

Twenty Seven Metaphors to a Grasp of Happiness

The Good News in Modern Metaphors

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Introduction

This is a book about obtaining a special kind of happiness that will never leave you nor forsake you and is as proof against as many forms of unhappiness as you will let it be.

Since what it offers you is happiness, I could have called it a self-help book. All self-help books ultimately offer happiness. But since this happiness comes from God, I have to call it a God-help book. Its purpose is to help you understand the happiness that is offered in the Christian Gospel. The word "gospel" comes from a Middle English word for "good news" Once you have read this book, and done the very consequential homework assignment I will give you towards the end of it, you will agree that it is indeed good news, because you will have gotten a grasp on a happiness that is able to grasp you back and not let go.

Unlike most books about the Gospel, this one does not relentlessly bang you on the head with the Bible. (At least not at first) What this book instead does is lead you through a cumulative set of metaphors, twenty-seven in all that inexorably guide you into a grasp of the best and highest happiness you can ever or will ever know. (But if you are the type who likes being banged on the head with the Bible, I have an appendix for you in the back.)

"What is a metaphor?" you may ask. A metaphor is a way of using language to bridge from one way of understanding something to another way of understanding something.

Sometimes it's a bridge between something familiar, and another familiar thing. For a example, in a phrase or figure of speech, we say "drowning in work," bridging between the idea of water and the idea of having too much work.

Sometimes it's a bridge between unfamiliar things to something familiar. Parables are like that. They are extended metaphors. Little stories that can translate things we are unfamiliar with (like the kind of existence that is yet to be) into things we are acquainted with in everyday life (the existence we have now).

The benefit of using metaphors is that you do not have to use hard words to explain things that might not be immediately obvious, and that you can say things as if they have been said for the first time, and thus have them heard as if for the first time.

So this book is a God-help book about some metaphors to a grasp of a unique and special kind of happiness. You may think of that happiness as being at the center of a flower that has not opened yet. As you read each metaphor, you are peeling away one petal after another, until you arrive at the core, and the nectar of happiness therein.

My only excuse for adding this book to the endless pile already in existence is that I wish someone has written a book like it for me a long time ago. I have been, for a good part of my life, very unhappy indeed, and I had a long twisting road before I finally got a grasp

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on the happiness that now grasps me. Walk with me then, down through the metaphors, and see if you can grasp that happiness too. I don't guarantee that you will always be happy if you do (there are still times when I am not), but I do believe that it will grasp you back.

The first metaphor is about happiness itself.

Metaphor 1 - Music as a Metaphor for Happiness

Consider music. Why do we listen to music? We listen to music because there is, somewhere in the notes, a divine moment, possibly several moments, in which we are taken out of ourselves and all our daily concerns of living and raised up to an ethereal place in our minds where a point-event occurs in our souls that we call "happiness." We can call it a lot of other things, depending on who we are: "fun," "cool," "groovy," "a blast," "felicity," etc, etc. For simplicities sake, I will call it plain old happiness.

But if you listen to music carefully, you'll notice that not every strain of a song, or every note of a composition gives you that specific point-event in the soul. In fact, if you listen carefully, you'll notice that a lot of music is about preparation for that point-event, rather than the point-event itself. The point-event is in fact quite small and very fleeting, and the preparation leading up to it makes up most of the song or the composition. It is this point-event quality that I take as being *the* characteristic of happiness in general.

Even if you are not a music lover, I'm sure you recognize the nature of that fleetingness I have pointed out. There are many things in life that we derive a measure of happiness from that involves a lot of preparation in comparison to how long the happiness of the thing lasts. Think about the card game, where there was waiting around for the guys (or gals) to show up, and then the amount of time spent talking and shuffling and dealing, and then the brief fleeting moments of happiness from points being made or from the chats with the guys (or gals), all of which are gone once the cards are back in the deck and the deck is put away and everybody goes home.

Think about the fishing trip where one spent time selecting where to do it at, possibly getting reservations for the venue, preparing the rod and reels, the bait, monitoring the weather reports, clearing the calendar to able to take the time, etc. etc. Then one does the fishing. One takes enjoyment from it. But how much of being there is really happiness, and how many moments of time were spent preparing for it in comparison to the moments of happiness experienced? You can notice this about virtually any hobby there is.

Then there is the larger happiness that comes from the events in a career or even a life. Now, I hope that you have seen more than one fleeting moment of happiness in your life, but if you care to think about it a little (and I'll understand if maybe you don't) , you will find that in the long run of a life or a career, you may have gotten the feeling that as far as happiness is concerned, there's been a lot more buck spent than bang received.

You may have worked hard and long on projects that gave you happiness after their completion, but found the happiness lasted only a day or two. You may have been an athlete who had trained really hard for the big contest, won the prize, and then realized your satisfaction in the prize has lasted maybe an hour or a day. You may be in a career in which a lot of hard work was punctuated from time to time by the happiness of a promotion that lasted only a day and night. You maybe living a life in which your

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happiest moments are a few pages in a scrap book.

And some of you may have noticed that what happiness you've had in life has been due to blind chance rather than design. You are not deceived in that regard. In the dictionary, the word "happiness" is said to derive from "hap," the archaic Scandinavian word for "luck" or "chance."

In fact, one sad aspect of happiness is that if we really notice it, and then set out to make it our goal, the act of having it as a goal may be the very thing that will prevent us from experiencing it. And God help us if some untoward event "spoils" our attempt at getting a flash of happiness from something. Some of the books on happiness will in fact tell you that the best way to get it is to ignore it completely and just go about your business. But that can be maddening advice to follow when happiness bobs up once in a while and then vanishes as fast as it came.

Now you may think "So happiness is fleeting. Big deal. So what? I'll just go after it more and more until I get it again and again." But you should consider, first, that some kinds of happiness do not lend themselves to constant repetition. There are only so many times you can listen to a CD tract without the point-events of happiness eventually draining out of it and actual boredom setting in.

Second you should consider that whole categories of happiness may exhaust themselves when you eventually realize how much alike they are in end. For example, you may get happiness from reading Sherlock Holmes, or Nero Wolf, or Ellery Queen. But eventually you reach the point where you see that the entire mystery genre is based on the principle of a tricky observation being wrapped around some plot devices designed to conceal it until the last paragraph. There after it becomes harder to read a mystery just for the mysteries sake. (The best mystery stories are the ones that contain observations about the human condition as well as just the mystery plot). Once you understand the operating principal behind a happiness, it becomes harder to get a flash of happiness from a instance of the genre.

Thirdly, when you were a child, your parents footed the bill for you quest for happiness. But now that you are an adult, you pay for it by working. If you haven't realized it by now, as you get older, the ratio of fun to work decreases as work becomes more and more demanding and one happiness after another is exhausted.

There are no two ways about it. We must solve the problem of happiness. The frenzied search for it is what makes this wicked old world go 'round and 'round, and is the source of much positive unhappiness. We have to solve it.

So we ask the obvious question "what makes happiness so fleeting?" And our second metaphor comes to our aid.

Metaphor 2 - Time as a Metaphor of Eternity

The chief problem of our happiness point-events is that time attenuates them. We say "time heals all wounds." But what we mean by that, rather, is that memory fades with time.

Time came into being with the creation of matter. Time is not just a clock ticking. It's the creation's processing. It is molecules moving, resulting in bodies decaying, hair turning grayer, and synapses in the brain gradually losing their connections so that, over time, a memory of a point-event that was once flesh and clear in our minds has now become less than what it once was to us in its immediacy, and may even have become lost to us altogether. It causes our experiences to be divided into an ill-remembered past, a minutely fleeting present, and unknown (at least by us) future. It serves us well enough indeed in healing wounds, but it minute by minute erases our point-events of happiness as if they were sand castles in a desert sand storm.

So, if we want a lasting happiness, one that is not always fading away and disappearing on us, we are talking about an everlasting happiness, or better yet an eternal one.

Is there a difference between something that is "everlasting" and something that is "eternal?" There is one I would like to make, even though they are used interchangeably. An eternal object can be conceived of as having no beginning and no end, and is therefore not subject to time, and indeed can be conceived of as existing outside time. While an everlasting object, like an eternal object, can be conceived of as not having an end, going on forever, but unlike an eternal object, one that is everlasting can be said to have a beginning and is therefore part of time. It is subject to having a past, a present, and a future.

But that is hard to imagine by creatures existing in time. So, I propose using time as a metaphor of eternity. The metaphor is this: to an object in eternity, every moment in time is being experienced as happening *now*. There's no past, present, and future. All the moments of time are experienced as being in the present.

Imagine what the possibility of eternity means for happiness! The happiness of that ice cream cone you just tasted would not fade away as soon as you swallowed it, but would remain as fresh in your mind as if you had just tasted it again and again and again. The event of happiness would not longer be fleeting, but something that could be held, well, for all eternity.

But where can we find eternity? What has the quality of eternity? Well, here comes the next metaphor.

Metaphor 3 - The Chain of Being

This metaphor comes with a decision. Before you consider this metaphor, you have to decide whether you believe Something can come out of Nothing or whether there must always be a Something (or rather a Someone) for anything to come out of. For before there was the Theory of Evolution there was the Chain of Being.

The churchmen of the middle ages, like us, were aware of design principles at work in the way all nature's creatures were made, and so, with the assistance of ancient Greek thought, came up with this metaphor.

In the Chain of Being, there is always a Someone out of whom everything else came. There is a kind of similarity between The Theory of Evolution and the Chain of Being, but with a very big difference. Evolution works from the bottom (the slime), up (to man?), and has no purpose, no reason for anything. The Chain of Being starts at the top, with a designer and creator at the top, who then works from the bottom up, creating creatures of varying complexity of design and self-awareness in a metaphorical "Chain of Being" leading up to the Creator, who has a very specific purpose in doing so.

We ourselves are self aware beings. We perceive that there seems to be successive levels of design in the making of animals, successive levels of self awareness and, if we observe carefully, we perceive that each creature has a form of "happiness" peculiar to it, whether instinctive or learned.

Being that there are increasingly complex beings, we can perceive that there are increasingly complex forms of happiness that these beings can enjoy. Varying in complexity by the amount of time and energy required to enjoy them and learn how to enjoy them.

In animals, happiness is mostly the satisfaction of drives for hunger or procreation. Fish are made happy (in a sense) by gobbling up plankton and/or smaller fishes, and very likely, by being able to excrete. But we don't know if they are made happy by their reproductive processes, other than that they innately know they have to perform them. Dogs are also made happy by food, excretion, and most obviously by procreation. But dogs also like to play games that, while related to their survival skills, are not just exclusively for that purpose. Monkeys and apes are known to get a form of happiness from relating to each other in a society, as scientific observation has revealed that they have grooming networks.

Human kinds of happiness vary in complexity as well. Enjoying music from other time periods is a more complex happiness than enjoying music from just your own generation, simply because of the time and energy required to recapture what it was that earlier people enjoyed about their music. The same can be said of movies, theater performances, and even television shows, and any of the other arts. Enjoying chess is a more complex happiness than enjoying checkers. Enjoying a game of Monopoly is a more complex

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pleasure than enjoying Candyland. And so on down the line.

Now that we are aware that there are different kinds and levels of happiness, we should go on to start thinking about our choices of which kind of happiness will best serve us. In a sense we are saying that only the best and most important kind will do, a kind that is suitable to our place in the Chain of Being.

In our sorting of the kinds of happiness, we can start with an old saw. It's the old saw about there being three kinds of people: those who talk about things (possessions), those who talk about people (gossip), and those who talk about ideas.

As with talk, it is so with happiness. Things, people, or ideas are the basic choices ("places", i.e. vacations spots, can be considered a collection of "things"). As far as talk goes, ideas are certainly a better topic than gossip about people or talk of possessions, but in a sort of the kinds of happiness, ideas should, all things being equal actually come in the middle between people and things. For these reasons: 1.) Ideas are more important than things because ideas for creating things come before the things themselves and in fact shape their creation. And if your imagination is good enough, it is possible to enjoy many things in your mind with out having to have them in reality. 2.) People create things, and they conceive ideas. And like things, ideas can be good or bad, intelligent or stupid, worthy or worthless.

Our bloody centuries on this earth have revealed the consequences some people holding some ideas to be more important than other people. But there have also likewise been other people who have conceived ideas that increased the happiness of many people.

So with happiness, the order of what is best and most important comes down to people first, ideas second (for the most part), and things last. And so from there it then comes down to who is the best person and what kind of ideas that person holds.

So the next step in contemplating the metaphor of the Chain of Being is to think about the levels of being and happiness going up. Up from the level of human beings. This is where we come back to deciding about whether there has to always be something (Or Someone) in order for there to be anything. I.e., we come to the ideal of a Supreme Being.

If I am a human being, and I have various kinds of happiness to chose from, of varying levels of complexity (or lack thereof !), and some of these are light years above the appreciation of any animal (one hopes), then what does the primary and most important happiness of God consist of? And what would be the quality of that happiness as opposed to human happiness?

Let's take the question of quality first. If we have a Someone who was always there, who has generated everything else, including time (which comes into being with the creation) then we have an eternal Being. At the top of the Chain of Being by virtue of being its Creator, and thereby perfect, this Being would have to be eternal in the sense of every moment in created time being present to Him at once without defect. (Footnote 1)

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Therefore God's happiness is perfect and never fades. This is the quality of God's happiness.

Now let's turn to the question of what is the primary and most important happiness of God. In a perfect being, happiness would have to sort by what is most important, perfect and best. And what (or rather Who) in the Chain of Being is most important, perfect, and best? If you think about it carefully, you have to conclude that God's best, most important, and perfect happiness comes from His ideas, His conception and contemplation, of Himself as a Person. (Footnote 2)

In the Chain of Being, indeed as the Creator of the Chain, God exists as a Person, who then has ideas, which translate into things, and into creatures which culminate in people. But the most significant, and the most worthy Object of happiness of such a Creator is Himself because all else derives from Him, whereas He exists solely from Himself. In fact, everything that He creates is a reflection of Him as if it were a kind of mirror.

If it sounds a little strange to you, think for a minute about what mostly gives you pleasure to think about when you're not forced to be thinking about something else. Nine times out of ten, I believe it will be yourself that you are thinking about. We are all, after all, the main characters in our own stories, or the action heroes of our own internal movie theaters. We all have the kind of secret life Walter Mitty does.

It's just that since God is perfect, and has some other attributes I'll mention later, it is perfectly all right for God's highest and best happiness to be centered in the contemplation of Himself and want to see Himself in all He has made.

Now believe it or not, we are now ready to answer Kurt Vonnegut Jr's famous question: "What are people for?" The answer is in another question. If we have a self-existent Being, who creates, and who's chief happiness is the contemplation of Himself, then how may that Being increase His happiness if He is perfect and ultimate, and thereby can never change into a greater form than that which He has always had? The answer is: by creating other persons, other beings, who are capable of that same contemplation of Himself.

Make no mistake. Let none deceive you. *That* is what people are for. God has created us for the very highest happiness there can be, which is to have Him as our Object. In a very real sense, we were all meant to be mystics. It's just that the degree can vary from person to person.

So, God increases His high quality happiness by creating a Chain of Being, which culminates in beings capable of the contemplation, adoration, and praise of Himself. There are design criteria for such beings.

The first is whether the beings will be based on what I would distinguish as Fecundity versus Fullness. A being based on Fecundity will be a being that starts its existence as something next to nothing and then within the fabric of time grows up into whatever

degree of maturity it was meant to have. This design principle implies that the finite number of members of this class of being will come into being by being distributed in the fabric of time. Earthly life, and human beings are based on this principle.

The contrasting principle is Fullness. A creature based on Fullness is one created complete as it is, with no need of either growth or reproduction, since all the members of this order of creation are created at once. Presumably, any messengers of God who pass between Him (in eternity) and His creation (in time) are of this design. (And just to clarify things, I'll mention that the Greek word for messenger is "angelos"). They would be an intermediate link in the Chain of Being between humans and God. They would be "everlasting", but not "eternal."

