demand sacrifice of any kind are nothing more than Pagan Jews who never realized all their sacrifices were for naught because the god, Jehovah, has never been the one and only God of All.

It was, however, this Jewish/Pagan world of Jehovah – a god of sacrifice – into which Jesus was born. Did Jesus believe in Jehovah? If he did, I could never believe in Jesus. No! I don't think he did; but unfortunately the life of Jesus was transcribed in the Gospels and Epistles by those who did believe in Jehovah and did believe that Jesus was one of them.

I believe that Jesus believed in an omnipresent God, a God that is in all and from Whom, All come. I do not believe that Jesus believed in a somewhere god that can reach out to some and leave others behind. I do not believe that Jesus believed in a god that had to be appeased with the burning smoke of lambs or doves or whatever. I do not believe that Jesus could have ever been part of the entire idiotic world of sacrifice. ***So how could I believe that Jesus needed to be a sacrifice at all?***

It has been somewhat difficult to determine the truth of Jesus because one has to separate the wisdom of the Gospels from the heritage of the Gospels to find the truth. ***The wisdom of Jesus makes sense. The heritage of Jesus does not. One has to separate the wisdom of Jesus from the heritage of Jesus to come to any reasonable conclusion that can legitimately be called Christ – or Wisdom.*** But it can be done; and I think many do it all the time – especially by attending to the parables that Jesus taught to define his wisdom.

***Christ***, for me, represents the “philosopher” or “sage” in Jesus – or, if you will, the ***Socrates*** in Jesus. True wisdom is simply basic life related - without dependency on history. At least, I think so. When you tangle Jesus within history – or historical expectation – I think you lose sight of the real Jesus. Like any sage, Jesus should be audited for his claimed wisdom, not for the historical events of his life. I do believe that Jesus would agree – or else he would have never bothered to teach ethics through parables; and perhaps that is an ***evidence*** that Jesus did not see himself as a messiah. A messiah would have been about commanding, not teaching – like a Jehovah through a Moses. ***Jehovah commanded. He did not teach. Jesus taught. He did not command.***

It is said – ***like father, like son*** – or you can expect a son to be like a father in terms of acting the same. If two do not act the same, one is not likely the son of the other. If Jesus had been truly the ***son of Jehovah***, he would have acted like him. He would have ***dictated a Ten Commandments*** – not ***suggested a list of beatitudes***.

***Was Jesus a Messiah – a son of Jehovah?*** I doubt it. If he was not a son of the Jewish god, Jehovah, neither could he have qualified to be a messiah from that god – or from that alleged god. Given the tremendous dissimilarities between a commanding Jehovah and a quiet and gentle Jesus, I can't believe that one sired the other. How could it have been? ***Each should be free to decide such an issue on his or her own, though; and I am thankful every day that I can.***

## Beyond The Grave

Will I ever know Christ *beyond the grave* any better than I do now? Perhaps. I may even bump into him personally like I imagined in my conversation with him and Socrates a few chapters ago. It would be rather nice if that did happen – and it might – but I am not counting on it. I am really not counting on anything *beyond the grave* that I do not have right now at this very moment; and I think that is the way it will be.

I think the real lesson of Jesus is that tomorrow will always be just like today – unless we change today. If I do not like what I am today, then I better change me today because if I don't, I will be the same tomorrow. I do not think the message of Jesus is anything more or less than that. *Beyond the grave* should present me no more apprehension than living now. Why should it?

Some would answer that with a concern like this: **You better be scared of what God can do to you *beyond the grave*.** My answer: I don't think God has anything to do with it in terms of person. God is only the *Amazing Infinite Presence and Divine Source of All that is*. God is not a person to judge me or do anything at all to me. So I have no reason to be more scared of God *beyond the grave* than I am now. If I am not scared now, why should I be scared after I pass? And if I am scared now, why in the world should I think I will not be scared later?

There is only one thing that really scares me – and that is a scared me. I do not like the idea of living scared. I do not like being frightened. So I try to approach life by not being afraid of what is in the dark. The way I do that is to remove the **scare** from the word **scared** – which is really easy to do. All one has to do is rearrange the letters a bit – and presto, **scared** becomes *sacred*. Once everything becomes sacred, all the scare goes away. Easy, huh? And almost literally, it is as easy as that.

I think the key to getting life and conduct right as Jesus saw it is to realize that all life and all existence is sacred. To be totally at home with life, then, all one has to do is treat all of life like it is – sacred. **It is sacred because God is in it – all of it. No matter where I go, all that will await me is more of that wonderful sacred stuff.** I do not have to understand it to know it. I just have to embrace it because it is divine. If I do that, tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow will always be just more of the same – on and on and on.

And if I don't do that and choose to see life as evil or see evil in life, that is precisely what I will see tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow – and on and on and on. **People of wisdom know this. People of grace do not.** People of grace like Peter and Paul will always count on better blessings to come in the future. Today will never be satisfactory. It will always contain less than what it should. Peter will always be looking to find someone **lying to the Holy Spirit**. He will always be looking for someone to blame for what he thinks he lacks. He will always use the threat of an **angry Holy Spirit** to try and get his way. He will always be looking for power because he mistakenly thinks that



power leads to peace. He will always look for power in a **Holy Spirit**, but that **Holy Spirit** will always be distinct from himself.

And Paul will always be looking to find his salvation in Jesus where Jesus is defined by grace and not wisdom. That is, until he realizes that is not what salvation is all about. It is not the grace of another that can save me. It is only the recognition of my own divinity and my own integrity within the *Grand Infinite Divinity of God* that can save. **Jesus can tell me I am worthy; but only I can believe it.**

If Peter and Paul are right, however, and peace and power are really interchangeable, then I would have none of it because I have no power. I doubt that anyone in this world has more peace than I do – and I doubt that anyone in this world has less power than I do. Peace and power (over others) are not two sides of an equation. They are opposite poles of struggle and conflict and hate and turbulence and unhappiness. I know of no one is powerful who is also at peace. **Power always wants more and that is why power can never be a precedent for contentment & peace.**

Happiness is *Contentment*. At least, I think so. I know that in those moments of life that I lack happiness I also lack contentment. To find happiness, then, is only to find contentment – to be happy with what is. The absolutely wonderful thing about that is happiness via contentment now will likely ensure the same later. **All one has to do is exchange later with beyond the grave and eternity is secure.**

That's why Jesus could not do other than he did. He may have planned his own death to prove a point – that point being that the threat of death should not distract one from virtue. Socrates also did the same thing. Virtue via Contentment with Being cannot be threatened as long as it is maintained by refusing to change course; but once I change course and allow my contentment to be threatened with fear of death and some fear of *beyond the grave* judgment, then I have let both life and death defeat me.

**As it is now, it will be – regardless of the definition of the future.** Be it in this life or *beyond the grave*, there is no reason to believe it can ever change. I may not know how my soul came to be, but given that it is – and the proof of that is, I am – then it should require no genius to know that the future can only be as good as I let the present be. The more I depend on others to define my present, the more vulnerable I will be in the present and the more vulnerable I will be in the future.

**It should not be so hard to figure out. All we have to do is observe as it is. The future has always proven to be an extension of the present in the past. So we can be sure it will be an extension of the present forever more.**

*Get the present right, then, and eternity is secure.*

# 10

## **SOCRATES, JESUS, & ME**

Written July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2002

**What is the meaning of life? It's a question we all should ask.  
Asking that question and searching for answers should be our greatest task.  
It seems to me it's the only way that each of us can be free;  
And if you don't believe it, just ask the likes of Socrates, Jesus & me.**

**Socrates was a questioning gent who lived 400 years before Christ.  
He led the way for Jesus, I think, to find his life quite divine.  
He said, question everything, my friend, to find the truths of divinity.  
And I must say that has been the likes of Socrates, Jesus & me.**

**Don't be afraid of life, Jesus would say, take it and cherish it bold.  
Don't fear what you can't see – just love all that you can't hold.  
Know what is in thy sight and what's hidden you will see.  
And that is the key of life that is known by likes of Socrates, Jesus & me.**

**If you do not love what you can see, then how can you love what you can't?  
Just embrace life for all that is and ignore those that say, thy shan't.  
Life is meant to be lived and known as much as we can allow it to be.  
You can know life as much as we – the likes of Socrates, Jesus & me.**

**Life is a mystery and always will be and there's much we can never know.  
But as long as we love the mystery, we cannot fail to grow.  
Generously question while searching for truth. That's the key to being free.  
Enjoy the answers you find – as the likes of Socrates, Jesus & me.**

**Be not subdued by the questions for which no answers do come.  
Enjoy the rays of light that shine even as you may never understand the sun.  
Ask why there is light, but be not defeated if the answer you never see.  
Love life as the gift it is – that's what we know –  
the likes of Socrates, Jesus & me.**

**I have only a little more to offer and then I will let you go.  
Ask what you will, but never allow anyone to dictate what you must know.  
Love what you know and also that which you would like so much to see;  
And you will be hitching a ride with the likes of Socrates, Jesus & me.**

**When I look into your eyes and offer speculations about life;  
and you respond with a doubt or an agreement – either one is fine.  
Then all is well in the class of life and there are wonders left to do.  
Thank you, Friend.  
I have learned from the likes of Socrates, Jesus and You.**

**KNOWING CHRIST**



**THE END**

## HELLO, MY LOVE

By Francis William Bessler

Written September 2, 2005

(A true story from a real walk in the park)

### *Refrain:*

*Hello, My Love, it's good to see you.*

*Hello, My Love, it's good to be.*

*Hello, My Love, it's good to know you.*

*Hello, My Love, let's be free.*

As I was walking in a park one day, I passed a walking lady,  
holding a bundle to her chest.

Then I peeked in and saw a little baby  
feeding so gently at her breast. ***Refrain.***

I asked the walking lady about the child that she held.

Smiling, she thanked me for my care.

I can't tell you the good feeling that I felt,  
knowing that life is ours to share. ***Refrain.***

She told me it is Lilly when I asked the baby's name.

Cheering, I told her that it fit.

Then we parted and went our separate ways,  
giving me a memory I won't forget. ***Refrain.***

Repeat 1<sup>st</sup> verse – then ***Refrain*** (3).

# I CHOSE

(4 Pages)

A Brief Essay by  
Francis William Bessler  
Laramie, Wyoming  
Sept. 29<sup>th</sup>, 2005

I could be wrong, but I think *I chose* to be here. That makes all the difference in the world for me because it puts everything into perspective. If I chose to be here for whatever reason or reasons I am choosing to live, then it is quite likely that everyone who comes into the world also chose to come. And not only that, everyone is choosing to live as they are for whatever reason or reasons they are choosing to do so.

Since I know me better than anyone else can or does, I can tell you why I chose to be here. It has not always been obvious to me, but crouching up on the swell age of 64 – which I will become in December – I can look back on a life and check out the pattern I left behind. I can tell by that pattern why I chose to live the life I am living and have lived.

It's all there – like black and white – or black on white like the words on this page. Each of us is different – and each of us has a right to be different. That is a principle message of my life, but it is also probably the assumption with which I entered life. Each of us has a right to choose whatever living or pattern of living we want. Contrived as economic sense, **that is the bottom line.**

Why was I born? Again, I can tell you that because I am talking about myself – not you or anyone else. I was born to walk the way of peace; and to a great extent, I was born to walk away from conflict. I can tell you that because I know me. I just have to look at my decisions in life; and for the most part, I have always chosen peace over conflict. If conflict has arisen, I have not chosen to meet it head on as if there is only courage in doing that. Almost always, I have chosen to walk away from those who prefer conflict. It is *probably* just that which I was born to do. That is why *I chose* to enter this world as a soul in search of a body – to encounter conflict, but to turn from it. One can only get lost in a muddle by choosing to embrace conflict by confronting it or battling with it. It is certainly not my way. **Peace cannot be served by engaging conflict.**

I was born on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1941 – in the midst of a raging world war that finally engulfed my own country just four days after I was born. On December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1941, Hell extended to the shores of America with the attack of Japan on America. I was only a baby then, but I can see a pattern already developing. Born in the midst of world wide turmoil, I was still a baby of peace. I cooed and yawned and sucked on my Mama like no war was going on. I was unaffected by it all; though that was mostly because I was unaware of anything of public matters as a baby. Most of us are.