The second design principle is, in a very real sense, "a killer." In order for the contemplation, adoration, and praise of God to be in any fashion authentic, the being performing it must have the key ingredient called "free will." Think, if you will, of all the millionaires who have ever wondered if they were really loved for themselves (what ever that might mean). This is what is implicit in God creating a race of beings whose purpose in life is to love Him and worship Him because of the excellency of Who is He is. Worship cannot be performed by either robots or Clockwork Oranges. (Foonote 3)

The only worship that is worth anything is the worship of a free being who has the capacity to refuse that worship and that high quality happiness which God has in Himself. In a word, worship can only be performed by a responsible being.

And so now we get to our next metaphor.

(1) I am aware that the division of our species into male and female is a design principle of the creator and as such both states are reflections of His personality. (One of His names in Hebrew means literally "the breasted one," which indicates His nurturing nature). I use the "Him" because I will not call Him an "it" and my reasons for not calling "Him" a "Her" will become apparent later.

(2) I know that some people are in the habit of thinking of God as an impersonal "force" (an "it") because they think that is somehow better than being an icky "person." But think about this: human persons have learned how to manipulate and overcome some of the impersonal forces of nature, like electricity, electro-magnetism, and even gravity. So thinking of the Supreme Being as an impersonal force is actually a way of demoting Him in our thinking. One is not after all accountable to an impersonal force, but one can be accountable to a person. I think C.S. Lewis (*Mere Christianity*) has the right of it. If God is a person, then His personhood is of a Super Duper variety.

(3) In Anthony Burgess' novel, *A Clockwork Orange*, there is a criminal anti-hero who is subjected to a behavior modification treatment that causes him to become immediately ill whenever he even conceives of committing a crime. Burgess is pointing out that this person is still basically a criminal because you have not really changed him, just his behavior. The impulses are still there. So you have a mechanically controlled organic

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being. A clockwork orange.

Metaphor 4 - Self-maintaining Computer Programs

Having come along this way with a concept of a being at the top of a Chain of Being, who has the power to create beings beneath Him who are endowed with will, the question arises as to who bears responsibility for the consequences of that will.

Some people take the civil liability view that the creator is responsible for the results of free will by virtue of being the creator. One is, after all, legally responsible for the acts of one's pets and one's minor children.

I submit, from my long career as a computer programmer, that the civil liability involved in the maintenance of a computer program is probably a better analogy. Courts have held that the liability of a computer programmer for the defects of programs he has written ends when his maintenance of the programs ends. For example, if, initially, Tom the programmer writes a program that gets Dick's payroll wrong, then it is Tom that is liable to Dick for the damage from the payroll foul up. But if Tom in fact wrote a good payroll program, and later turned it over to Harry for maintenance, it would be Harry who would be on the hook for any resulting foul up.

Given this, I would add the following: suppose it were possible to make programs that once created, were self aware enough to maintain themselves by re-programming themselves. Well, the liability would pass from the programmer to the program itself. And it is just this that I take as a metaphor of responsibility. One is not, after all, responsible for the acts of one's adult children.

Metaphor 5 - The Novel as a Metaphor of Time in Eternity

Now, I have just gone over the idea of there being not only free will, but also responsibility for it. And yet I have also proposed a metaphor of eternity which is that it is like all the moments in time happening at once. How are we to reconcile these two ideas? If time is of a piece with matter in being part of the creation, then all the moments in time, including the future, are already known outside of time. How then can there be such a thing as either free will or responsibility? Well C. S. Lewis gave me a very serviceable metaphor that helps a great deal. (Footnote 4)

It is this. Imagine that you are reading a novel instead of reading this. The characters in the novel are talking to each other and getting on with the lives the author of the novel gave them. In the novel, time is passing for these characters. Depending on what kind of novel it is, the time passing could be a single day, or a lifetime, or several lifetimes, but it is a kind of time passing.

Then you may come to a place in the novel where two characters are having a momentary discussion, and put the book down and do not resume reading it until a month or so later. In your own time, a month has passed. But to the characters in the novel, only a moment has passed between the time one of them said something and the other replied.

But now also consider that besides time passing, the characters in the novel are making decisions that cause actions to take place that change the lives they lead in the novel. Now as far as the characters in the novel are concerned, they have complete free will. But yet the novel has already been written. Everything they've done is forever predetermined. In fact, in literature, there is something called an "authorial intrusion" in which the author of a story can interrupt the flow of the story by commenting, as the author, on things that are going to happen in the "future" of the story.

So in one sense, that is what I think the eternity that is outside of time is like. It's like being the reader of a novel in which time is passing and the creatures in it are making decisions and causing consequences from their decisions, but it is all a recording of what has already occurred. To an eternal being, seeing the future is like re-reading the novel.

And you would then ask me, "But where's the responsibility in all this? Aren't all the decisions fake if they've already written down before hand?" And my answer would be: in the very best novelists, most of the characters have free will before the novelist ever sits down to write his or her novel.

Frederick Buechner, in *The Book of Bebb*, is on record as saying of his Leo Bebb novels "I had heard about single characters running away with the show but never the whole cast - and not just running away with it but refusing to let it end." And Stephen King has likened writing stories to archeology. He senses that he's not so much making things up as digging up things that were already deep inside the human race to begin with. Fiction writers in general will tell you that it's a gift when a character "shows up" and takes on a life of its own in their fictive universes.

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Now if we stretch this last idea a little with the idea that the Creator is the best possible novelist there could ever be, we come up with the idea that we really do have free will, and responsibility for it, even if the Creator knows all the moments of our futures in a moment of His eternity. We have free will and make decisions that we can be held responsible for, but the Creator has decided where in time He will place us and how He will use our decisions in the story that He unfolds in our time.

(4) C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*. Where I do not specifically mention what work of C.S. Lewis suggested something to me, the work is this one.

Interlude in the Dark Valley

So, here we are. Responsible, self-aware, self-programming beings, and creatures specifically designed for the worship, adoration, praise, and contemplation of our Creator.

Is that what all of us actually do on any basis more frequently than we take in any other pleasures? Is that what we feel? Do we even *like* the idea? Does our world look like it reflects that fact, or some quite different state of affairs?

Surely, and sadly, it is a quite different state of affairs with us. What most of us really seem to experience in real life is a blindness, or deafness, or deadness to anything whatsoever that even hints of a higher being who might make a claim to be our felicity. And what we definitely experience is a profound sense of aloneness. Or as Aldous Huxley poetically put it:

We live together, we act on, and react to, one another; but always and in all circumstances we are by ourselves. ... Embraced, the lovers desperately try to fuse their insulated ecstasies into a single self-transcendence; in vain. By its very nature every embodied spirit is doomed to suffer and enjoy in solitude. Sensations, feelings, insights, fancies - all these are private and, except through symbols and at second hand, incommunicable ... From family to nation, every human group is a society of island universes. (Footnote 5)

But if you have read this far, it's probably because you are unhappy in some degree (I did entitle it *Twenty-Seven Metaphors to a Grasp of Happiness* after all), and maybe you've known some people who seem to be happy on the basis we've just explored and would like, perhaps, to awaken a facility for it inside yourself. Keep on reading. I have some more metaphors. And they have to do with deadness, blindness, deafness, and aloneness.

Let's take aloneness first.

(5) Aldous Huxley, *The Doors of Perception*. Yes, the Jim Morrison rock group was named after this book.

Metaphor 6 - A Robot Named Pierre (the Chicagoland Metaphor)

As a metaphor, or rather a thought experiment, I'm going to say that a team of scientists at the University of Chicago are going to perform what would in reality be a thoroughly wicked human experiment. I am, for the moment, not considering the wickedness of the experiment, other than to mention that it is wicked and I hope will never be attempted, but rather I present it as a thought experiment to highlight something we may never have considered about our lives here on earth.

The experiment is this. Imagine that the savants of the University of Chicago are able to obtain a pregnant woman who is ready to give up her child for science (there's one wickedness right there). The child is taken out of the mother's body and put in a scientific device or tank of some kind which allows it to continue life in an unborn state.

Simultaneously, in Paris, in a research annex of the University of Chicago, some French scientists have constructed a mechanical, robot-like body of some sort that has arms and legs, and hands, and a means of seeing and hearing, etc. etc. The robot body does not have a brain to run it, but rather, a series of telecommunication links (say by radio) between the various parts of the robot's body and the University in Chicago.

Now imagine that before the baby is born, its optic nerve is disconnected from its own eyes and connected to the telecommunication link to the robot's eyes in Paris. Then its auditory nerves are then disconnected from its own ears and linked to the robot's ears in Paris. And it's likewise for its arms and legs, and the other parts of its body.

When the infant in the tank finally becomes conscious and is "born," it begins to sense with the robot's senses in Paris, and when it moves, it moves its robot body in Paris. Suppose then, that the wicked scientists let it grow up and live its whole life in the tank sensing with, and operating, its body in Paris, while the scientists monitor its incoming and outgoing communication links.

What misconceptions do you think the individual in the tank would grow up with?

- Well, 1.) He would think he was a robot and not a human being.
- 2.) He would think he was a French robot.
- 3.) He would think that if a Mack truck (or whatever the French equivalent is) ran over his robotic body; that would be the end of him.
- 4.) He would think that he was alone inside his body's head in Paris.

And he would be dead wrong about all four things. [Footnote 3-7]

Now what do we get out of this extended metaphor? Well, two things.

- 1.) We begin to arrive at a concrete idea of what might be meant by the words "spirit" or "soul". The fact that you have a body that is in a certain place at a certain time, and in a certain condition does not mean that your body is all there is to you. The fact that we can

speak of something that's not part of your physical body does not mean that it does not exist somewhere (even if away from where your physical body is) and have some kind of structure or components or function just as the parts of your physical body do. You have a "Chicagoland" that coincides with your "Parisian" existence.

When you try to observe your Chicagoland - your soul or spirit - its kind of like a flash light in a dark room trying to shine its light on itself - the thing that you're trying to shine the light on is the thing doing the shining. Just because you can't sense it and weigh it in a scale does not mean it doesn't exist. [Footnote 3-6] In fact, in The Record, one of the titles ascribed to God is "the Father of Spirits". So in very real sense this "Chicagoland" that looks out of your body's eyes, and hears with our body's ears is just as much a creation of God as the physical world your eyes see and your ears hear.

2.) We can start to speculate that we might not be so alone inside our own heads after all. Suppose for a moment that one of the scientists in the above metaphor decided to start speaking to the individual who thought he was a French robot. The scientist could, we can suppose, speak directly to the individual inside his tank by tapping directly into the comm links for his ears or eyes.

And what would be the effect? Doubtless poor Pierre would get the shock of his life and possibly start to think he was going cybernetically crazy (especially if the scientist was speaking English!). But notice this: the means of communication was always there. In terms of the metaphor, that communication would have been "by the spirit" and occurred "in the soul." And the scientists, being there all along, and from infancy, would know everything the individual saw or heard or said or did.

The individual thought he was a French robot and alone inside his own private mechanical skull. He was none of that.

But let's add another wrinkle to this metaphor by proposing another. Consider the early days of the telephone and the radio. People who first encountered those inventions, without a prior knowledge of how they worked, used to jump out of their skins at having these new fangled contraptions speak to them as if they had little tiny people in them! This is another way to consider Chicagoland and its operating link to a Parisian existence. You may think of the brain as an electro-chemical colloid that is capable of receiving, instead of radio waves, what might be called "soul" or "spirit" waves.

Now let's take it a step further and propose that not just what Pierre saw and heard and said and did was being transmitted between Chicagoland and Paris, but also what he thought. Suppose the "soul" or "spirit" waves transmitted, not just communications about sense and movement, but also the thoughts of the individual? Well then, Pierre would really have never been alone in his head!

So now we have an operating metaphor for how it can be possible for us never to be alone inside our own heads. The question is then, why are we? If we really consider this metaphor, we will soon conclude that what's actually stranger than the idea of receiving

communications from a Chicagoland is that fact that we have never received a communication from a Chicagoland.

And why haven't we noticed this before? It's because everyone we know of is not receiving communications from Chicagoland either. The no-eyed man in the land of the blind does not know he is as blind as his fellows. Nor as deaf, nor as dead (though he may be very aware of how lonely he is).

But now we get to our next consideration. If the Supreme Being is perfect, then whatever lack of communication we may have from Him on our end cannot be attributed to Him. If there is a defect in our communications through Chicagoland, it is more likely the problem lies with us.

And by this time we may be collectively asking ourselves, "Was it something I said?"

It's time for another metaphor.

(3-7) Yes, I did see the movie *The Matrix*. It is an excellent realization of this metaphor, as is the movie *eXistence*, and *The 13th Floor*, and even *Dark City*. But the intent of these movies is Gnostic. Hollywood is on a Gnosticism binge right now. Something I will cover later.

(3-6) I remember once reading an unworthy religious tract that said that a scientist had once put a dying old man on a long flat scale to see if his weight changed at the moment after death. It did by a something like an ounce, and the tract writer said this proved the existence of the soul and gave its exact weight as an ounce. The tract writer was not a coroner, who could have told him that on death, the sphincters of the body relax and open, one consequence of which is that any gas in the colon is released. Most assuredly, one ounce is not the weight of a soul!

Metaphors 7 and 8 - Skeleton Programs and the Tree in the Water

For this next metaphor, I'm going to turn back again to my long experience as a computer programmer.

When I was a young junior programmer, I had a fanciful notion that computer programmers spent all their time writing new programs from scratch, each a realization of a given stage of his expertise and personality. Little did I know.

In point of fact, what professional programmers do is write a basic skeleton program that does a variety of commonly done things, and then whenever a new program is required, they grab the skeleton program, make few changes to it, and then install that changed version of the skeleton into production as a brand new program. This is efficiency. The idea is now called "code reusability," and there are now whole programming languages based on this idea. It is marvelously efficient, but has one defect.

Imagine that, one night, a programmer at a company is called in because four payroll systems crashed in the same place in their runs on the mainframe. (I am dating myself with this example. Let me date myself further. These kinds of crashes were called "Abends" for "abnormal end").

The poor programmer comes in and starts sifting through the cybernetic wreckage like an investigator for the Federal Transportation Safety Board. He discovers that all four payroll systems crashed in the same place because all four different systems used a program that had been created from the same skeleton program. A defect in the original skeleton program (for example, an incorrect leap year calculation that shows up once every four years) had years later caused four different computer programs for four different payroll systems to fail.

This makes it easier for the programmer to fix, because the problem is localized in one place, but he still has to correct every program that was based on that same original skeleton program.

Now, let's think back again to living in Paris while truly residing in Chicagoland.

Another way to think about this is to consider the robot's body in Paris to be, as it actually would be, hardware, just like a personal computer that sits on a person's desk at home is a piece of electrical hardware no different from a television.

Then think about Chicagoland as being a piece of software that runs on that hardware. Chicagoland Version 1.0 running on RobotBody Version 1.0. That can be a picture, however strange, of all of us. Some of the cyberpunk science fiction authors think along those lines, referring to human beings as "meatmachines" running "wetware."

Admittedly, this is not a pretty metaphor, but it does get us closer to a crucial truth, which is, namely, if Chicagoland Version 1.0 has a defect in it, every meatmachine running it

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will have that same defect.

Now, lets step back a minute and consider this.

A while back ago, I said that the key thing about Chicagoland was that you could not observe it, because the thing you would be observing it with was in fact Chicagoland itself. And if its true location happened not to be located solely within your head, you would not be able to know that. And if it had some kind of structure, components, function or parts, just as your physical body does; you wouldn't know that either. Consider now, if Chicagoland does indeed have parts, structures, and maybe a history that precedes your own personal existence.

For a good part of medical history, human beings had an inkling about the idea of genetics. There were expressions like "blood will tell", "the acorn doesn't fall far from the tree," and "a chip off the old block." There were inklings about heredity before there was any knowledge of DNA, chromosomes, and the like.

It was only with the advent of modern science that the physical mechanisms of heredity were finally uncovered. With the discovery that 50% of our genetic material comes from each parent at our conception, we now understand that within each of us, there was, in the past, a vast tree of many many branches (human beings of many different kinds) that grew in reverse, consolidating downward into a single trunk that became us, and that we in turn become the trunk of another vast tree going upward and onward into the future (provided, of course, that we are able to convince a member of the opposite sex to help us reproduce).

Science has even discovered that there is in fact a "Mitochondrial Eve." I.e. there is a piece of physical genetics that all humans in the world have, that seems to have come from a single human female. [Footnote 3-8]

Now, most people today, who are educated about our modern concepts of heredity by DNA, would have no intellectual problem with the idea that they might have a hereditary disease transmitted to them by the DNA of one or both of their parents. (Though assuredly they might have an emotional problem) And even uneducated people understand and accept that a hereditary disease is a dubious gift of nature. But the one thing both educated people and uneducated people have a really hard time accepting is the idea that their "souls," their "spirits," their "psyches," their "personalities", their "Chicagolands" might have a hereditary disease that affects the part of them that they can't examine.

The attitude is very much that of the atheist philosopher Ayn Rand who is on record as saying "I can account for every emotion I have." Just so. The response is "Call me a leper. Call me a hemophiliac. Even call me a schizophrenic. But do not even imply that there might be anything wrong with the part of me that's not my body." That might be your response. But consider that your bias to the idea of owing your own soul (which you did not by yourself bring into being) may be just the thing that may prevent you from

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getting a grasp on eternal happiness.

Consider. Suppose it is true. Suppose your Chicagoland has a history, heredity, and a DNA just like your physical body does? Suppose that in our Chicagoland, as with our bodies, there is besides the stuff that makes us personally our own selves, also stuff that is part of all the people who have ever been?

I was once driving by a pond and noticed that some kind of pretty water plants I had never seen before were dotting out of the pond in a noticeable pattern that didn't look natural. So I pulled over and walked over to the pond and found out what it really was: a tree in blossom that had been cut down and thrown into the pond. What I saw as individual water plants in a pattern were actually branches of a tree that, below the water line, went down into a common trunk.

Suppose that our "souls," our "spirits," our "Chicagolands" are actually the branches of a tree leading down into a common origin that can affect us all even while we think we are autonomous individuals? Well, we can start to understand where our Chicagoland's defects of blindness, deafness, deadness, and aloneness may have come from. They may have originated with the first people who were on the planet.

Does science have any inkling about such a thing as a spiritual heredity? Believe it or not, there is some science lying in this direction. The depth psychologist Carl Jung wrote about the existence of something called the Collective Unconscious whereby collective ideas residing in a collective human psyche can affect the behavior of autonomous individual humans.

The physicist Rupert Sheldrake has proposed that there may be something that can be called a "human morphic field," which is a field in the sense of a "magnetic field," in which collective human behavior can have influences on individual human behavior.

There are also depth psychologists who examine peoples reported dreams, who see certain patterns over and over again that appear to have an archaic origin, as if they were artifacts from great-great-great-great-great grandma's own spiritual attic.

And then there are scholars who study the myths of the many primitive (and not so primitive) peoples of many lands, who have noticed that some of the myths are like some of those re-occurring dreams, and have observed re-occurring themes in those myths.

And then lastly, there is the phenomenon of inventions and scientific discoveries being made by several different people at about the same time in different parts of the world.

Personally, I do not endorse some these researchers, because I have noticed a tendency for their studies to degenerate into studies of the occult. (This is especially true of C.G. Jung's). There is a reason for this, but that is a topic I will address later.

So, we have the possibility that Chicagoland may have a hereditary element to it. Where

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does that bring us?

Recall, if you will, that one of the design criteria for a being who can worship is that it be responsible. It can start out with a perfectly fine Chicagoland and thereby receive the responsibility for the continued maintenance of its ability to relate to the Creator who created it.

Having engendered a creature of free will and responsibility, the Creator must then, in line with certain personal attributes I will soon describe, test these new creatures. For the Creator is a wise hunter who tests whoever he takes his next hunting trip. And that's my next metaphor.

(3-8) I have a niece who as of this writing has four little boys. Each of them looks completely different from the other. But all of them look unmistakably like their father. I would have to say, of a woman, that spamming her man into the gene pool is the highest compliment she can pay him.

Metaphor 9 - The Wise Hunter

In a church I once attended, we had a Texan who hunted animals for a hobby.

One day, some boys from the church entreated him to take them with him on a hunt. But he was a very wise hunter, who knew that one just doesn't take anyone on a hunt, because it can be a dangerous business and it has to be done quietly if any game is to be taken.

So before the hunt, he left the boys in a field and told them he would be back in a while to begin the hunt with them. Then he went off to a place where he could remain out of sight, but still observe the boys. And sure enough, boys being boys, and time being time, restlessness set in and they started making noise, and even firing their rifles at ant hills and other nearby inanimate targets. And so the Texan came back and told them he had witnessed their undisciplined behavior and the hunt was off.

If we can conceive of a Supreme Being, who is a Creator, and who has created for His own highest happiness some self-aware, responsible beings who have free will, then we can perfectly well imagine this Supreme Being putting His new Creatures to such a test as that described above.

It is a test to find out what the responsible creatures will do with their free will. Will they retain the Creator as their right and proper contemplation and so retain a character inoffensive to that Creator? Or will they change their character to one unlike that of their Creator and thus dethrone Him from His right and proper place in their hearts?

Our blindness, deafness, deadness, and loneliness would strongly indicate that the first people failed that test, and that their failure has become our heritage in the part of us that is Chicagoland. Being responsible self-programming beings, the first people in effect changed Chicagoland Version 1.0 into Version 1.1, and in the process introduced a profound and global failure into it.

And with these latest metaphors we have now arrived at a foundational notion of what might be meant by the idea of *original sin*, which is very nearly the hardest concept for modern people to accept.

Some of you, having come this far with me, may here say "Okay, we as a species in the Chain of Being have gone haywire and become unable to perceive our Creator. So what? Why doesn't God just leave us alone? We leave Him alone don't we?" Or more likely "Why don't we all just get along?"

That's the subject of my next metaphor.

Metaphors 10 and 11 - Synesthesia and Perfect Pitch

Synesthesia is a physical/psychological condition in which a person perceives one sense as through it were through a different sense organ. For a example, a person's ears can hear a sound or some music, but their mind will perceive it as light of some color or quality, or a taste sensation, or even a smell.

I like the thought of that. Imagine perceiving Beethoven's ninth symphony as a wonderful fireworks display, or a delicate and exquisite perfume, or as the best thing your tongue has ever tasted.

But the reality of that condition maybe just the opposite. The brass section of an orchestra may come though as a head-splitting blinding flash of evil looking red light. Certain movements of the violin section may come through as a whiff of the most rotten substance in existence. And certain strains of the wind instruments may come through as worst thing one has ever tasted.

Then too, think of the "gift" of perfect pitch. This is the ability some people have to exactly distinguish one musical note in the scale from another musical note, just by hearing it once. Most people have to hear a number of notes in secession to get a relative sense of where they stand in relation to each other. People who have perfect pitch need to only hear a single note to know which one it is.

For musicians, perfect pitch is a perfect gift. But it comes with a price. They have to endure people who do not have perfect pitch who insist on singing or playing musical instruments. They are even prey to random inharmonious noises. For someone with perfect pitch, this can be like enduring a physical illness or even an assault.

Now here's the question. What is all this a metaphor of? Well, two things that are very hard for human beings perceive that are very real attributes and characteristics of the Being who resides at the top of the Chain of Being. These attributes are righteousness and holiness.

Righteousness is right relation to other beings (or treating other beings right). Holiness is a related attribute that can be described as righteousness in itself without relation to another.

Being perfect, God has a perfect perception of the quality called righteousness, and is Himself most holy. God, as Creator, is at the top of the Chain of Being, and by that position is the sole arbiter of what is right and wrong, good and evil, and is in Himself good, and incapable of doing wrong. He is the Maker of the "rules of the game." Therefore a lesser being than God would say that righteousness and holiness are super-developed in Him.

Now think for a minute. A more highly developed being is more easily transgressed against than a lesser developed being.

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A fish will only get annoyed at you (if he is even capable of that) when you actually get your hook in his mouth. A wild dog will get angry at you as soon as you step into an area it has marked as its territory. Apes, even if you have successfully negotiated stepping into to their territory, will get angry at you if you smile at them because among them bared teeth are interpreted as a challenge to a fight.

And in a similar vein, I recall a story about Washoe the chimp or one of the other chimps who have been taught a form of sign language from using a specially made computer keyboard. The story is that the special keyboard had a sign for "scientists" and a sign for "feces," and one day the scientists denied the chimp something and the chimp immediately tapped back and forth on the key for "feces" and "scientists!" True story or not, you get the picture. A more highly developed being is more easily transgressed against than a lesser developed being.

Now consider again, climbing up the Chain of Being, whether it is more than very likely that with a being like God, there are offenses that might not seem like they are a very big deal to us (indeed we might not even be aware of them or even think we are doing Him good by doing them), but do in fact strike very heavily at the center of His own happiness, just like Beethoven's ninth might make a person with synesthesia ill, or our singing in the shower might make a person with perfect pitch cringe in their inmost being.

By experience, which I myself have shared, I know that most people, when they think of God at all, they think of Him as either an annoying stickler for rules who is like the Princess in the fairy tale of the Princess and the pea - someone easily annoyed by seemingly petty little things.

Either that, or they believe He is a jolly fine old fellow who can be easily entreated of any offense against Him because either they've had dealings with corrupt officials who can be bribed, or they've had authority figures over them who were given to moods they could take advantage of (which are merely the product of time passing), or more likely they or others they've hurt have experienced the baneful healing that time brings, which is merely forgetfulness, and found themselves easily absolved of offenses.

Whatever the reason, there is a failure to see that with God, righteousness and holiness are like the air we breath, the food we eat, and all that strikes our senses. It is His atmosphere. And it is of a piece with the intentions He has for creatures created to worship Him.

Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. It is also the sincerest form of worship. It goes right to the heart of God's happiness. If you have God as your Object, and He is your contemplation, then if you do something that is contrary to His personality, to the air He breathes, you have in fact become something unendurable to Him, and in all likelihood He has dropped out of your contemplation because what you have done is contrary to what He is.

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Just how unendurable is it for God? We have discussed the quality of God's happiness. We should now consider the quality of His unhappiness. Time for another metaphor.

Metaphor 12 - Imagination as a Metaphor of Creation

Consider this. God creates "ex nihilo" or "out of nothing." What in human comprehension is the one thing that is like that?

Answer: the conception of ideas.

You cannot create materials without using pre-existing materials, but in your mind, you can create dream houses, dream cars, and (unfortunately) dream relationships out of nothing.

In your imagination you can say "Let there be a mansion in Bermuda," and lo! it is there. It only requires a certain amount of imagination. But note well, it is in your mind that you are having this creation. It is intimately apart of you in a way nothing external can be.

So realize that in a very real way, God's whole creation, though separate and not the same "substance" as Himself once it was brought into being, is still very much connected to Him and that very intimately.

And also realize that you are in this Creation, and that all the moments of your time in this Creation, both of as to your thoughts, and as to your deeds (remember Chicagoland?) are present to Him as if they had just happened, and they will always be that way to Him for all eternity. They will be, as the expression goes, "in His face."

And consider now the works of all men everywhere and everywhen and consider that if the Creation is anything like a dream of God's, then we who are in it have surely become His nightmare.

Metaphor 13 - Defense Mechanisms

It's time to turn back once again and consider the Chain of Being.

We can perceive in nature that every creature in the Chain of Being has a means of maintaining itself in its environment against threats to its being. As with the complexity of the creature, so is the complexity of its defenses.

The amoeba has within its nature and its power the ability to ooze slowly away. The fish has within its nature and its power the ability to swim quickly away and be very slippery. The hound has its teeth, its cunning, and its instinct to band into a pack with its fellows, while monkeys and apes have their roaming societies which operate in a yet a more complex fashion than dog packs.

And humans have become supreme in their maintenance of themselves, even to the extent of it being at the expense of many other species. Humans can "get at" any other species in the creation.

Should it come as any surprise to us that God has within His power and His nature a means to maintain His personal integrity in the face of a nightmare?

That means has a technical name. As a human metaphor we call it "wrath." It is a good metaphor in that it correctly conveys a vital emotion that a threat to one's integrity would call forth. Where it falls down is the fact that we have known human beings in our lives who have been unreasonably and unjustly wrathful.

The thing to keep in mind about wrath in reference to God is that, since He sits at the top of the Chain of Being and is perfect and righteous and holy, any anger that is kindled in Him and any wrath that is provoked out of Him, has all three of those attributes, and will be perfectly in line with the rest of His character, and therefore just.

Now, here is the kicker. You will recall that when something happens in a moment in time, it becomes, to an eternal being, as if it were always happening, never fading away. Since God is eternal, anything that happens in a moment in time that activates His wrath will cause that wrath to fall with the that same attribute that God has, i.e., it will be as everlasting (beginning in a moment of time) as God is eternal (having no beginning and going on forever).

And since God is in eternity and all the moments of time are as one to Him, the time His wrath will eventually fall is up to His convenience and not that of any creature in His creation. His sword is truly the sword of Damocles. And His defense of His integrity is a more fearful thing than any weapon of man or beast.

Metaphor 14 - Pets

Maybe that doesn't bother you. Maybe you are thinking, "So what? I'll be dead and buried and gone, one day, and the wrath of God won't matter to me then." But you would be forgetting about the metaphor of Chicagoland. Remember that one of the things Pierre the pseudo-robot would have been wrong about was his existence ending when his robot body was destroyed by a Mack Truck.

Just so is it with us. The body may be destroyed, but the spirit that inhabits it goes on. And there is another aspect of the Chicagoland metaphor I should like expand upon with another metaphor, one suggested from something C.S. Lewis once wrote.

Imagine wild dogs. In the wild, dogs have their own drives and instincts and a particular mental makeup that drives their behavior.

Now consider domesticated dogs that we have as pets. Their long association with us humans, while not changing their basic drives and instincts, has changed their mental make up to a remarkable degree. Pet owners will tell you that their dogs, overtime, eventually develop personalities that have human qualities to them. In a sense, human association with a dog has raised the dog's mental makeup up into a higher degree of being than it would have had as a wild dog.

Now remember that human beings were created for the express purpose of contemplating God, and that one of the characteristics of God is eternity. So a consequence of the creation of our Chicagolands, our spirits, is that they have some of God's quality of eternity "rubbing off" on them. We have eternity in our hearts. Our bodies and our spirits inhabit time, but once the body dies in time, eternity is the home of the spirit, the Chicagoland.

This is another reason why God must "do something" when such being as ourselves becomes unlike Him. And why we should be very concerned indeed about what the "something" will be.

So we've now come around to the idea of the eternal wrath of God. And you may be asking me, Robert DeNiro style, "Are you talk'in to me?" For which I answer, "Yes, I am." And I have another metaphor.

Metaphor 15 - The False Friend

Since I have gotten personal with you now, I would like you to consider for a moment, personal relationships.

Imagine, if you will, that you enjoyed the friendship of a close personal friend. You have enjoyed for a number of years, all the outward trappings of a condition that is presumed to be an indicator of an inward condition, i.e., conversation that goes deeper than chit-chat, some degree of gift giving and gift receiving, mutual visits in each other's homes, the sharing of food and drink, etc., etc.