Much later in my twenties, however, I was not unaware of a war raging on – the Vietnam War. Then I did not have the advantage of not having a public conscience. I had to react to it because I had become aware by then. How did I react? In 1966, I tried to get into the armed forces – not to fight the war, but to serve as a medic to those injured in the war. Nothing came of my attempt, but I tried three times to get into the mess. At

first, I tried the Navy – which rejected me because of a hole in my eardrum. Then I tried the Air Force. Same results. Then I tried the Army. Same results.

I wonder how I came upon my hole in my eardrum, but looking back I can see that someone or ones may have made it happen for me – perhaps just so I would be rejected if I should try such a fool thing as getting involved in a war when my whole purpose is to walk a path of peace.

Even though it is true – or probably true – that *I chose* to be here, it is also *probably* true that I am not alone. I came from my own personal providence as a soul just like you or anyone else. In that, I am not alone. Though I did not choose to put that hole into my eardrum, the chances are great that one of my own chose to do it in my stead. One of my own who also come from a long line of peaceful souls probably was there for me and let Mom stick a hairpin too far in and puncture my eardrum – if that is how it happened. I do not know that for sure, though. I just know it might have happened that way because Mom was always cleaning the wax out of my ears with a hairpin.

You see, I think that not only did *I choose* to be born as I was, but before I came into this world, I also chose to be among a certain kind of soul. That choice probably was the result of a past life. We choose our soul friends like we choose any kind of friend by choosing to imitate a certain way. **My way is that of peace.** So the souls I choose to encircle me are kindred souls of peace. I probably chose that way in the past life and that is why I was born into the world this time to choose the same way all over again; but by choosing my way, I also chose and choose my friends. That is just the way it works – or *probably* is.

For a long time in this life, I thought that God chose me to come into this world. It was a comfortable thought and it was easy to think that way. I mean if God – **The Prime One** – chose me for a mission, Wow, that makes everything all sort of rosy for me because I can do no wrong. How could I do wrong if I am on a *mission from God*? I used to think that I was, but that was before I came to realize that God can't be personal to send me on a mission because God has to be in me, not outside of me to send me anywhere. That has to be so because God has to be *Infinite* – and an easy translation of *infinite* is *everywhere*.

Yes, I used to think that God is my own personal agent – just like so many insist in the world today. I got over my thinking I could be a personal emissary from God by realizing that God is in everything, but a whole lot of folks trudge through life still hanging on to the notion that God is doing things just for them – parting the waves just for them or letting them drown because it is their time to go.

Part of my character of being a peaceful soul is to try and define things so I can get a better perspective of it all. I have written a lot of lines in this life – which almost no one has read as of now, 2005 – including four rather soulfully intimate, physically blush-full stories - and some of it has been on God. I have thought of *God* as being an abbreviation of *Good*. That has worked wonders. What a wonderful thought! It sure serves peaceful souls like myself really well; but just yesterday I toyed with making *God (G-O-D)* an anagram for *Grand Old Deity* – or even better – *Gracious Old Donor*. I went to sleep just one hour before I started writing this essay thanking my *Gracious Old Donor* for my life. Hey, it works for me; and that is the point of all this – we find in life things that support us on how we think.

I say I went to sleep an hour before I started writing this piece. That is true. I went to sleep at 9 P.M. last night, but awoke just an hour later with the idea of this essay on my mind. So rather than going back to sleep, I got up and am now typing these thoughts and you are finding out that someone in this world thinks of *God* as a *Gracious Old Donor* or *Grand Old Deity*. We souls of peace have no real regimen in life except to find ways to define our peace; and finding a useful definition of God is really important for some of us.

Many think I am crazy for thinking that God is not a personal agent of anyone or that I am essentially a soul choosing to be in my body rather than God choosing it for me. I might be. That is a distinct possibility, but as I see it, it is no more than that – only a slim possibility. In the arena of *probable* – where I live mostly – I am *probably* right in my thinking.

So, I was made exempt from the Vietnam War. A lot of souls chose to go into that conflict and their providence chose to let them go because they *probably* believe in conflict. There are a heap of folks in this world who think that life without conflict is like eggs without salt. They need conflict; and that is the real reason why there is so much war in the world.

I definitely think that *I chose* to come into this world as a soul in search of a vehicle to express itself, but if it's so for me, it is *probably* true for everyone. I do wish that people would not choose conflict, but as the saying goes, *to each, his or her own*. Just look at your life like I have looked at mine and see if there is not a pattern there for you. I could have chosen to go into a lot of conflicted areas in my life, but have chosen to walk away from conflict because conflict is not my way. I think it is good to keep all of that choice thing in mind when we feel sorry for others who have chosen to put themselves into harms way; but we should be outraged with those who have the gall to place others in harms way because they think some cause or other is right.

Among the many lines I have written in my life, I have penned a few poems and songs along the way. A song I wrote back in the early 1980s that I call *Lift Your Spirits High* has a verse that goes like this:

**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.**

As I see it, though, so many in life do not believe that it's virtuous or courageous to spread on whipped cream. They see themselves as making the way straight for others because they are on some *mission from God* to do so. Again and again and again, it happens. The pattern is clear. There will always be those who think they are the right arm of God and will choose conflict over peace under the guise of making peace; and

come Hell or High Water, they will act as they should *and God's way will be preserved for all* – and any man who dares to defy it will be cut down.

It always begins the same way. It is like someone made the recipe long ago and mankind must make the same bread over and over and over. The Vietnam War was made from that recipe. We must preserve the right of some foreigner clear across the world to choose our way or our way will become challenged at our shores. So we constantly defy those who might challenge us far away in another land so that we won't have to defy them at home. Men march on with a song in their heart, but it is that one about marching on to war with the cross of Jesus leading the way – not the one I wrote about willing what I dream and spreading on whipped cream. That which is so sad about that is that Jesus never marched to war and begged us not to go that way ourselves; and yet men continue to march on in his name to honor a way he died to oppose. **It is a bit sad, don't you think?**

You may have noticed the emphasis on "I" in this little writing. Some would say I am being unacceptably selfish in thinking so much of myself, but if there is one thing I knew before I came into this world, it is that my whole world revolves around me like your whole world revolves around you. **Anyone who lives his or her life thinking that others are more important than the self are bound to inherit a world in which the self is lost.** That, too, is not my way because I know I have to inherit the me I'm living now; and I want to know that me. That is just one of my choices.

And so it is for you, too, and everyone. When every person in this world comes to realize that he or she is not favored of God, though they may be favored by a personal providence, then suffering among all the many conflicted selves will dissolve and people will realize that nothing really happens by accident. If we choose war, it is a choice for those who choose conflict; and all I can say to that is that ***I think it is one hell of a choice.***

It's Midnight now. Time for me to retire again and thank my *Gracious Old Donor* for the stuff of life. Yes, I am a peaceful soul; but in the long run, that is because ***I choose gratitude over service in conflict.*** If only the rest of the world would choose likewise, there would be no war. **There would only be the peace my soul lives to know.**

***Thanks for listening!***



# JOURNEY OF MY SOUL

(7 Pages)

By

Francis William Bessler

Laramie, Wyoming

Written Oct. 19th, 2005; amended May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2011

## Describing a Personal Vision

In the Fall (or maybe Summer) of 1975, I had a rather unique experience. I was returning to Denver, Colorado - where I lived - from the state of Oklahoma. I had driven a few young students to Oklahoma for a seminar for the Unification Church. I had no belief in that church, but at the request of a friend, Cathy Corrigan, who did belong, I consented to drive Cathy and some of her Unification Church friends to Oklahoma where they could attend a seminar for their church. ***On the way back, it happened!***

I was letting one of the young friends of Cathy drive my car. I was sitting in the back seat, resting from having driven a good while before then. As I was resting, I had this very interesting experience. While in a slumber state – in between sleep and full awareness – with my eyes closed, I had what I call a ***paranormal*** experience – meaning ***outside the norm***. Some might call it a ***vision***; and for this essay, I will too.

***With my eyes closed, I began to see what would develop into a seven phase visionary experience.*** In phase 1 of the experience, I had a vision that was two dimensional. Before the total expanse before my eyes, I saw a totally fluctuating orange background with a similar orange sphere in front of it. The first dimension was the orange background. The second dimension was the orange sphere in front of the orange background. At this point, everything was orange – and brilliantly so. The background was moving like waves upon the sea. The orange sphere was shining like the sun in a clear blue sky and occupied at least a third of the picture.

Then phase 2 of the experience began. As I sat there, quite aware of the conversation going on in the car amongst the others, about a fourth of the way down in front of the sphere, I saw a blue line shoot across from the left side – starting from outside of the sphere or globe and extending in front of the globe to about 2/3 of the way across it. That was the beginning of the third dimension. First, the orange background, second, in front of that an orange globe, and third, in front of the globe, a single blue line, extending part way in front of the globe.

Needless to say, I was quite impressed, but I had no idea what it all meant – if it meant anything. Then while pondering the existing upper blue line on the left side of the vision, phase 3 of the experience began. Seconds later, another blue line shot across in front of the globe from the lower right side of the picture, about a fourth of the way up from the bottom of the sphere, extending from outside the globe to about 2/3 of the way across it – overlapping the initial blue line on top a good bit. So, now, I was witnessing a fully orange background with a similar orange globe in front of it and two overlapping blue lines in front of the orange globe.

After watching this rather interesting spectacle for a few seconds, the 4<sup>th</sup> phase of the experience began – the two blue lines began to move toward the middle of the globe and

to each other. This phase ended eventually into a phase 5 after the two separate blue lines merged into a single blue line in the middle. Just before the merge, blue sparks reached from one line to the other. It was all very comfortable for me up to this time.

Then an uncomfortable phase 6 began. While sitting there and wondering what all this might mean, the blue line – quite brilliantly so – turned abruptly into a red line. The blue completely disappeared. Now I was faced with an orange fluctuating background with a brilliant globe in front and a single fiery red line in front of the globe, extending from outside the globe on the left side to outside the globe on the right side. I must admit to being uncomfortable during this phase, not liking the red at all, sensing it reflected discomfort in some way as red normally would.

Phase 6 did not last long, though. After a few seconds, phase 7 began. The red line turned back into the same brilliantly blue line from which it originally came. Phase 7 of the vision continued for quite a while; but it was the last phase. I would open my eyes and close them and the phase 7 picture would continue for some time. I am not sure how long the whole experience happened, but at least for a few minutes, I'd say. I opened my eyes and closed them to test reoccurrence of the vision at least a half dozen times. Eventually, of course, the spectacle disappeared.

## **Interpreting My Vision**

What did it mean? I have wondered about that since it happened – though I have not considered it for some years as I write this. It is now 2005. The vision happened to me in 1975, thirty years ago. I am only now reexamining the experience in light of a very recent prompting. I belong to the Unitarian Church and a few of us are meeting to discuss our spiritual experiences. Reverend Penny is conducting the rather interesting adventure; and in session 2 of a planned 8 sessions, each of us was asked to draw a picture of at least one personal spiritual experience. I tried to feature this vision that I have described – suspecting it as one of the foremost spiritual experiences of my life. If it had not been for that exercise, I would not now be reexamining the experience.

Having the terrific advantage of having it happened long ago, I think I can now look back and make a great deal of sense of it. So, that is what I am doing with this essay. Given the dual advantages of retrospection and introspection, I will do my best to explain it.

First of all, it was a totally personal experience, I think. I believe the vision – if you want to call it that – came from within, not from without. No one gave me this vision – though it is possible – though not probable - that I am wrong on that. Who knows about anything that is paranormal. Some of it can be explained as originating from a given subject; and some of it may be translated in some way to a subject from some outside or occult source. I believe my vision came from within, but perhaps not. Maybe my soulful personal providence contacted me in some way and the result was the vision I had. Regardless of source, however, I do think the vision was intended to tell me something about myself.

It happened in 1975. I was 33. I think the vision told me mostly of my past life and used the graphics I have mentioned to define my own personal journey as a soul. My journey may be the journey of many in terms of the same things generally happen to a lot of us as we grow as souls; but I make no claim of anything but a personal journey by it.

Assuming that all phases of the vision had already happened - and looking back, I can finally see that they probably had - at the age of 33, my basic journey as a soul was complete. I have lived a lot of years since then – since I was 33, as now in 2005, I am 64 – but essentially, my basic journey as a soul completed by the time of my vision. The vision was a reflection of what had happened – though phase 7 did not end at age 33 and continues now and will continue until the day I die and beyond.