Then, one day, you and your bosom friend meet a person who is wealthier, smarter and more interesting than you are. What would your reaction be if suddenly your so-called friend dropped you out of his life altogether, treating you as if you never existed, and then took up with that other person to the exclusion of yourself?

I imagine that you would feel something very like wrath that is thoroughly mixed with the cutting wound of betrayal. But I think the thing that would really get your goat would be the realization that all the time you were friends with this person, the possibility of him or her doing this thing to you was latent. It was there all along, just waiting to happen.

As with a human being, it is more so with the Supreme Being. Our personal Chicagoland, connected as it is to the first people who failed and damaged it, makes latent in us every characteristic and act that is contrary to the personality and character of the Supreme Being. And therefore it makes us subject to, and a target of, His wrath.

And by now, you would probably like to say to me "Who do you think you are, talking to me this way?" And now it comes to the point where I must get personal with you indeed.

Who I Think I am

I once read where a man had said:

"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old, Thou shalt not kill and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of judgment; But I say unto you that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of judgment and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca [a term of abuse], shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."

When I first read that I thought it was an instance of overdeveloped righteous, or of someone being a fastidious stickler for the rules of good behavior. And I thought the punishment greatly outweighed the crime. And I thought that way until two events came together in my mind and convinced me otherwise.

When I was a pre-school child, I was living in a predominately Polish/Irish Catholic neighborhood. But one of my friends was a little Jewish girl who I will call Rachel.

As I got to know Rachel, I noticed a peculiar quality in her from time to time. She would easily become emotionally hurt and go off for a long time to be alone with her hurt.

Had I at all thought about it then, I would been able to conclude that this had something to do with her being one of the few Jewish children in a largely working class Catholic community which had its problems with the casual anti-Semitism of most largely gentile communities. (I should point out the religious background of my own family was most definitely disposed against anti-Semitism. My parents would not have countenanced any expression of it in our home.)

Anyway, there came a day when Rachel and I were playing, when, apropos of nothing whatsoever, I turned to Rachel and said "Jew." I did not say this word to identify her as a member of an ethnic group, nor did I say this word to identify her by religion. I said this word as if I had preceded it with the word "dirty." And Rachel did not mistake my meaning, for her face, at first mortally astonished, fell with a collapse like that of the most delicate work of stained glass art being smashed by a big crude brick. And Rachel ran off to be alone a long time with her latest hurt.

Later my parents were called, and I was made to apologize. But there was a powerful part of me that did not want to admit I had committed this deed and indeed did everything I could to conceal the fact that I had done it, and tried wriggling of out admitting I'd done it. And I tried to explain it away. But there was also a part of me that knew exactly what I'd done. And things were never the same between me and Rachel thereafter. Something had been done that could not be undone.

That was the first event.

The second event occurred on a sunny Saturday afternoon, again while I was a child. I

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was lying down watching television and got up to switch the channel from one cartoon show to another, and while switching the channel I came upon a documentary of Adolph Hitler which stopped me in my tracks.

The documentary was displaying a brief strip of grainy film footage of the operations of a death camp. It was a scene of bodies being pushed put down a slide to go into a deep pit. And what I first saw was the body of a small emaciated child going down the slide. When the body got to bottom of the slide one of its legs fell forward across the rest of its body in such a very unnatural angle that I knew immediately that the child was dead. She had in fact been deliberately killed. And it was done by deliberately acting adults.

Being a young child, I had never seen actual death before. But here it was in front of me in all its ugliness and on an inconceivably massive scale.

G.K. Chesterton is on record as saying that adults are generally guilty and so insist on mercy, but children are relatively innocent, and so demand justice. I would correct him only by saying that what they want is not so much justice as wrath. For that is what my small body and mind felt then with every fiber of my young being. "HOW DARE THEY?" screamed my small child mind. And my small mind was filled with what I can only describe as a wrath that was but a tiny reflection of that of the Creator who created my mind and the mind of that child who perished. It was a wrath that I wished would remain as everlasting as the doom I wished would fall all the malefactors who committed these crimes.

The memory of this event is so painful to me that it has taken me the better part of this day to write the above two paragraphs. You see, in order to write it, I had to undo the "healing" that time wrought by the mere fading of memory. And I take some comfort in the assurance that this crime that was committed so long ago remains in God's eye as if it happened a second ago, and that the wrath He will inflict for it will remain as everlasting as He is eternal.

But, as we all know, it is easier to see the gross crimes of others than to notice the more subtle crimes of ones own self, which only a Supreme Being can see. There came a day when I was allowed to see that to a Supreme Being, the offense I once gave Rachel, and the acts of those murders in the documentary, were one and the same act.

A Supreme Being sits at the top of the Chain of Being, perfect in Himself, perfect in knowledge as to our deeds and our thoughts, perfect in perception as to holiness and righteousness, and who dwells in an eternity that allows Him to see all the moments of our lives as one moment of time going on forever. To such a Supreme Being, thoughts, latent, or otherwise, are deeds indeed. He does not look on our ability to carry out the thoughts we have, but on the thoughts themselves.

And truly, I had occasion over the years to reflect upon that day I sinned against Rachel. And the thing that most strikes me about it is the fact that the impulse seemed to have come out of nowhere. As soon as I committed the sin, I knew it was a sin. So I must have

known that it was going to be a sin before I committed it. And yet there was a moment when I had not committed the sin, and then another moment when I had sinned and released all the evils in the world like Pandora and her famous box.

Did I say "impulse?" Perhaps "latency" is a better word. And Chicagoland is a seeming nowhere that a lot can come out of.

Who do I think I am? I think I am a creature in time who became unlike His eternal Creator and who, unless there is some intervention, will experience His wrath for all eternity.

I have learned that some psychiatrists and psychologists treat a good many people in their consulting rooms for what they describe as an irrational fear of going to Hell. Some of these learned healers even think the idea of Hell is itself irrational. I would wonder though if they haven't considered that if some humans can make a version of it here, why that shouldn't be reason enough for one to exist hereafter. But in any case, this shows that the idea of eternal Hell, latent in anybody with a conscience, is one of the most unacceptable ideas to modern human beings. It is right up there with the idea of original sin.

And as it is true that there is no amount of labor human beings will not go through in order to avoid the true labor of thinking, there also no amount of thinking that humans beings will not go through to avoid thinking about Hell.

There are several species of false thinking. I am now going to go talk about one that is foundational and two others that are derived from it.

Metaphor 16- Caricature (The Not So Secret Life of Walter Mitty)

Remember earlier where I wrote about the fact that God's best and most important happiness was His contemplation of Himself? Do you remember your first reaction to that statement? I'm willing to bet that your first reaction, if you did not already have religious training of a certain kind, was probably something like "Well, how very selfish!"

And you would have been right, had you been talking about any other being than God!

But I then went on to use the metaphor of our own "Walter Mitty" like habitual contemplation of ourselves. If you think about that carefully, you will notice something profound: God's contemplation of His Person and our contemplation of our person, is an antithesis like matter and anti-matter. If we are in habitual contemplation of our person, then we are not in habitual contemplation of His Person. It is either one or the other. It cannot be both.

Is this seriously a problem? Well, let's consider *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty*. The story was written by James Thurber, and the movie starred Danny Kaye. Both are intended as humor.

And what was so funny? Well, the basic idea that a Comic Relief character (played by Danny Kaye) is day dreaming that he is the Heroic Protagonist or the Romantic Lead in the movie that is his own mind, while we are watching and realizing just how unfitting it is for Mitty to be having these day dreams.

The roles Mitty day dreams for himself are roles proper to a Heroic Protagonist or a Romantic Lead, not a Comic Relief. There is, if you will, a kind robbery going on here, in which a lesser being is robbing a greater of its proper props and accouterments, which then ends in the kind of comedy that we call caricature. The lesser being, in mimicking the greater has brought out, not the character of that greater being, but a *caricature* of that greater being.

Okay, so Walter Mitty is a caricature of a Hero Protagonist and a caricature of a Romantic Lead. What's the harm in that? Simply this. Suppose that Walter Mitty was a person in real life who was actually having a secret life like his (and don't we know of such a person?).

While performing this caricature, Mitty is engaging, in his mind, in relationships with people he knows in real life, and those relationships in his mind are making those people caricatures of what they are in real life. Suppose that one day, through some science-fictional means, the real people that Mitty had made caricatures in his mind were one day able to see into his mind and see those caricatures of them there? Do you think they would be very pleased to see that?

Some, I suppose, might laugh at it, but they would also probably hold poor Mitty lower in

their esteem for needing to caricature them like that. Others would get angry at him for holding a lie about them in his mind like that. And I would think that the female objects of his Romantic Lead fantasies would be "creeped out" enough to call the police.

But the most serious business about Walter Mitty having a secret life is if his secret life included a mental relationship with God Most High in which that Worthy Being was caricatured. There is a technical term for this. It is called -- *idolatry*.

Think back a bit to where I wrote about God creating "ex nihilo," or "out of nothing." I likened it to our ability to create things out of nothing in our minds. So if we are having a day dream relationship with God in our minds that is a caricature of Him, then we are reversing the Chain of Being and making the creature the creator of the Creator. That is the classic definition of idolatry. It is this which forms the foundation for all other ways of thinking falsely about eternal things like God Himself and His wrath.

But before we go on, consider this. What is one way that you can tell whether or not you are dreaming? It is when you pinch yourself. And what's one way to tell when you are not having a day dream about someone? When they cross you and annoy or hurt you or do something your heart is not expecting them to do.

One of the things C.S. Lewis lamented about the death of his wife in *A Grief Observed* was that he knew that over time (which "heals") the actuality of being with his wife would gradually give way to his own day dreams about what his wife was. She would go from being able to argue and fight back with him intellectually, to being a mere punching bag for his great ideas.

It is no less with God. It is when we are most in disagreement with Him that He is most real to us. And original sin and eternal wrath are the facts which are most disagreeable to us, but inescapable consequences of His character and attributes.

Metaphor 17 - The Microscopic New Leaf

Another species of false thinking that a great many people engage in is the idea of "turning over a new leaf." I.e. they come to a realization that they fall morally short of their Creator, and decide that from this moment of realization on, they will conduct themselves by what they perceive to be that Creator's desire.

The problem with this solution is two fold.

One is that, as creatures in time, who have experienced its baneful "healing," they have forgotten that their past is still as real to God as their present moment of realization is to them. The term of abuse they leveled at someone five years ago is still right in God's face at the present moment, and will in fact remain there for all eternity no matter how else they have behaved since then. The "new leaf" is simply too small to cover over all that a human being might do in a lifetime of latent thinking and actual doing.

And it is this same problem that invalidates the idea of "working" for one's escape from wrath. A time bound creature may think that "a righteous act" (however defined) can wipe away a previous act of sin from before the face of eternal God. But that creature forgets that it is still in time, and therefore any "righteous act" that creature may perform would simply sit right next to its last unrighteous act before God, the two both being eternally present in His face for all eternity.

Now you may think that this state of affairs is okay with God. But you would be wrong. In the Record, there is a incident where God commanded one of His prophets, as a visual metaphor, to eat bread that had been baked by using human manure in the process. (Ezekiel 4:12-15). In another place in the Record (Isaiah 64:6 to be exact) God likens our little acts of righteousness to used menstrual rags. The point is that God does not like righteous acts mixed with unrighteous acts. The unrighteous acts of a creature in time are simply not erasable by that creature in time.

The other problem is with actually being able to perceive what the Creator's desire might be at any given moment. I.e. with defining what a righteous act would be. It is the problem of determining what would not run contrary to His fundamental nature and character.

Remember, from the first people we all have our defective, time-based Chicagoland Version 1.1, out of which the contemplation of the Creator has been dropped so that we are blind, deaf, and dead to the Creator. We are all morally stupid enough not to know that a term of abuse we leveled five years ago is worth the perfect Creator's everlasting wrath.

Who among us is a good enough accountant to keep books on what only eternal God can see?

Metaphor 18 - The Letter Strict Teenager

In the last paragraph above, I mentioned the problem of perceiving the Creator's desire at any given time, and the thought may have crossed your mind that maybe we could perceive our Creator's desire if He gave us a set of rules to live by.

Well, that's really beside the point, isn't it? We have no shortage of written rules for how to conduct ourselves. Any reasonably competent scholar can go through all the legal systems that have ever existed, from Hammurabi's Code to the latest 10 step program of the today's best selling self-help guru, and find a great body of similarity in all their injunctions.

The problem is not a shortage of knowing what the rules are. The problem is that the rules - the law - even not just the law but the principal of law - is itself a metaphor. It is a metaphor of what?

Well imagine that you are a good parent who has done the best job of parenting as could ever be done, but your children are now teenagers, and that has, just by itself, brought your relationship with them to the breaking point. (I have it on good authority that this is not farfetched).

There comes a day when, if they do not actually rebel against you entirely and completely, that they will say to you, "Don't bother us, just write down your rules and we will obey them." And this is a day that makes you very sad indeed because you realize that such a set of rules would only be an incomplete metaphor of your personality and how your personality relates to your children's personalities.

The law - any system of law - the very principle of law, can only be a very incomplete metaphor for the personality of God, who is eternal, holy, and righteous altogether. It can only point at His quality of moral synesthesia and perfect pitch. It cannot describe all of the relationships and interactions we can have with Him. It cannot be our whole relationship with Him, anymore more than a parent's set of written rules to his child can be the whole relationship with the child. And it is because law is a representation of God's personality that breaking one even one commandment means you have broken all of them.

Metaphor 19 - The Second Copy of the Ten Commandments

In fact, one of the things that may distress us about a teenager demanding a set of rules is that we know that the rules will always be incomplete, and the incompleteness maybe what the teenager is really after.

We are told to love God with all our hearts, all our minds, all our strength, and our neighbor as ourselves. And the first thing we ask is "Who is my neighbor?"

We desire to find incompleteness and limitation in the law, because, however incomplete it already is, it still is a good metaphor of the personality of God. And in our current state, we can't stand God, and he can't stand us.

And that last is the reason why God added law to revelation in the first place. Like any good depth psychologist, God wants to make what is unconscious, conscious, and what is latent, explicit.

The Tablet of Stone that the ten commandments were inscribed on became a second copy as soon as Moses brought it down from the mountain. Moses angrily broke the first copy when he found that his people had already broken the first commandment by making an idol (a conception of their own minds.)

The purpose of the law is to show us that we can't stand God, and, unless something is done, God will not be able to stand us.

Interlude in the Darker Valley -C.G Jung, Rupert Sheldrake, and Things That Go Bump in the Night

I have previously told you that I do not care for the researches of C.G. Jung and Rupert Sheldrake. And I have also mentioned Hollywood's recent fetish for Gnosticism. Well, here is where I will address those items.

I would really like not to even mention these items, but there is that very consequential homework assignment I'm going to be giving you soon, and you will need this information in order to evaluate what you will encounter during that assignment.

To start off with, there is my problem with C.G. Jung. I've mentioned him earlier, because he is one the few modern scientific thinkers who thought that there is such a thing as a "collective soul," or "collective unconscious." I'm of the opinion that his doctrine of the collective unconscious is an unconscious inheritance from his father, who was a Swiss Reformed minister, and therefore well acquainted with the apostle Paul's writings about "the flesh," or "the carnal nature," or "old man," or "sinful nature" [Chicagoland Version 1.1!]. That is the only reason I have mentioned C.G. Jung.

My problem with him is that he once had what some have called a psychotic break in which a being named "Philemon" appeared to him in his imagination.

Jung explained that this creature was an autonomous manifestation of his deep unconscious, because he had no conscious control over the creature when it appeared in his imagination. Jung wrote of this creature that:

"He said I treated thoughts as if I generated them myself, but in his view thoughts were like animals in the forest, or people in a room, or birds in the air, and added 'If you see people in a room, you would not think that you had made those people, or that you were responsible for them.'" [Footnote 6]

And how did Jung describe this creature that appeared to him?