So, let's look at phase 1. There was a two dimensional picture of fluctuating orange background with a brilliantly orange globe in front of it. No blue lines yet. Keep in mind, this is a story of a soul – my soul. Before my soul began, of course I did not exist. ***There was only Divinity without me.*** The orange testifies to a wonderful world of Divinity before my soul came into being. I suspect the orange globe in front only represents our sun as this particular planet's source of light. From the light, all things come; and without light, nothing could exist. It is much like that. The orange globe is the same color as the general source of all because all exists within the glow of the one Divinity. **A circle is a spiritual sign of perfection; and the orange circle in the middle of my vision was a declaration of Divine Perfection.** The background orange was constantly fluctuating to show how the Divine is in constant motion. It is probably out of that motion that life is created. That should explain phase 1.

In phase 2, without explaining how it happens, a soul begins. The top blue line reflects a soul – my soul – though it could represent any soul that is at peace with itself. Blue suggests peace as orange suggests source. Any soul that is at peace could be represented by the top blue line; but I am only claiming it for myself for this essay.

In phase 3, an exact replica of the top blue line appeared in front of the lower half of the globe. I take this second blue line to represent my body. I say this because I know my life and I have considered body and soul as equal. Thus, from my own inspection of myself, the lower blue line probably represented (and represents) my body. It is very useful as a demonstration to myself that both lines were exactly the same – different only in terms of positioning. I believe the soul takes on a body. So that means a soul must exist before a body can be considered. Thus, it makes sense that, being the first to occur, the top blue line at the left side represented the soul and the bottom blue line represented the body.

The left blue and the right blue overlapped because that is how it happens in real life. It is almost impossible to know where the soul ends and the body begins. When the blue line of the soul came together with the equal blue line of the body, the lines overlapped to show that in real life, body and soul overlap. They feed off of each other; and one without the other is probably quite helpless. My journey is not an exception to the process. It is probably an expression of the process for all – though, again, for this essay, I am claiming my vision and my instruction only for myself.

Early in my speculation of this experience, I was sure that the two blue lines represented two different people – myself and another – but my comfort with solitary wholesomeness down through the years since the vision has taught me otherwise. I am currently single, though I have been with several partners since 1975. Given that the vision represents an ongoing statement of my life, the two blue lines must be contained solely within myself. Otherwise, the vision would represent something to happen – not something that has already happened as I believe to be so.

In phase 4, the two blue lines began to come together. Phase 4 represents a *coming together* of body and soul – though only in a spiritual sense. They both exist separately as individually wholesome entities, equal to one another; but until such time as I realize they are totally equal, to some degree they remain separate. Then, like a marriage of two persons who previously existed as two but come together to be one or act like one, so, too, upon realization of the equality of my body and soul, my body and soul became one.

The process of realization of equality, however, was gradual for me. It might be instantaneous for some, but it was only gradual for me. It took time for me to slip out of some bad ideas or away from some bad ideas and into some good ones. But once I left all the bad ideas behind and realized the true Divine equality between my body and soul, phase 6 of my life began.

As phase 5 ended, sparks moved between the merging blue lines of soul and body to show again that soul and body feed off of each other. They depend upon one another. As such, they should be the finest of companions of one another, not enemies as so much traditional religion teaches.

I was born a Catholic. As such I was taught that the body is sinful. That never made much sense to me, but for a long time in my life, I accepted it even though I disagreed with it. I guess I felt that all my Catholic (and Christian) friends could not be wrong in their belief in the doctrine of sin. It seemed to me impossible that one dissenting Catholic might be right.

The belief in sin – assumed as separation from God - suggests that man cannot help but stray from God because his nature is somehow ungodly. Thus, man is born in sin. Being born in sin, he has to become redeemed by one without sin in order to become Godly or acceptable to God. Thus, a *God-man*, called by Catholicism, a *Messiah*, is needed to deliver man to God. Enter Jesus as the essential *God-man* to deliver man to God.

That was the doctrine I was taught. It took some time for me to realize it could not be true because God, being Infinite, must be everywhere and in everything. How, then, is it possible that man or anything can be separate from God?

At first, I committed myself to the doctrine of the sin of separation from God and even committed myself to teaching the doctrine. I studied for the Catholic ministry for six years after graduating from high school in 1960. During that entire first period of my life, I *suspected* the reverse was true – that man has no sin and therefore need make no apology for his life in any way. Looking back, it was a strange course to take – to consent by a claimed admission of sin and to dissent by *suspecting* that life has no sin; but it is the exact course I took in life. To say the least, it was contradictory.

After disagreeing with the faculty at St. Thomas in Denver for several years, I was finally dismissed as a candidate for the priesthood in 1966 because *my thinking is not that of a Catholic priest* – as I was told upon being dismissed. I remained a Catholic, however, for several more years. I married Dee, a fellow Catholic, in 1967 and tried to be a good Catholic for several years – all the while dissenting from the doctrine of sin, understanding sin as separation from God.

As my marriage progressed, I became more and more entrenched in my real belief of the *Divinity of Everything* as my wife, Dee, held onto her Catholic belief. Dee's parents became very upset with me for *abandoning my faith*. They felt that my challenge to the doctrine of sin as separation from God was surely going to land me in Hell; and though it

might be OK for me to go to Hell, I had no right influencing their granddaughter and my daughter, Anita, to challenge a doctrine that age had canonized long time ago.

All of our disagreements were quite soft, however. It was not like we fought one another – though there were occasions where frustration made things quite tense. I think we loved each other more than we disagreed, but in 1973, I decided to make a clean break from Catholicism and from all of traditional Christianity that preached the doctrine of sin of separation between man and God. Looking back, I think it was that event that represented the two blue lines in my vision finally making contact. All my life I had been reaching to make that break, gradually moving toward it until finally in 1973, I did it. Finally realizing that the Catholicism of my past and of Dee's past and present could not be reconciled with my *Divine Naturism*, as I called it, I decided to leave the Catholic Church and all it represented.

In terms of the vision, when the two blue lines met, that was the juncture in my life when *real belief and conduct became one – when my soul could finally embrace my body as a friend and not as a foe or competitor*. No longer would I consent to straddle between the world of sin and virtue as I had been doing for years. Without any animosity toward the Church, I walked away from it in 1973 and have never looked back since. Phase 5 of my vision represents that part of 1973 (or it might have been 1974) when I finally came to terms with my dissent and completely and totally committed myself to what I call the vision of *Divine Naturism*.