"Suddenly there appeared from the right a winged being sailing across the sky. I saw that it was an old man with the horns of a bull..." [Footnote 6-1]

Ahem. As I said, things that go bump in the night. For you see, Chicagoland, like its earthly namesake of some decades ago, is sometimes visited by gangsters.

Its time for me to take you back to the metaphor of the Chain of Being.

Recall, if you will, that the Chain of Being starts with a Supreme Being at the top, creating from the bottom up, creatures of increasing complexity and intelligence. And as we have seen, parallel with the physical world we know around us, there is also the inner world of the spirit, the place where human beings have their thoughts, emotions, and

dreams, and where the deepest part of their spiritual existence is connected together in some mysterious fashion.

In the Chain of Being, Man (Humans) stand at the top of the physical Chain of Being, and there stands alone of all physical creatures in having a special and unique access to the spiritual world as well.

Man is kind of like a duckbilled platypus. The platypus has the body of a ground creature, but has a bill like a duck's. It is a ground creature, with the mouth of an air creature. Man is a physical being with a spirit that subsists in the spiritual world.

And now recall that I distinguished two kinds of created beings, those based on Fecundity (temporal Humans), and those based on Fullness (the everlasting messengers). The Record speaks of these two kinds of existence as being two different "estates," I.e., two different dwelling places and spheres of activity. They are generally kept separate. And it is time for me now to write at length about this other order of beings, the ones based on Fullness, who stand in the Chain of Being between eternal God, and temporal humans.

These beings are intelligences greater than human, who have never had physical bodies. They have their own Chain of Being, based on their varying degrees of intelligence and power. The Record seems to say that they came into existence with the creation of the Universe or just before it:

"Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"

One of their functions is to bring messages from the eternal God to temporal man. [Footnote 7] Hence the derivation of their designation from the Greek word for "messenger," "angelos." We are speaking here of angels.

And before we go on, it would greatly help matters if you removed from your mind the many too-pretty pictures of babies with wings, young women with wings, and decidedly un-masculine young men with wings. The Record repeatedly states that when an angel appears to human beings, they tend to fall to the ground, shaking with fear and needing some reassurance that no harm will come to them from the visit. Angels, in reality, are very fearsome creatures to behold.

And now, if you will recall what I wrote about the first people failing a test that the eternal Wise Hunter subjected them to, and also recall that the test was necessary because free will is necessary if there is to be any true worship of the Supreme Being, it should not then surprise you that the Record says some of these everlasting messengers failed their test also.

Of course the most famous of these failed non-physical worshippers is a being who was once known as "The Light Bearer" (Latin: Lucifer).

In a metaphorical sense (because we cannot physically understand this) this being stood the closest to God's presence of all the beings of his order, and his role was to shine his (metaphorical) light on the Almighty. The Record says that evil was eventually found in him, and he was ejected from the presence of God, taking with him a host of other disgruntlets of varying degrees of intelligence and power.

His name then became "The Adversary" (Hebrew: Satan). Those who followed him are commonly called "demons." [Footname 8] He has the name "the Devil" from the Greek word "diabolos" (literally "a slanderer") passing through Middle English. His lessers are given as the plural "devils."

Now, before we go any further, I want you to purge from your minds all the Hollywood images of heads spinning around, young females shouting obscenities in a deep masculine voice, and buckets of vomit flying. I have just alluded to the intelligence of these creatures, and that means subtlety as well as stealth. [Footnote 9]

What are they applying their subtlety and stealth to?

First, to the reversal of Lucifer's original function, i.e., casting eternal God in a bad light. (That is what is implied by the Greek word "diabolos," "a slanderer").

Secondly, to eternally damaging God's second creation, Man, in anyway they can, out of sheer spite, while enjoying themselves in the process.

The best way that I can describe what's going on between eternal God, Man, and the diabolic realm, is to give you a new metaphor.

(6) C. G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p. 183

(6-1) Ibid.,pp 182,83

(7) See Jacob's ladder in Genesis 28:11-13. I think their other function is to bring messages back and fought between God and the material world. I think they somehow underlie the material universe without being part of it.

(8) According to Webster's, from the Greek, daimon - a deity, spirit, one's genius, or an evil spirit. Daimon originally had a neutral connotation, and acquired its negative connotation with the advent of Christianity.

(9) If you really need a Hollywood image of what these creatures are like you can do no better than to rent a video of William Dieterle's 1941 classic *The Devil and Daniel Webster* (Edward Arnold, Walter Huston), and watch how Mr. Scratch operates.

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Metaphor 20 - The Artist's Mistress

There once was an artist who had a mistress living with him. (They are bohemians after all.)

One day, the mistress had a falling out with the artist and he kicked her out. (Happens all the time.)

The artist then began to paint a picture, and the picture ended up becoming that of a beautiful woman, who was not the mistress.

The mistress, keeping tabs on the artist, eventually snuck back into his studio when he was not there, and discovered not only his new painting, but his all too apparent passion for his new painting. She then took a paint brush and proceeded to mark up and mar that painting with all her might and vindictiveness, and then left the artist forever.

The artist, on his return, saw the spite that had been done to his painting, and then picked up a brush, and then with many hours of many deft strokes, turned the painting of a woman into something that was even more beautiful than what it was before.

In the above metaphor, eternal God is the artist, Satan the mistress, and humanity the woman in the painting. It is a metaphor of the theological term *redemption*. It is a work that God is busy at today with human souls, even as Satan and his underlings are busy at theirs.

Gangster of Hate

Mick Jagger notwithstanding, sympathy is quite wasted on the Devil and his kind because they are beings of Fullness and not Fecundity. They do not have the ability to repent. I'll explain what I mean by that.

C.S. Lewis has pointed out that the moments of unsteadiness we have with regard to religious belief have more to do with our being fleshly creatures than with anything else. [Footnote 3-9] We are creatures of flesh and blood, digestion and disposition, and our mental states are always going to flutter from time to time.

The atheist has his moments from time to time when he briefly thinks there might be something in Theism. And the Christian has his moments from time to time when he briefly thinks of Atheism.

That flutter is the hinge on which repentance turns. As human beings, the incarnation of our spirits into flesh guarantees us that as long as we are flesh and blood, repentance is possible. The Devil and his like are creatures of pure spirit, and great knowledge, who have changed themselves by sinning, and now cannot change themselves back. And that

is likely the source of their spite against the human race.

Now, I have briefly alluded to these fallen angels as "enjoying themselves" in the process of bringing human beings to eternal ruin. What do I mean by that? Well, C.S. Lewis has given me a clue about that also.

There is a letter C.S. Lewis wrote once, where he makes an observation that angels, though they have perfect knowledge of everything in the physical universe (Fullness), they do not have tongues that can taste like a human, noses that can smell like a human, eyes that can see like a human, or ears that can hear like a human. They are creatures of knowledge, but not experience. [Footnote 10] Whereas human beings, who have the ability to have experiences with their senses, have an intellect that has to be gradually built up over time (Fecundity).

So basically, what some of the fallen angels are after is the ability to sense as a human being does. That requires a human host, and a breach of the estates. Or as the Records says:

"And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."

The reference to Sodom and Gomorrah is a reference to perversion. The Record is saying that the angels who left their original estate to enter the human estate for the sake of getting human experiences are spiritual perverts.

Now before I go any further, I want to quickly make clear that we must not let our imaginations run away with us when entering into a discussion of this topic. The traditional Christian phrase "the World, the Flesh, and the Devil" has the right of it. The diabolic realm is the last thing a human should be worried about.

"The Flesh," is the apostle Paul's word for the fallen Chicagoland v1.1 that's inside us (also called "the sinful nature," and "the old man"). "The World," (Greek: Kosmos - "the system of things") is every non-personal system of evil that arises out of the collective urges of humankind to sin. Policemen are very well aware of the world as a system. They keep arresting individuals for individual crimes, but the system of evil just seems to keep running on and on as new individuals take the place of the ones they incarcerate.

There is a dynamic among the three. The World tempts the Flesh in us, and the Devil keeps the World moving on and on by his appeals to individuals. And individuals who yield to temptation keeping the World moving on and on, also.

I would say that ninety-nine percent of the time, our problems with temptation to sin are due to the Flesh within and the World without. But ultimately, what matters is not where

the temptation comes from, but how we respond to it. That is what is up to us.

Now, I've just said that "the Devil keeps the World moving on and on by his appeals to individuals." But I want to make clear that we must again not let our imaginations run wild when speaking that way. People tend to think of the Devil as if he were God's "evil twin." That, he is not. He is a creation of God, and therefore he is not omnipotent ("all-powerful"), he is not omnipresent ("everywhere present"), and he is not omniscient ("all-knowing"). He is a created being, he has limits.

When religious people sometimes say something like, "I am being tempted by the Devil," they could be right that the very Devil himself is tempting them, but more likely it is that an agent of the Devil - a devil or devils, is doing the tempting.

For example, we sometimes read in the newspapers that "Senator Smith introduced a bill into the Senate." But what actually happened is that a committee of the Senator's staffers got together, and then were had at by another committee of lobbyists, and then were had at by yet another committee of anti-lobbyists, and then Senator Smith was cozened into putting his imprimatur on the resulting mess. Senator Smith did introduce a bill into the Senate, but a whole set of lesser persons and processes went into that.

I would say that ninety-nine percent of the time, an equivalent thing is going on when we speak of "the Devil" as "doing something." (And one prays to God that process is as inefficient as the U.S. Senate!)

Unquiet Mind

Now, having gotten some clarity on the nature of the diabolic realm, we are now ready to look at what it is up to.

I've already said that it is involved in casting eternal God in a bad light, and in eternally damaging the eternal God's second creation, Humankind. How does it do that? Very simply, they do it by inserting thoughts into the minds of human beings that the human beings go on to mistake for their own. Like the scientists in my Chicagoland metaphor, the beings of the diabolic realm have access to our inner self, and can speak to it.

In Zen Buddhism, there is an interesting exercise that is done to qualify a neophyte for its higher mysteries. The exercise is called "thought stopping." The neophyte sits quietly all day, and simply tries to stop any thought that comes up in his head before it has a chance to grow and turn into other thoughts and distract the neophyte from achieving what is called "quiet mind."

What the neophyte learns from doing this is that most of the time, for most human beings, the mind is in a riot of all kinds of different thoughts going on all at once. Thoughts about what happened in the past. Thoughts about what is going to happen in the future.

Thoughts about what somebody did. Thoughts about what somebody will do. Thoughts about what somebody said. Thoughts about what somebody will say. Thoughts about what somebody meant when they did or said something; etc., etc., ad nauseum.

When the neophyte begins to get really good at "thought stopping," he eventually gets to the point where he is having thoughts only about what his body is currently feeling at the moment, moment by moment. The temperature in the room. The feeling of air on his skin. The movements of his internal digestive processes. And then the neophyte begins to stop those thoughts too. And at some point, "quiet mind" results.

The point of the exercise is to teach the neophyte just how much his perception is affected by the riot of thoughts his mind conjures up from within himself and from his environment without.

And here is where I make my point: in the riot of thoughts that most people have, it is fairly easy for a being that has access to our inner world to slip in a thought or two that we go on to mistake for a thought of our own. If such a being can convince us that having a thought that is not our own is okay, that is so much the better.

Philemon's little chat with C.G. Jung is worth re-reading in this regard:

"He said I treated thoughts as if I generated them myself, but in his view thoughts were like animals in the forest, or people in a room, or birds in the air, and added 'If you see people in a room, you would not think that you had made those people, or that you were responsible for them.'"

And that is one of the places where temptations come from. But as I said, ninety-nine percent of the time, it's the World and the Flesh, and not the (a?) devil.

Possession States

I have alluded to the fact that devils may take a liking to the sensory experiences of a human host, but have really not gone into that topic in detail. Its time for that topic now. And let's call it what it is: *demonic possession*. Scary term, no?

There are two books with that term as a title that I have read: *Demon Possession* (John Warwick Montgomery, editor, Bethany House Publishers), and *Demon Possession* (John L. Nevius, Kregel Publications). I have also read *Christian Counseling and Occultism* (Kurt Koch, Kregel Publications). And what is my take away from having read those works?

Eight observations.

The first is the crucial one: The diabolic realm will pay attention to you, only to the

degree that you pay attention to it. The phenomenon is a matter of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And it's also why I don't recommend you read the above books if you have no particular need to.

Second, demonic possession is rare in comparison to the total population of the planet. Because of the advance of Western secular culture, there are fewer people today who even believe that there is such a thing as a diabolic realm. And the few people who do, do not like to spend their time thinking about it.

Third. Demonic procession occurs more frequently in cultures that have a belief system which supports the idea.

Some African cultures still support the idea of one or more "gods" taking over an individual temporarily during a ceremony of some sort. In Haiti, the "Voodoo" religion (or "Voudun." Yes it is an actual religion) supports the idea of a supernatural being becoming the "horseman" of a human "horse" temporarily. And in Latin America, there are religions where, during a specific ceremony, a human being becomes possessed by a "saint." (Actually this is said to be a "deity" of an earlier pagan religion which has been renamed as a saint as a matter of syncretism from the Roman Catholic religion).

If the culture you are in supports the idea of possession states (however defined or labeled), it will be easier to succumb to such a state.

Again, its the same principal as above: if you pay attention to the diabolic realm, it will pay attention to you. And this is even more true when talking about a whole society and its culture.

Fourth. Demonic possession should not be thought of (if at all) as being an either/or situation (i.e., you are, or you are not). Rather, the influence of the diabolic realm on an individual should be thought of as being on a continuum, and being a matter of degree.

There is simple temptation, in which one receives thoughts in ones noisy little mind, which are then taken for ones own thoughts. If simple temptations are yielded to, these thoughts can become stronger and stronger as they fail to be resisted. Then over time (possibly a lifetime) the acts suggested become so frequently indulged in that they can become involuntary and the difference between a possession state and a non-possession state can almost become a moot point. In this regard, personalities like Hitler and Stalin and Osama bin Laden come to mind. But do realize that this can also happen to every day people who have a lot less political power at their disposal (for which we thank Almighty God!). [Footnote 11]

Fifth. There are specific activities that human beings can engage in that increase the likelihood of coming under demonic influence or possession. Some of these are: using an Ouija board, [Footnote 12] Flipping Tarot cards, [Footnote 13] participating in a seance, [Footnote 14], casting horoscopes[Footnote 14-2], performing ceremonial magick [Footnote 15], automatic writing (i.e. hand writing something that is not under one's

conscious control), participation in possession states as part of an occult ceremony, divination by whatever means, casting spells, necromancy (communication with the shells or shades of the dead) [Footnote 16], using consciousness-altering drugs like LSD, praying to any other being than the true, eternal, almighty God.

The common thread to all these activities is that a human being, on his or her own strength, is trying to obtain some benefit from the spiritual world (even if only a cheap thrill) without any reference to, or protection from, the true, eternal, almighty God. Here, human will is primary, and a breach in the two estates is committed, this time with human beings intruding into the realm of the angelic hosts. When a human does this, it attracts the attention of the diabolic realm.

Will a person always become demonically possessed by doing any of the above activities? No, it is not a automatic thing. Not every hare that darts across a field from one burrow to another will be caught by the hawk flying overhead. The demons have skills they have to exercise too. And one of their skills is convincing their prey that they are operating in safety. But more on that a little later.

Sixth. When a person who engages in the activities described above manages to breach the spiritual barrier between the two estates, they can sometimes acquire what have been called "psychic powers," I.e. clairvoyance (perception of objective facts occurring in the past, the present, or the future, through other than one's normal five senses. The person knows things by "seeing them."), clairsentience (knowledge of objective facts in the present through other than the normal five senses. The person just "knows it." For example, being able to diagnose an illness by merely touching a person), remote suggestion (a person is able to "think at" another person who may be miles away, and that person acts on the suggestion), automatic writing (it can be both a cause and a result), necromancy (the ability to see and communicate with the shells of the dead).