Following my final commitment to *Divine Naturism*, however, I experienced a good deal of regret for all the years I had lost straddling between sin and virtue. I was unhappy with myself that I had wasted so many years competing with the world of sin. It is that period of regret that represents the red line of phase 6 of my vision. As the vision illustrated, however, I would not allow my regret to last. Once I put the past completely behind me with all its past regrets, then phase 7 of my vision started and continues to this day.

If you remember, for as long as the visionary experience lasted, I would open and close my eyes just to see the vision continuing. The red had long gone; and the blue of peace and firm conviction had replaced it. Maybe next life, I will choose for some reason to repeat some part of this scenario – if not all of it – but for the rest of my life, as the vision so wonderfully told me – I will always be at peace – as the blue signifies.

As I offered before, I think my vision represents the journey of my soul – for the most part, completed by the age of 31 in 1973. When I made that final commitment to walk away from the Catholic Church in 1973 – I entered the first fully blue period as one person with an equal body and soul with neither being the foe of the other. My regret and anger over a wasted youth of virtual belief in sin followed, but did not last long. That anger was represented by the one red line in my vision; but as it has actually happened in life for me, the anger soon subsided and I have committed myself to a different perspective. Thus, the red turned back into blue; and be it in this life or the next, no one can ever take that away from me.

By the time of the vision in 1975, however, it had all been completed. My vision was only looking back to see the *Journey of a soul*. In 1975, I separated from Dee for a time; though by Christmas of that year, I was trying our marriage again for the sake of Anita, my then five year old daughter. Dee and I stayed together through 1976 and finally went our separate ways completely in Jan. of 1977. Dee has remained Catholic

and a devout believer in the notion of sin as separation between God and man. I have continued to be the *Divine Naturist* I have always been, but which I compromised for the first thirty years of my life. No longer, however, do I compromise my real conviction about life.

*Thanks for listening!*

*P.S.* The year of initial blue and temporary red may have been 1974 rather than 1973 as stated. I have forgotten so much about that period of my life as I write this in 2005, but in general, it was no earlier than 1973 and no later than 1974. By the Fall of 1975 when I was 33 and by the time of the vision or *paranormal experience* featured in this essay, it had all been decided. Perhaps many lives have some one period that represents some time of some irrevocable commitment. For me, it happened in that period of 1973-1974. At this time in 2005, that commitment continues.

### **The Truth – in Orange & Blue!**

(An amendment: May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2011)

What a wonderful journey is life! I smile every time I think of how easy it really is. It's easy because all that is required to attain virtue is to embrace life as a gift. Now, that is really easy! How conflicted mankind is, though, for the most part because it does not see life as easy because it does not rate simple gratitude as virtue. Anything easy is considered useless – and therefore, to some degree, objectionable. Have we not all heard the utterance – *nothing easy is worthwhile*. So we commit ourselves to sweating and grunting and doing all the hard stuff because it is the “hard stuff” that really makes life worthwhile.

Thus, I think, we engineered the concept of sin – with which I have so fiercely disagreed all my life. Sin “explains” why we have to sweat and grunt and do all the hard stuff. Somehow, we have misled ourselves into thinking that without the wonderful obstacle of sin, we could not aspire to great things. Accordingly, sin is required in order to allow for progress – not only individual progress, but societal progress in general. It's like unhappiness with life is a requirement for improving one's lot – and mankind's lot in general. Unhappiness is just another name for sin – in a way. If life is to improve, one must be unhappy with it. Therefore, all must sin.

*Bless me, Father, for I have sinned!* How many times did I say that in my youth and early adulthood? My early faith, Catholicism, taught me that I had to “confess” to my sins on a weekly basis. Why? I think it was to keep me aware that I should be a sinner. The Church has no room for non-sinners. So to make sure there are plenty of sinners, the faithful have to be constantly reminded of how sinful they are. That keeps them coming – and keeps the Church growing.

Oh how ingrained we are with sin. **Francis, what did you do today. I sure hoped you spent some time in sin – because if you haven't, well there's just no hope for you for the future.** But how dumb it is! As a human race, it has been dictated to us that we “must sin.” No one is sinless! How many preachers say that every single Sunday? **Welcome, Fellow Sinners!** Welcome to this little pause so you can ready yourself to go

out and sin all you can so that you can come back here next Sunday and join us again as “woeful sinners.”

I guess I realized long time ago just how idiotic it is; and for me, it has become, “**how is it possible to sin?**” when sin is defined as separating yourself from God? How can I sin if separation from God is impossible? And that is the crux of the whole issue for me. How can anyone really sin in terms of being separated from God when, in fact, God must be Infinite and therefore *IN* everyone? How can you be separated from something that is inside of you?

Well, I suppose it is useful for some or they would not stick to the notion of sinning. If that is so for you, all I can say is, **keep sinning, my friend, if it makes you happy!** As for me, I left sin behind a long time ago. When I realized that God and me are really one, I stopped sinning; and, you know, I have not regretted that a single instant. It is such a grand life to know your body and your soul are friends. I can’t recommend such a friendship enough. Whatever those two are, they are of God. Nothing exists outside of that wonderful Orange Background of my Vision. It is only for me to realize that and to be grateful for my wonderful, mysterious, miraculous life.

***I am “one blue line” comprised of two wonderful entities – a body and a soul – that believe that virtue is only knowing there is no sin.*** I can sin by ignoring the truth and acting like I am an enemy to myself or another, but there is no sin in me. ***There can be no sin where God resides.*** I often wonder just how long it will be before the human race as a whole believes the same thing – and all the confessionals and all the “meeting houses for sinners” will empty – and only blue lines of peaceful souls will remain.

I hope there will come a day when confessionals will become expressionals and souls can join with others to testify as to their virtue and not their sin. I hope there will come a day when all the “meeting houses for sinners” will become “greeting houses for virtuous souls.”

Jesus told us so long ago – ***go and sin no more!*** We should have learned by that little counsel that Jesus really believed we can sin no more. We should have learned from our dear brother and friend, Jesus, that he did not believe we have to sin to be his friend and have need of him to resolve it. ***We should have learned so long ago that as Jesus was, we all can be.*** Our *New Testament* should not be that we can dismiss sin with the help of Jesus, but that we can miss sin entirely and not have to dismiss it – simply by knowing we are all One In God and celebrating that Oneness!