Now, how does all that work? Well, my Chicagoland metaphor gives a good indication.

Imagine, if you will, that instead of one individual being in the tank in Chicago, with a connected robot body in Paris, there is a second individual in the same tank with the first one, only this second individual has a connected robot body that is in Rome. They both think that they are located some distance away from each other because their robot bodies are located some distance apart. But in reality, they are very close to each other in the tank in Chicago.

Now imagine that the pseudo-Frenchman in the tank is aware of what the true state of affairs is, and begins to start nudging the pseudo-Italian in the tank with his elbow. Let's even suppose they both know Morris Code, and the Frenchman is able to nudge the Italian in Morris Code. In our metaphor here, the nudging would be considered "extra-sensory communication." The two robot bodies with their five senses are too far apart for their normal five senses to communicate with each other. But their common residence in Chicagoland ("the spiritual world") allows the communication to take place. In the above example of clairvoyance, it's just a matter of someone, somewhere else

seeing or sensing something for the clairvoyant to pick up on it. Likewise for the other powers mentioned above.

The only part of the model that's not covered is perception of the future. That part is accounted for by my earlier metaphor of "the Novel as a Metaphor of Time." The Record seem to indicate that angelic beings have some ability to read "the novel" a little ahead of our "living it," and that the fallen angels then make that information available to people who have acquired clairvoyant powers.

It may even be possible that when we dream at night, some of the future parts of that Novel bleed into our unconscious mind and can be read from there through the spiritual realm.

I believe our common existence in the spiritual realm is the basis for all "occult phenomena."

Seventh. *Christian Counseling and Occultism* brings out something that many people may not be aware of: if a person who has breached the two estates has children, sometimes their children or grandchildren or other descendent may spontaneously develop some of those "psychic powers," without ever having taken part in any of the practices their ancestor in engaged in.

Why would that be? Because Chicagoland - one's spirit - is part of a spiritual tree, even as one's own body is part of a genetic tree. This passing down of "psychic powers" is, in the spiritual realm, what having a genetically transmitted disease would be like in the body.

This is interesting because there are some modern writers, scientists, and even science fiction authors who have mistakenly called these powers "Extra Sensory Perception" (ESP), and believe that they represent the next stage of human evolution, and are therefore new powers that human beings are just coming into.

There is a particular author I am thinking of who is an example of the breed. He's written a series of books on "spiritual development" and the occult, and had, early in his career, taken the view that the various kinds of psychic phenomena are emergent powers of a new humanity. But in one of his later books on the occult, he finally admitted that he had encountered a psychic phenomenon that didn't fit his emergence model, and he went on to admit that, yes, there might be such things as demons. Good on him.

Another item of interest in this regard is the case of our friend, C.G. Jung. Many people are not aware of this, but C.G. Jung's father, the Swiss Reformed minister, played around with something like an Ouija board. One consequence of that was that his father's sermons tended to contain heresies. The other consequence, apparently, was Jung's ability to receive visits from "Philemon."

A counter example of this is the Chinese Christian evangelist, Watchman Nee. In a book,

The Latent Powers of the Soul, Nee said that psychic phenomena and psychic powers were a part of Chinese culture in his day. He said that he himself had the ability to understand what people were saying, even when they were speaking a completely different dialect of Chinese (in Chinese, that's almost like speaking a completely different language). But he made it a habit not to use this power because he found that it actually interfered with his evangelistic work. He had deduced that the power came not from God, but was an inheritance from an ancestor who had dealings with the diabolic realm. Through neglect, this power eventually left him.

Eighth. The physical manifestations of an actual demonic possession are not those found in the movie, *The Exorcist*. As I said before, there's no heads spinning, no young females shouting obscenities in a deep masculine voice, and most certainly no flying vomit. Or at least not in any of the cases I've read of.

The global impression I did get from reading those books is that a demonic possession should be thought of as a person acquiring a spiritual virus in the same manner that a computer acquires a computer virus.

a.) There can be more than one possessor, as a computer can acquire more than one computer virus. The Record says that Christ encountered a man whose possessor told him his name was "Legion." That meant this man had somewhere between 4,800 to 6,000 possessors in him, that being the number of men in a typical Roman legion.

I would hazard a guess that the reason for this is that demonic possession is so rare that when they do get someone, they like to "pile in."

b.) The possessor(s) drain off resources the way a computer virus drains off resources from its host. The possessed tend to be given to prolonged bouts of depression and exhaustion. And this can sometimes lead to suicide.

c.) The energy drained off is put into spasmodic activities the possessed has no control over, just as a computer virus will cause a computer to start doing a lot of extra things its operating system never requested. Possessed persons will often have spastic tics or impulsive falling spells, and sometimes exhibit seemingly superhuman strength while performing destructive activities.

Sometimes possessed persons are given to violent, uncontrollable fits of emotion, which can include anger. This sometimes expresses as extended bouts of shouted profanities (but in their own voice!). C.G. Jung was famous for telling his house keepers to completely ignore his tendency for extended outbursts of Swiss swearing.

Sometimes this impulsive behavior will manifest as addictions of one kind or another. I.e., food addictions (eating too much), alcoholism (drinking too much), sexual addictions (with the possibility of perversions showing up), and even drug addiction (intense pleasure through drug use). These are all manifestations of the parasitical possessors wanting more and more physical experience out of their host human.

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One last item I should mention here is that it is possible for the descendants of a person who has breached the estates to inherit not only the "psychic powers" I've described above, but also some of the "spiritual viruses" and their attendant afflictions. Once demons become familiar with a human being, they take great interest in that human being's offspring.

Honesty Is Not Their Policy

Now that I have brought some clarity to the topic of demons and demonic possession, how can I best describe the diabolic realm's policy toward the human race? Well it is said that Cardinal Richeleu once summed up his policy towards his enemies as "All means to placate. Failing that, all means to crush!" In a similar vein, the policy of demons towards humans can be summed up as "All means to possess. Failing that, all means to deceive." We have talked about possession at length, so now we can go on to talk about deception.

There are basically two kinds of demonic deception. The first is deception with a view towards enticing a human being to lower his or her guard and allow a possession to take place. The second form of deception is that directed at preventing human beings from a getting a grasp of the happiness this book will soon reveal. Casting the one, true, eternal God in a bad light is common to both these forms of deception.

But before I go into this further, I want to suggest a movie for you to watch that gives a very good picture of what demonic deception is like. The movie is *The Usual Suspects* with actor Kevin Spacey. You may want to put this book down and watch it, because my next few paragraphs contain some spoilers. [Footnote 17]

Did you see it? And what did you see? You saw a very dangerous and evil criminal pretend to be a harmless source of information about a dangerous and evil criminal, who was able to talk a seasoned and hardened police detective into releasing him from police custody. And how did he do that? By making up a convincing story using the names of people, places, and things that were on objects in the room the detective's interrogation took place in (which the detective was unaware of). The use of the names of people, places, and things gave the criminal's story a veneer of believability so that the detective believed the criminals story and released him from custody. The detective had been presented with a *landscape of belief*.

That is a terrific picture of how demonic deception works. The demons use whatever is already in our own minds that we already believe (facts, memories, opinions, cultural beliefs, etc.) to spin out a convincing story about something that will then prompt us to do something that promotes their agenda.

So what is a good example of demonic deception with a view towards possession? Well, believe it or not, the practice of ceremonial *magick*. In ceremonial magick, the

practitioner does two things.

First, he trains his imagination so that he gets to the point where he can actually see in front of him some object that exists only in his imagination. I.e., he trains himself to have something like an eidetic memory, where things that are recalled in the mind actually seem to be really in front of the person recalling the memory of the thing.

The second thing a magician does is study the "cookbooks" of previous generations of magicians. These "cookbooks" are called *grimoires* (from which we get our word "grammar"), and they basically direct the practitioner of magick in what kinds of ceremonies and rituals have worked in the past in causing various kinds of non-physical beings to appear in the magician's imagination (which being trained as it is, causes the creature to seem to "appear" in reality.)

If the magician is especially good at what he is doing, a creature may put in an appearance that seems to have an existence outside of the control of the magician's own mind. (The similarity of these creatures to "Philemon" is not purely coincidental.)

Historically, there are a goodly number of grimoires out there, left behind by their practitioners, and some of which go back to the middle ages, if not further on into the classical era of Greece and Rome. I have heard that if you strip away all the cultural accretions in these grimoires, you will find that there is a distinct similarity in the descriptions of these beings from one age to the next, from one century to the next. They have different names in each era, but the same basic description. This leads to the conclusion that they are not solely products the magick practitioner's mind. They would seem to have an independent existence. When they put an appearance in a particular magicians imagination, they then take on the cultural trapping that are already in the magician's mind.

A basic outline of a grimoire is that it lays out a program for how to "keep away" creatures that are not wanted, while "attracting" the one or more creatures who are wanted. Then in the climatic moment in the ceremony or ritual laid down by a grimoire, the magician throws his heart, mind, and imagination into the "reception" of the creature or creatures that he wants to have "appear."

The purposes of this transaction with non-physical beings could range from just knowledge itself, to wanting something in the physical world to take place, or just simply to have a cheap (if costly) thrill.

But where is the demonic deception in all this? Well, first of all, in the whole spiritual landscape that is presented to the magician. Instead the of the one, true, eternal God, and his messengers, a whole host of "elementals," "imps," "demi-urges," "demi-gods," "gods," and yes, even angels and demons, are presented to the magician, for his belief in them. Along with that is a whole landscape of different "levels" of "reality," that are controlled by the beings supposedly responsible for them. (I am thinking here of the occult use of the Kabalistic "Tree of Life," as well as the Gnostic "demi-urges").

This whole deceptive landscape, much like the background scenery in a theater play, has been maintained by the demons, over the centuries, because it has one purpose: to convince a human magician that he can control what the final outcome is of the magical ceremony or ritual. The magician thinks he controls the beings he is dealing with. The reality is that these beings eventually end up controlling him. All his "banishing" and "summoning" are to no affect in the end (being things the magician was lead to believe in the first place), because the creatures he has called are intellects of longer experience than any one human being.

The magician has, by his own will, placed himself in a spiritual realm where God cannot protect him from the consequences of his acts. One of the consequences may be eventual insanity. If you think about it, magicians are deliberately doing with their minds what insane people are trying to cure their minds of.

The foregoing was an example of deception with a view towards possession. Now we come to deception with a view towards preventing a human being finding the happiness which is the subject of this book. Or rather, deception for deception's sake.

The smallest part of this, as the Greek word "diabolos" suggests, is putting slanderous thoughts about eternal God, and his servants, in people's minds. [Footnote 18] But the really ambitious part of this program is about putting out false information, or rather, creating false religions and philosophies, for human beings to occupy themselves with instead of getting a grasp on the happiness that can grasp them back.

The Matrix

Gnosticism is a historical example of something which is both a false religion and a false philosophy. It is coming back into style of late. It figures heavily in the recent movie **The Matrix** and its sequels.

In a nutshell, the Gnostic (believer in Gnosticism) tries to answer the problem of evil (why is there evil?) by proposing that it is because we live in a false reality which was created by a false (or rather, less intelligent) "god." That is also the basic premise of *The Matrix*. But in a really full blown Gnostic system, it's a little more complicated than that.

In a really good Gnostic system, you start out with a "god," who creates his own reality, who then spins off a slightly less intelligent and less powerful version of him (or her!) self. And then that less powerful, less intelligent being creates a reality of its own which is slightly less perfect than the one "above." And then that less intelligent, less powerful "god" spins off a slightly less intelligent and less powerful version of itself. And so on and so forth, in infinite regress, down a chain of lesser and lesser realities.

I suppose different Gnostic systems will differ in how many levels there are, and what the names of the different "gods" are, and in which level of reality human beings are "stuck in." But the basic goal of a Gnostic system is to, by intellect alone, get the better of the "god" who controls the "reality" one is in, and thereby attain to a higher and better "reality." Eventually one supposedly gets to the top of the heap, where one finally knows all things and is above all "realities."

I'm going to give you a spoiler for the next *Matrix* movie. I'm willing to bet that in the coming series of *Matrix* movies, Neo is going to find out that the Matrix is inside of another Matrix, where he will encounter two more "deities" like The Oracle and The Architect who control this outer Matrix. That would be the beginning of a fully blown Gnostic system. And it's only the beginning, mind you! As you can well imagine now, there is a great deal of movie mileage to be had out of a Gnostic system. It just goes on and on and on.

And that is the point. That is why the diabolic realm first put these ideas in some human being's head in the first place. It is all an intellectual game, which has nothing to do with a person getting a grasp on the happiness that can grasp them back.

Yes, there is a spiritual world, and along with it, a physical world, but they are both part of the same reality, and they are both creations of the one, true, holy, eternal God. The defect of evil is not in the reality, or the creator of that reality, but rather in the hazard that free will, and thereby true worship, entail.

But Gnosticism is only one of many false systems of belief that have been engendered by the diabolic realm. Gnosticism happens to be a cross between a religious system and a philosophical system. I have no doubt whatsoever that Communism, a philosophical system, had its origin in the thoughts of some demon before it was ever put into a human mind. And it took very many people a long time to realize that. And I have no doubt that Mormonism is a false religious system that has its root in the diabolic realm. [Footnote 19]

In your lifetime, you will meet with many a demon-inspired system of belief. There is one test for deciding if a belief is of the diabolic realm or not: if the belief brings you closer to the one, true, eternal God, it is likely not of the diabolic realm. But if it moves you further away from eternal God, then it is likely that it has its origins with some demon or another.

The apostle Paul is not kidding when he writes: "(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal [of human flesh], but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;"

And that's the basic truth about deception. Where it is not directed towards possession, it is meant to obscure the truth of God.

Sheldrake

Now we come to Rupert Sheldrake and the problem that modern science has when it tries to investigate the spiritual world.

Sheldrake is a physicist who has written a book called *The Presence of the Past: Morphic Resonance and the Habits of Nature*. One of the things he supplies in that book is an interesting experiment. The experiment was this: two groups of people were selected and isolated. They were both given a crossword puzzle from a widely distributed newspaper that millions of people every day attempt to solve.

The first group of people completed it at about the same time that millions of other people attempted to solve it. The second group of people completed it at a much later time than the first group did. After the accuracy of the two groups was graded, and all other factors were accounted for, the second group of people turned out to have a higher score than the first group that was statistically significant.

Conclusion: there was something about millions of people having solved it first that made the puzzle easier for the second group of people to solve it later. Sheldrake calls this "something," the "human morphic resonance field." The word "field" is used to signify that it is something like a magnetic field that magnetic objects have. I.e. something that affects matter which is not matter itself. Gravity is another example. Sheldrake's contention is that millions of people doing something causes other people to get better at doing it.

It's an interesting thing to think about from a moral perspective. This means that millions of people doing a moral act makes it easier for any one human being to get better at performing that moral act. But on the other hand, it also means that millions of people performing an immoral act makes it easier for any one human being to commit an immoral act, and get "better" at doing it. Frightening stuff, no?

But it seems to support the apostle Paul's concept of a collective soul (or unconscious perhaps) which has its mind set on evil ("the carnal mind," or "old man"). So that is why I mentioned Sheldrake as another modern thinker who gives some support to the idea of a collective soul.

But I have recently learned that Sheldrake is now researching how dogs sometimes seem to know when their owner has died even when the owner is miles away. Which is to say, Sheldrake is starting to go down the path to researching Extra Sensory Perception, and like topics. Because of this, some of his fellow scientists no longer consider him to be a

scientist at all.

This has happened before. And you will not believe who it happened to.

Remember Charles Darwin, of *The Origin of Species* fame? Well, many people do not know this, but Darwin published *The Origin* before he really wanted to. The reason he jumped ahead is that he realized that another scientist was getting ready to publish a work similar to his own and pre-empt him of the credit for his theory of human descent. That other scientist was Alfred Russel Wallace. But Darwin published first, and Wallace went on into obscurity as an "also ran" in the evolution game.

But there was another reason why Wallace fell into obscurity. It was because he later went a few steps further than Darwin. Where Darwin looked at the similarities between apes and men and remained focused on that, Wallace began to look at the abysmal gulf between apes and men. This line of thinking eventually brought him around to thinking about what would now be called Extra Sensory Perception. And he eventually ended up with the necromancers. Which is to say, he became a Spiritualist.

C.G. Jung, Rupert Sheldrake, and Alfred Russel Wallace. Three scientists. All probing into the spiritual aspect of human beings, as opposed to the physical. And all turned aside into things that go bump in the night. It all comes down to a simple observation: any attempt by human beings, however gifted, to probe into the spiritual world under their own strength apart from eternal God, will come under the influence of the diabolic realm.

A Difference in Spiritual Atmosphere

Now, what does all this interesting information have to do with the consequential homework assignment I will be giving you? Simply this: I want to bring to your notice a difference in spiritual atmosphere that exists between the Hebrew scriptures (in what is called "The Old Testament"), and the Christian scriptures (in what is called "The New Testament").

In the New Testament, and especially in what are called "the Gospels," one reads frequently about demonic possession, and exorcism. It seems to be in the very air of the culture of the time. But when one reads the Hebrew scriptures of the Old Testament, there is hardly any instance of demonic possession. Yes, there is a good deal of demonic influence to be sure, with very many devils having convinced human beings that they are "gods" of one sort or another who must have children sacrificed to them on abominably bloody altars. But you hardly read of any instance of demonic possession. Why is that?

The reason is very simple. The law that God gave Moses at the beginning of the life of the Hebrew nation contained very harsh provisions for people who engaged in occult practices. "There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an

enchanter, or a witch. Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee." [Footnote 20]

Now if you consider the deception element in demonic activity, with its tendency toward engendering false religious systems, it quickly becomes apparent why Almighty God gave Moses this law: it was designed to keep the revelation He gave Moses from being corrupted from within by Hebrews who came under demonic influence or possession. [Footnote 21]

So that is why we find little in the way of demonic possession in the Hebrew scriptures of the Old Testament. But why do we find it in the New Testament? Because, very simply, during the inter-testamental period (the 400 years between the last book of the Hebrew scriptures and the first book of the Christian scriptures) the Jewish nation began to become overly interested in angels.

Where in the Old Testament, there is "Michael" and "Gabriel" revealed as arch-angels, in the inter-testamental period we start reading of "Raphael", "Asmodeus," "Semyaza," "Azazel," "Mastema," "Beliar," "Sammael," and a whole host of other names, who are not sanctioned by the scriptures.

And here my earlier principal is seen in action: some Jewish people began to pay more attention to angelic beings than to eternal God, and the result was that some of these "angelic" beings began to pay attention to them. Possession states then began to become the order of the day. [Footnote 22]

Consult Your Physician

Now before we go on, I want to make one thing very clear. If you happened to have any (or even, heaven forbid, all) of the physical problems associated with demonic possession that I have outlined above, that does not mean that you are definitely demon possessed. All those problems could simply have physical causes for which you should see a qualified physician. And before any considerations of a diabolic nature are entertained, you should definitely see a psychologist or psychiatrist.

I will reiterate what I wrote before: ninety-nine percent of the time your problems will be with The World, or The Flesh. But if there are some persons who should be reading this who think they may have a problem like this (and I hope they don't), they should continue on reading. The kind of happiness which is the subject of this book is proof even against demonic forces.

No Exit

So in the light of the foregoing interlude, we now turn back again and reconsider Metaphor 19 - The Second Copy of The Ten Commandants. The law stands before us. It makes what is unconscious, conscious and what is latent, explicit. And we see in it the eternal wrath of God aimed right at us, who are beings made for eternity. How then can we escape?

If having my own day dream about God, and turning over a new leaf, and insisting on the law as a rule of life, cannot help me escape from the wrath of God eternal then how may I escape? And if some of my thoughts may not even be original with me, and some of the things I think I believe may be based on falsehood, and it is even possible that I may not even own my own soul, then how can I escape the eternal wrath of God?

The answer is that I can't. In the Chain of Being, man is the only creature who can "get at" any and other creature in the chain. Think about this and realize that you cannot escape a confrontation with your Creator. The only question is when and what kind of confrontation that will be.

And if you think about it enough, you will have to conclude that the only way the Godhead can have us in our current state of being subject to His eternal wrath is if something occurs within the Godhead that allows the Godhead to remain righteous and holy while treating us as if we had not lost those qualities ourselves. It would have to be something that reconciles us to the Godhead.

Godhead? It's time for another metaphor.

(3-9) C.S. Lewis, from "Religion: Reality or Substitute", in *Christian Reflections*.

(10) I have not been able to remember where I saw this. It was an extract of a letter in a book of pictures concerning Lewis.

(11) As the gangster Dutch Schultz lay dying of his bullet wounds, he began to babble in a Joycean streams of consciousness manner, and a police stenographer took down his nonsense sentences as he said them, hoping that some evidence would turn up. One of the sentence fragments Schultz uttered was: "don't let Satan draw you in too fast."

(12) If you think I am kidding, read *Ouija: the Most Dangerous Game* (Stoker Hunt, Harper Collins). The use of an Ouija board has been likened to having an apartment on the first floor on an urban street that is in a high crime area. If you leave the door open at night, you'll never know who is going to come through.

(13) The present author knows an everyday average person who used to flip Tarot cards as a way of entertaining friends. One time this person was alone in a room, flipping the cards, and then had an unmistakable feeling that an evil presence had entered the room. That person does not flip Tarot cards anymore.

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(14) Stephen King is on record as saying he would never attend a seance.

(14-2) See Shirley Ann Miller, *Tempera Mysticism*, Starburst Publishers, PA, 1991. If I recall correctly, Ms. Miller had been an astrologer and left the occupation when evil manifested itself.

(15) Aleister Crowley, a deceased occultist, revived the ancient ritual and practice of summoning up actual demons. He gave his efforts the name 'magick' to distinguish them from stage conjuring, which involves optical illusions, sleight of hand, and misdirection.

(16) Shades or shells of the dead. I will explain this in an appendix.

(17) If you have moral objections to profanity, try to get a version edited for television. Since I live in New Jersey, I pretty much already know all the bad words. But I do remember the first time I was subjected to extended profanity as a child and recall how defiling it can be.

(18) The present author was once introduced to a new co-worker for the first time. We became friends. And much later, after we got to know each other well, she told me that the first impression I gave her, without my saying anything at all or her knowing anything about me, was that I was some kind of ignorant, bigoted, Fundamentalist Christian. The only reason we became friends is that I later turned out not to be ignorant, or especially bigoted.

(19) Some of its doctrine is taken from science-fictional ideas that were in circulation at the time of its founding. And communication with the shells of the dead is looked upon favorably among them. And the "angel" of their particular "revelation" is named "Moroni." That is what is called Clue One.

(20) Before you say "My, how very Puritanical!" you should be aware that Native American Indians used to put some of their witches to death. Do you really think that someone who has that kind of power is going to remain in the camp of sweetness and light for very long?

(21) But even as harsh as this law was, bad King Saul still managed to find a witch who would do necromancy for him.

(22) And when I muse on the recent fad we've had for "angels," I shudder to think what we might be in for next!

Metaphor 21 - Self-Contemplation

We have now come to a consideration of something I have briefly mentioned earlier in a footnote. I agree with C.S. Lewis that if God has personhood, it is likely of a Super Duper variety. I now want to give you a metaphor that may help you see this in a way that, perhaps, you may not have before.

First, I want you to recall that seemingly normal and everyday act I have previously taken such pains to complain about: the act of contemplating yourself. From our previous discussion of Walter Mitty, we now know that self-contemplation is a defective act. There are a least four aspects to this defect:

- 1.) It is defective in order, because we are contemplating ourselves instead of God, who has first priority.
- 2.) It is defective in self knowledge. We think things about ourselves that are simply not true (ask your significant other or your parent or teacher), or we do not think things about ourselves because we don't know of them (or don't want to know of them).
- 3.) It is defective in morality, because we can imagine doing evil.
- 4.) It is defective in memory. We can't hold a consistent image of ourselves in our minds for any great length of time without it changing in some way.

Now, in addition to defect, our contemplation of ourselves is also subject to limitations.

- 1.) It is time bound. Our thoughts of ourselves have a beginning at a point in time and (hopefully) an end.
- 2.) It is not expressed. We can think all we want about ourselves, but those thoughts can never become real, and exist in the world we share with other people, unless we manipulate our physical world (or other people!) in some way as to bring some aspect of our thoughts into reality. But even then, many people find that things are still not the same as what they had in their minds!

Now if we reverse this picture, we can possibly get a sense of what God's contemplation of Himself would be like:

- 1.) It would be perfect in order, because the priority would be right. It is perfectly okay for God to think about Himself.
- 2.) It would be perfect in self-knowledge. He is all-knowing.
- 3.) It would be perfect in morality, for God is most holy.
- 4.) It would perfect in memory (see 2.).

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And as to limitations:

- 1.) A single thought of His would be eternal, never beginning, never ending.
- 2.) His thoughts can become expressed. I.e., He can bring them directly into reality just by thinking them so.

Now with these initial concepts in place, we come to the metaphor proper. And do remember that this is a metaphor. I am not saying that what I am about to say is what is really going on, but only giving an analogy so I can make a point later.

Before I show you the metaphor, I have to remind you that I am a material being in a creation that consists of things and time passing and other material beings like myself. But I am going to talk about God, who exists before all those items and is in fact their Creator. Therefore I am going to use certain words that only make sense in a material, time-bound existence and in reference other beings like myself. But I am going to put these words in quotes and explain some of them before I use them.

The first word is "Person." Historically, this a word is taken from the Latin word *Persona*, which was a mask that an actor in ancient Rome wore to let his audience know which stereotyped role he was playing in a comedy or a tragedy. And it is the root of the modern word, *personality*. So what I am thinking of is something between the idea behind the Latin root and its modern extension. But bear in mind that I do not mean the kinds of things we mean or associate with a human person.

The second word is "essence." If you wanted to say that one thing was exactly the same as another thing, or that one thing is different from another thing, you could say that they were "of the same substance" or "of different substance." In this creation of substances and things you would be perfectly right to do that. But what if something existed before the creation of substances and things? How would you express it then? One way is just to go ahead and say "substance" and hope you are not misunderstood. Another way is to use the word "essence," and hope you are not misunderstood in another way (or mistaken for talking about a perfume).

I will use the word "essence" and keep it in quotes to remind you that I am still talking about something (thing?) that exists before the creation of things. The other words are "results" (as in "this results in xxxx"), "becomes," "expression," "expresses," "expressed" and "now." I am going to be talking about relationships in eternity as though they were processes happening in time. The above words are words based in time and processes.

Are we clear on the ground rules?

Okay, here goes:

The first thing (note that "first" is a time based word and "thing" is a material based

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word. We can't get around them!) is to think of God contemplating Himself. As in the above discussion this contemplation would be:

1.) Perfect and complete and without defect or lack.

2.) Expressed in reality ("the express image of").

The contemplation of the First "Person" "results" in the "expression" of the Second. And there is "now" a First and Second "Person" of the same "essence". These being both Godhead, have the same quality of thought, are both contemplating the same self, and this self "now" "expresses" as the Third "Person" who is also of the same "essence," and whose contemplation includes that of the First and the Second "Person." The self of the Godhead being fully expressed, no other "Person" is expressed.

Now remove all the time based references like "results" and "becomes," "now," and "expression" and "expresses," and just see this as a single relationship of three "Persons" that has no beginning and no end and no reference to time other than calling it into being by the creation of matter.

You have now arrived at a metaphor of the Trinity. [Footnote 23]

"Now why," you may ask me, "did you go to all that trouble? I was perfectly content just to simply think of Him as 'The Big Guy.'" Well, I find that if I am going to lead you any further on this journey into a special kind of happiness, I have to lead you into some facts about the nature of God. If we are not going to be toying in our minds with some Walter Mitty style day dreams about God, we have to replace childish ideas we have about Him with ideas that He has about Himself.

And as for the Trinity, I have found that anytime a discussion of the concept comes up, the first reaction some people have to it is "My, how arbitrary! Why not a Binity? or a Quadity?, or a Quintity?, or Googlelity? Why only three persons? Why not several? Indeed why not a whole crowd?" And this usually leads on to the next thought, "I'll just smooth that all out and just go back to calling Him 'The Big Guy.'"

But if you have followed the metaphor, you can just glimpse that there is in God, not what I would call "design principles" exactly, but rather, revealed features that have led to a Trinitarian explanation of His personhood, which is indeed revealed to be Super Duper.

Then too, I also wish to knock away some erroneous Walter Mitty notions that people have about the Trinity. For one, the Trinity is not tri-theism. It is not three Gods, three separate Persons in three separate essences. It is God in three "Persons," Who are of the same "essence." And it is not "modalism" which is one God "appearing" for a time in one of three modes of being. It is God in three eternally existing "Persons," who are of the same "essence." And it is not any of the other "-isms" that make any of the "Persons" to be greater than or less than any of the other "Persons." It is God in three "Persons," who

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are of the same "essence," co-eternal and co-equal.

Okay, I'm starting to become a grind. But you begin to get the picture. As C.S. Lewis once pointed out, when something we notice begins to have a grainy not-quite-what-we-were-expecting quality, it usually means that we are looking at something real rather than something we have imagined or simplified in our heads.

Remember, if you will, Gallileo's famous experiment with dropping two objects of unequal weight. Centuries prior, the philosopher Aristotle had a Walter Mitty day dream that if two bodies of unequal weight were dropped from a height, the heavier one would fall faster than the lighter one and hit the ground first. For centuries learned people actually believed Aristotle's day dream. Then Gallileo actually performed the experiment instead of day dreaming about it and found out the weights fell at the same speed and hit the ground at the same time.

Today, our physicists are struggling over observations of something that half their machines call a "wave" and other half call a "particle." It is the same thing happening at the same time, but to their instruments it looks like two different physical phenomena. Reality is very grainy. And the Trinity is reality.

Now before I go on further, I want to make something clear. I have used imagination as a metaphor for creation. But I have also used it to build up a metaphor of the Trinity. The thing I want to make clear is the relationship between the Godhead and the creation. That relationship can be summed up in two theological terms, immanence and transcendence.

Transcendence is the easier one to grasp. It means that God is not the same thing as His creation. The creation, the universe, is not co-eternal with God. God created it, and began time by doing so, but God existed before it was created.

Immanence means that, having created the universe, God is everywhere present in it at the same time. There is nowhere in His creation where He is not.

I will rephrase an analogy C.S. Lewis once gave. Stephen King has written a series of novels. So in a sense, Stephen King is in all his novels, his creations. There, he is immanent. But there is more to Stephen King that just his novels. There are other things he does in his life that have nothing to do with his novels. In that sense he is transcendent with respect to his novels.

My use of imagination as both a metaphor of creation and the Trinity is just a convenience on my part, and not an implication that they are the same thing.

So, to continue, an undivided "essence" of three co-eternal, co-equal "Persons," a Godhead, was, is and ever shall be.

What, you may ask, was the Godhead up to before the creation? That is not as blasphemous a question as some have tried to make it seem. [Footnote 24] We actually

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do have a clue. The clue is in this sentence: "God is love."

That sentence does not mean, as some has taken it to mean, that "love is God," putting the emotion itself above the Being who best expresses it. If that were true, He could not do anything about His created beings who become unlike Him, and love itself would thereby suffer. God must be able not only to love love, but to hate hate.