***I am not the only blue line in the world. We are all blue lines, or potentially so. I am no different than you and you are no different than me. Each of us can dismiss the red from our lives by living in gratitude and shunning regret. And what a wonderful way to go! At least, I think so.***

## JOURNEY OF MY SOUL

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**THE END**

# LOVE – SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING

(4 Pages)

An essay by  
Francis William Bessler  
Laramie, Wyoming  
December, 2005

I suppose we all seek that which is called *Love* – and perhaps find it in many different ways; but I would like to share a definition of it that was brought home to me just last Sunday. In our Unitarian service, Reverend Penny offered that each of the four weeks of the December season of **Advent** is dedicated to a different virtue.

To abbreviate Penny's offering, the four weeks of **Advent** are dedicated to *Faith, Peace, Love, & Joy* – in that order. You should notice that *Love* is not first in order. *Faith* and *Peace* precede it. As I sat there listening to Penny, it came to mind that at least *Faith* and *Peace* should precede *Love* because if *Love is sharing Peace* as I think it is, then one cannot *Love* until one has found both *Faith* and *Peace*.

Perhaps that is not a world shaking notion that *Love* can only follow *Faith* and *Peace* – **Spiritually Speaking, that is** – but it makes a whole lot of sense to me; and so that is why I am writing about it today. The idea that *Love* must be preceded by *Faith* and *Peace* is one of those mind boggling, eye opening, heart moving ideas that can make everything so simple. I like simple. I don't think Penny was quite intent on suggesting that notion as I was in hearing it; **but I heard it strong and clear!**

I think most people never find real *Love* in life because they seek it in the wrong places – or in the wrong way. They go looking for *Love* like it is out there someplace and if one is lucky, he or she will bump into it – like looking for gold by knowing it is in the earth someplace. One might not be lucky enough to find gold, but if one is going to find it, one must look in the earth. And so many will spend an entire lifetime digging through mounds and mounds of dirt while searching for gold. In the end, they may find it; and then again, they may not.

But I do not see finding *Love* like looking for gold. *Love* is so much more definite than gold – and so much easier to find and know. If one follows the trail that I heard from Penny last Sunday, all one has to do is to know how to find it. It is really simple. You can't find *Love* until you have preceded it with *Faith* and *Peace*. That means you need to concentrate on *Faith* and *Peace* first – and once you have that mastered, then you can deal with *Love*. No sense looking for *Love* until you have mastered the *virtues* of *Faith & Peace* first. It's a lot like having to climb some stairs to get to a balcony with the balcony representing *Love*. You can't get to *Love* except by climbing the stairs of *Faith & Peace* first.

So, what is *Faith*? I suppose it is a lot of things to a lot of people, but for me, *Faith is Believing in the Goodness of Life; but in general, it's only believing in something that serves as a base for all conduct in life.*



I know there are a lot of folks who define faith as *believing in salvation*; and I once did too. When I was a Catholic as a youngster, I was taught that life is not good in and of itself. Maybe it once was, but with the alleged failure of Adam & Eve, it is not any longer. Because life is not good anymore in and of itself, I was taught that life needs saved or redeemed in order to make it good like it once was. Lots of people still believe that salvation of life is necessary, but salvation makes no sense to me anymore because I cannot begin to imagine how it is possible for life to be depleted of God. **Depletion of God** is the only thing that could justify needing saved or redeemed as I see it; but if God is truly infinite and in everything as I believe today, then there is absolutely no possibility that anything can suffer a *depletion of God*. Thus, nothing needs saved – or redeemed.

In retrospect, it is a bit sad that I was ever taught that life could be *depleted of God*. Perhaps it was pure ignorance on the part of those who taught it and believed it, but as I see it and believe it now, God is the very source of life and all existence – and that source is an ongoing source. I do not believe that anything by itself exists in isolation of God. For me, *God is not as much a being that sets me in force, as it is an Infinite Presence in which I exist*. To know myself is to know God because it is of God that I am. Adam & Eve could not have deranged me from God because God is the very essence of all that is. You cannot separate a being from its essence. So the tale I was told that mankind became estranged from God via the action of one set of human parents could not possibly be true. Given no actual estrangement between God and any being of God, it must be pure folly that any being of God needs saved or returned to a God it can never leave.

Having conquered *Faith*, then, as the first of two steps that must precede *Love*, it is almost automatic to find *Peace* or know *Peace*. At least for me, *Peace is Being Comfortable with Life*. It may be more than that to others, but that is all it is to me or for me. Once one believes or has *Faith* in the Goodness of Life, it is really easy to proceed to *Peace* because with *Faith* comes *Peace*. ***Peace – Spiritually Speaking – is almost only an afterthought of Faith if your Faith is right***. If one does not have *Peace*, then one did not precede it with *Faith*. If you do not have *Peace*, then either faith is missing or you have a useless faith.

After ***Faith & Peace*** – comes *Love* – according to the sequence of **Advent**; but I am not so sure about that. Penny placed *Love* before *Joy*, but I think it should be the other way around. I think a natural consequence of *Faith* and *Peace* is *Joy* – individual joy. *Joy is Being Happy with Life*. You can't be happy with life unless you are first *comfortable* with it. *Joy* follows comfort. At least it has in my life.

So I would put *Joy* as the third of the *virtues* of **Advent** and the successful life. So far, *Love* is missing in this trail of virtues of life. That ought to put it in its place. Contrary to what most folks preach and teach, **Love is not the most important of human virtues** because it cannot happen unless preceded by *Faith, Peace, & Joy*. In the order of things, *Love* is the least important, not the most important, as so many preachers would have us believe.

But like *Peace & Joy* are almost automatic consequents of *Faith*, so also is *Love*. I think the natural thing to do is *Love* if one has *Faith, Peace, and Joy* because ***Love is only sharing one's Faith, Peace, and Joy***. At least, that is how it has been for me. *Love* is important, for sure, but finding it is not near as risky as looking for gold or pursuing any goal in life. *Love* is perhaps the easiest of pursuits in life because it comes at the end of a trail that is easy. There is nothing hard about *Faith*. There is nothing hard about

*Peace*; and there certainly is nothing hard about *Joy*, given that *Faith* and *Peace* precede it. Likewise, there is nothing hard about *Love* – given that a true *Faith* precedes it.

Early in life, I believed that life is hard and should be that way. People would say – **nothing worthwhile in life is easy**. But I have found that ***nothing worthwhile in life is hard***. Life is really easy if you go about it right – **locate a proper *Faith* first**. In the end, of course, it is to each, his or her own, but for the life of me, I cannot understand why people actually choose to make life hard.

I think many who are unhappy in life do not think about life being a mystery and their being a part of that mystery. I will never understand life; and I don't think I have to understand it to know it is good. I think acceptance of life because life is part of the general mystery of God should be enough to make anyone happy. If people are unhappy, I think they may believe, alright, but believe in the wrong things. People war with others on various fronts because they believe in the wrong things. They believe in what man does to and with one another, not in what man is or what man has – in terms of natural endowments.

Well, I believe first in what I am and in those endowments with which I have been blessed as a created Divine being – not what I may do to or with another. I believe that all that is me is good because **I see me as a *Divine Expression***. I believe I *am* a Divine Expression because I believe that God is in everything, including me. I believe in my own goodness and do not improvise to see it as evil because nothing blessed of God can be evil. **It is my *Faith* in the Goodness of All that leads me on – and makes me *Peaceful, Joyful, & Loving* – in that order.**

A poem about *Love* follows.

## That Is

A Poem About Love – & Faith & Peace & Joy

By

Francis William Bessler

December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2005

What is the key for finding *Love*,  
Spiritually speaking, *that is*?  
I think it must begin with *Faith*,  
Believing in the Goodness of Life without sin.

If one believes that Life is Good  
because it's filled with God, *that is*,  
then that belief can only lead to *Peace*,  
which is only a comfort that comes from within.

If one is comforted and has no pain,  
only happy can result, in the heart, *that is*.  
Believing there can be only Good, there can be only *Joy*;  
and what a wonderful way one's life to spin.

Having *Faith & Peace & Joy* all in one,  
bonded together as spiritual siblings, *that is*,  
one can only want to share – and that is *Love*;  
and that's the story about how *Love* begins.

And as *Love* begins, it will carry on,  
even beyond this life, *that is*.  
So, with *Faith & Peace & Joy & Love* in tow,  
carry on, My Friend, and you'll always win.

**LOVE –  
SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING**



**THE END**

# **EPILOG:**

## ***KNOWING LIFE***

May 27th, 2011

When I was a kid, I was under the tutelage or supervision of others. Those others saw life much different than I see it today. For the most part, my “instructors” believed that life as it is on this Earth is much less than what it should be. There is another existence someplace else, however, where life is the way it should be. They called this other place “**Heaven.**” I was instructed that to get to this Heaven, I had to prove obedience to the caretakers of this Heaven. I could get to this wonderful place, but only if I were to “obey” the commands of the leaders of this place.

I must admit that I believed that others knew of some other place they call Heaven for a long time in life, but that was before I opened my eyes and saw no proof that Life is not great on this Earth. ***If my instructors were wrong that life is lacking here on Earth, then it is likely they are wrong about there being a better place elsewhere.*** Call it a **matter of credibility.** Indeed, there may be other expressions of life elsewhere that are as good as the expression of life here on Earth, but I doubt that life is any better than it is here. At least, there is no evidence of it that I can see.

There is plenty of evidence, however, that people tend to want what they do not have. I know I am guilty of it; and I know of no one who is not “guilty” of it. **We all want what we do not have.** Realistically, that is the basis of the predictions of a better life someplace else. Some have simply become convinced that what they want is true – even if it is in another life. **In wanting something to be true, they have merely crossed the line and “predicted” that what they want will come true.**

It is a way to go alright – to live your life based on wanting something you do not have; but I don’t think it is the wisest way to live life. ***I think the wiser course is to be grateful for what you do have and consider life itself a fantastic gift.*** I know I am much happier when I’m aware of my blessings than when I am looking forward to some blessings I might have – and I do not think I am any different than anyone else.

Some were led to believe that May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2011 – just a few days ago as I write this – was going to be the last day of life on this Earth. The Earth was to be consumed in some conflagration, but those living who would qualify for this Heaven someplace else were to be “raptured” and taken off to this Heaven without having to perish with the others. A preacher of the age of 89 predicted it, based on his reading of some scripture; but why did this guy predict such a thing? I think it is because he first “**wanted**” such a thing. He turned out to be wrong, but how much of his life has he wasted prior to May 21<sup>st</sup> wanting something that was not in store to happen? ***I think it just goes to show that living your life wanting something and not being grateful for what you have is a very unwise way to go.***

There should be a lesson in that for all of us, though. Never mind offering that this preacher of 89 was goofy. Mind instead that we should not follow his lead. Look at the real evidence before us. ***Look at the life we have and be amazed.*** Don’t pine about what we think we may be missing, but embrace that which we are. Doesn’t that seem to be the

better way? Otherwise, like the 89 year old preacher wanting & expecting a rapture in the future, we may prance through Paradise, thinking it is Hell, and miss many of the wonders of a true *Heaven at hand*.

Well, that will do it for Volume 4 of my *OUT IN THE OPEN* writings series. I hope you are enjoying the ride somewhat, keeping in mind that everything I write is opinion. I enjoy thinking, but my thinking does not have to be that of another. You think – and share what you think; and I will do the same. But it is oh so wrong for me to think and then demand that you obey what I think. *Let us respect one another for our thoughts, but never use thought to keep another from thinking for him or herself.*

Join me for Volume 5 if you like. Like Volume 4 contained only one year – 2005 – Volume 5 will also contain one year – 2006. I wrote a lot in that year – and so I will limit another volume to just one year. Volume wise, however, I did not write near as much in 2006 that I did in 2005. Expect about half as much. OK?

As we all know now, life on this wonderful planet of ours did not end on May 21<sup>st</sup> – as one distracted human predicted. It is likely to continue for a long time to come; and as long as it does for me, if I am wise, I will say thank you for the grand gift. I am not making my life. It is not for me to judge it or discredit it in any way. It is only for me to be aware of my wonderful life – and to say *THANK YOU* for my blessings.

Bye for now!

**Your rather untraditional Jesus guide,**

**Francis William Bessler**

May 27th, 2011

# ***OUT IN THE OPEN***

*Volume 4 of 8*

(Featuring works written in 2005)



# **THE END**