No, what "God is love" means is that the "Persons" of the Godhead have, in and for all eternity, a relationship of love, the highest possible form of happiness. An emotion which is subordinate to the Godhead, has, in a sense, been taken up into the Godhead and transmuted by the eternity of the relationships in the Godhead. And that kind of love is the ultimate form of happiness that there can ever be.

From this love, the Godhead brought forth the creation and the Chain of Being. And with the Chain of Being, there came into existence beings who could experience God and have a relationship with Him.

Some of these beings are time based and reproduce by being divided into sexes. Hence they refer to the First "Person" as the Father. The Father, they have learned, is as to His essence unknowable because the whole of His creation is not the whole of Him. (Transcendent, remember?) The Father must be manifested in the creation for His beings to perceive Him. More on this anon.

But these created beings also have a created inner world as well as the created outer world - the inner world of Chicagoland, if you will. Anciently, they referred to themselves, as to this inner world, as having a "spirit." And when God manifested in this inner world, they called Him, in His third "Person," the Holy Spirit, in contradistinction to their own spirits, which were decidedly unholy. He is also referred to as the Spirit of God. For God, as we have seen in our discussion of the Trinity, has, in a sense, an "inwardness" also.

So, given our lack of an exit from the wrath of eternal God, what will God do to fulfill His deepest desire of love that knows no end of days. What will God do to retain the perfection of His love while retaining the justice of His wrath? To what lengths will God go in the love of His alienated creatures who are blind, deaf, and dead to Him? The metaphor is Immersion.

(23) Some of you may have wondered why I didn't use water as a metaphor of the Trinity since it can be a liquid, solid, and a gas. Well, that is actually a good metaphor for modalism since water exists, singularly, in each of those states at different temperatures - or rather times. Also, water is a substance, while thought is not.

(24) I'm trying to remember where I heard a apocryphal story about St. Augustine that goes like this: A skeptic once asked Augustine what God was doing before He created the universe. Augustine supposedly replied "Making hell for people who ask questions like that!"

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Metaphor 22 - Immersion

In 2001 a common domesticated cow named Bessie gave birth to a animal of a different species, that of a wild ox known as the Asian gaur, which was and is in danger of becoming extinct. How did that happen? Well, researchers of Advanced Cell Technology in Massachusetts took genetic material from the skin cells of a male gaur, which had died eight years previously, and fused it with the emptied egg cell of a common cow and transferred the resulting embryo into Bessie.

In 2000, computer game publisher Electronic Arts released a computer simulation game called, "The Sims. In an earlier genre of this kind of game, a player could create a simulated world of his own inside the computer, full of little computer generated people and little computer generated things, and little things for these computer generated people to do. Now, with "The Sims," the game player creates a little computer "person" that represents him or her in that simulated world, so that he or she can interact with the other inhabitants of that simulated world and engage in various activities of that world, such as finding and holding a job, cleaning up the house, making friends, dating, etc. etc. This game has recently gotten even more interesting with the introduction of an interface that allows a player to use a photograph of him or herself as part of the appearance of his or her representative in the simulation world.

Both of the above occurrences are immersions. An immersion of one species into another. An immersion of one's self into a created world of one's own. An immersion is when one thing is placed into another thing without it losing its identity. What is this a metaphor of? The Incarnation.

In the Godhead, the Second "Person," The Son, the express image of the essentially unknowable Father, was selected to be incarnated into the creation as a member of the human race.

The ancient Israelites had a physical metaphor for someone being selected by God. The metaphor was to anoint the head of the person so selected with oil. The word "anointed one" in Hebrew is "Messiah." The Greek word for such a one is "Christos." With the incarnation, the eternal Son entered time for a time, taking on human form, human flesh, and dwelt among us.

All the time He was here on earth, He was fully the Second "Person" of the Godhead, as well as fully human. And being fully human, He had a human body, as well as the human inner-world I've characterized with the metaphor of Chicagoland. But His Chicagoland, if I may so speak of it, was different in that it was indwelt by the Third "Person", the Holy Spirit of God, as well as the inner-world of the human spirit.

The question then becomes, which version of Chicagoland was He "running?" Was it Version 1.0 as given by God, or the faulty Version 1.1 that the first people changed the original into?

Well, the Record shows that the Third "Person" of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit of God, drove the Son into a wilderness to be, in spirit and in body, tested to the uttermost as Son of Man and Son of God. And He emerged victorious, showing that as the Son of Man, His inner world was from Chicagoland Version 1.0, that He was everything the First Man was supposed to be and failed to be before God. "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" reads the Record.

It is for this reason that the writers of the New Testament refer to Him as the Second Man or the Second Adam. "Adam" in Hebrew means "man." In the Chain of Being, the Second Man, the Son, now has first, well, "rank" if you will. His inner-world of Chicagoland displaced the First Man's as the skeleton program of all humanity. At His incarnation, He became the Head of the human race. The significance of this will become apparent in a moment.

So, The Son was incarnated. Did He, from the get go, go around telling everyone He was the Son of God? Actually the Record shows that the admission had to be almost pried out of Him, and that almost towards the end. When He did reveal Himself as Son of God, it was when he was showing, making manifest, what the essentially unknowable Father was truly like. He did this by giving the blind sight, making the lame to walk, cleansing the leper, giving hearing to the deaf and on occasion, raising the dead. (Note that list well: the blind, the deaf, the dead, and the unclean and the incapable as well. Miracles can serve as metaphors.) His life and work were of such a kind that it was not a caricature to think of Him as being God.

But His favorite expression for Himself was to call Himself the Son of Man. Which is to say, the Human Being. And why did He do that? Because He knew His visit to earth was for the purpose of completing a specific mission from His Father. From time to time, He dropped mysterious hints about what that mission was. Hints like:

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill."

and

"the Son of man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

At the time that the law was given as a metaphor of God's synesthesia and perfect pitch, a system of sacrifice and atonement (which means literally "to cover") was given as well.

This system had a single strong element of physical metaphor in it: blood. Most of the elements in this system required a blood sacrifice of an animal of some kind. And this was especially pronounced in the atonement aspect of the system. When transgressions of the law occurred - when sins against God's synesthesia and perfect pitch were committed - animal blood had to be shed as a covering, as atonement.

God was pleased for a time to allow the sins which are before His face for all eternity to be covered temporarily by the sacrifice of an animal's blood.

The emblem of this system, the "nutshell" of it, if you will, was the Passover Lamb whose blood, in the inaugurating episode of the system, was painted on the lintel and posts of the door of every Israelite home to ward off a visit from the Messenger of Destruction.

Why blood? Well, the life of creature is in its blood. People in ancient times observed that blood was the only liquid from a creature's body that could, if leaked enough, cause its soul to leave to its body. The life of a creature is in its blood. And by "showing" the blood of an animal to God, the human being showed God (the author of life) that he understood that his own life was under forfeit to God for transgressions against Him. The human being showed that he understood that he was subject to God's wrath for transgression against Him. And God took that as a temporary covering for the transgressions that sit before His face for all eternity. He could do that from His perspective in eternity, because He could, at the same "time," see another event taking place at a later time.

And so now we come to John the Baptizer, the last and greatest of the old style prophets to Israel, and a practitioner of an early form of the metaphor of Immersion. (The Greek word for immersion is "baptizo.")

By the time of John, the system of sacrifice and atonement had fallen on hard times, as does any system committed to human hands. Things had been added to the system by mere humans, that either nullified the intent of the law, or shifted its focus. People had for a long time been asking "Who is my neighbor?" People had gotten taken up with deciding whether to sacrifice mint or cumin, and overlooked the weightier matters of the law, like justice and mercy. And in the temple itself, some of the priests were rationalists who denied the possibility of a specific supernatural act of God. And along with those priests, there were also money changers who continually rooked the poor among the worshipers.

John the Baptizer arrived on the scene with a new physical metaphor, the metaphor of immersion. People could come to John the Baptiser, confess their sins, and be immersed in water as a metaphor that there was now a "before" and "after" in their lives. They went into the water to agree that they had indeed done things to bring themselves under the wrath of Almighty God. And they came out of the water, testifying that they had now changed their lives in view of the One John said was soon to be arriving. A One, Who, John said, would immerse them in the Holy Spirit of God as he had immersed them in water.

One day, while John doing his baptizing, a Human Being got into the line, and John noticed and said to his students, "**Look! That's the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**" John knew what the Son's mission from His Father was.

Before the day the Son was incarnated in time and space, His earthly parents were told what He should be named. They were told to give Him the Hebrew name "Joshua." In Hebrew, this name is actually an expression which consists of two other words. The first word is a variation of God's personal name that was given exclusively to the children of Israel, which means something like "He Who Is," in the sense of "He Who Was, Is, and Ever Shall Be, the Self-Existent One." The second word is "Savior". So the name Joshua means "He Who Is is Saviour." In Greek, the Hebrew name of "Joshua" is rendered "Jesus."

The Son's earthly parents were told specifically:

"thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."

The mission of Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior - the immersion with which He was immersed - was not just to become a Human Being, and not just to show human beings what the Father was truly like, but to come to the night of agony in the garden of Gethsemane and to the crucifixion of Golgotha the next day.

In the garden of Gethsemane, the Son, shedding sweat like great drops of blood, begged the Father that if there was any other way that a particular metaphorical "cup" might pass from Him. The Son of Man on the Cross at Golgotha cried with a loud voice in Aramaic,

"Eli, Eli lama sabachthani?"

which means,

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

The mission of the Son of God was to die as Man for the sins of all men for all time. The "cup" He obediently drank, and the forsaking He strenuously endured, was nothing less than the eternal wrath of God against all sin for all eternity and all time, past, present and future.

And finally, at the end, He said "**It is finished,**" and died. He died "**to taste death for every man.**" An infinite life had just been given for a finite number of finite lives.

The Record says that while this supernatural event was taking place, the course of nature was set on its ear with an unnatural darkness covering the land for up to three hours, followed by an earthquake that rent rocks and other things. And a Roman centurion who witnessed it, a harden executioner, was frightened enough to utter that this was indeed the

execution of a divine being.

Something had just occurred in the Godhead that has reconciled us all to God.

But His human death, like His human life, was also an immersion. In an immersion, there is first a going down. For Him, it was a going down from His bliss above into the confines of a merely human life, and then a going down into crucifixion and death. And that is then followed by a coming up.

Metaphor 23 - The Abend of Death

When I was first learning how to program computers, there was a sort of science fictional television show I used to watch. In one episode of this show there were these evil scientists who had what they declared to be the world's most powerful super computer, one that could answer any question ever put to it. So the protagonist of the show asked the super computer one simple question: "Why?" And sure enough the big fancy machine started sputtering and smoking and blowing up.

I've always liked that scene because it is my mental picture of what happened to Death the day Christ died. For you see, Death has always had a syllogism. And computer programs are merely electronic syllogisms. The syllogism of death is:

Socrates is a man.
All men are mortal.
Therefore:
Socrates is mortal.

On the day Christ died, He was fully Man, and He was fully God, so the syllogism went:

Jesus Christ is a man.
All men are mortal.
Therefore:
THAT NOT DOES NOT COMPUTE!

Since God cannot die, Death did. The syllogism of Death had "abended." And the Record says that Christ now holds "the keys of Death and of Hell."

And so after the third day, the resurrection of Christ took place.

Did it really? We have the word of the original witnesses "the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days." And we have the word of another witness: "he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also..."

And what a resurrection it was!

Those who knew Him before quickly realized that something about Him had changed: His body. It was recognizable as Him. But He could make it unrecognizable at will.

It was not bound by physical limitations. He could suddenly appear in the middle of a locked room. And He could just as quickly vanish into thin air.

And to reassure his students and friends that He not a ghost, He asked for and ate a piece of fish and some honeycomb in front of them. He invited them to touch Him and see that He was flesh and bone.

And in doing so they found out His new body was indeed of flesh and bone, but not blood. For His new body still had the wounds of His old: the holes in His hands and feet and the spear puncture in His side.

His old body had been transformed into a new kind. Later on they would find out His body was capable of rising up into the sky and out of their sight. And one man found, even later, that it was capable of radiating glory, for when he saw it, it was as a light that in midday was shining from heaven above the brightness of the sun.

It was a body of glory. It was a body fit for the fellowship of the "Persons" of the Godhead.

It took a while for Christ's students to understand what had taken place with the death and resurrection of Christ. But eventually they were shown that it was not an event that had happened just to Christ, but also something that had happened to them, and not just them, but anyone else who understood and believed that it had also happened to them as well.

What Christ did on the cross was not only to die as Man for the sins of all men for all time, but also to take into death the collective aspect of the human inwardness, the Chicagoland I've been talking about, and render it powerless over the individual who was born into it.

Metaphor 24 - The Sin Factory

If you think about it for a minute, you will realize that there are two aspects to sin. One aspect is the particular sin itself, the specific act. The other aspect is where it originated from, the thing that brought an act of sin into being.

We have previously talked about how the Chicagoland contains the latency of human sin from the first people, and all who came after them, as if it were an invisible tree growing from generation to generation.

We talked about how it has that quality of one moment there not being a thought of sin, and than another moment, not only the thought, but its commission as well.

Another way we may envision the collective aspect of Chicagoland is by thinking of it as being a sin factory. It is a factory that produces instances of sinful acts. So what Christ did on the cross, was not only to "clear the slate," as it were, with respect to all the instances of sin we have committed, but also to take the root of the invisible Chicagoland tree down into death and in death render inoperable the sin factory that it is.

Being Son of God as well as Son of Man, and therefore the Second Adam, he had the skeleton program for all humanity. On the cross, while enduring the wrath of God, he deactivated it with regard to sin. He not only dealt with the fruit of sin, but also its root. Now hold this thought for a minute. I'll have more to add to it shortly.

Second Immersion

Now, what was this in view of? Was there a reason the root of sin was dealt with? Was there a reason that the central problem of fallen humanity was given its death blow? Yes there was. The Son of Man was making a way for a "Person," another immersion, a new creation, and the solution to our problem of happiness.

Between the last Passover supper with his students, and his travail in the garden of Gethsemane, Christ made the following statements to his students, which they had a very hard time understanding:

"I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. ... I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever... the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost [Spirit], whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. ...But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me ... Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you ... Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you."

The Greek word for "Comforter" means "one called alongside to help," and is thus a consoler. Christ was saying that when He left, He would leave a replacement who was just like Him, and would be for them as He had been to them, by mediating His self to their selves ("he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you"). They would not be left orphans by His returning to His Father to prepare a place for them. The replacement would communicate Him to them and them to Him.

This replacement was and is none other than the Third "Person" of the Godhead. And given that the Holy Spirit of God is the inwardness of God, somewhat like our unholy spirits are our inwardness, where do you suppose the Third "Person" of the Godhead will make His appearance?

The Record says that the risen Christ was with His students for forty days before returning to where He came down from. Some days later, Jewish feast of Pentecost arrived. (the Greek word for Pentecost means "the fiftieth day", its fifty days from the Passover to the feast of Pentecost).

At this time, the event Christ had promised His students happened:

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"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost [Spirit], and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God."

An immersion had occurred. The Third "Person" of the Godhead became immersed in the persons of Christ's waiting students. Or it can be looked at the other way: that Christ's students were immersed in the Holy Spirit of God.

In the terms of the Chicagoland metaphor, The Holy Spirit of God had now replaced the scientists and was speaking directly from within rather than from without. And in this particular inaugurating instance, He was not just speaking but fairly shouting. The barrier of sin having been dealt with, the Holy Spirit of God now takes up His proper residence in the human spirit. A new creation was born. The age of the Holy Spirit of God on earth had begun.

Metaphor 25- The Vine

A new creation? Yes. With the old tree of humanity having been dealt with at the cross, God is now in the process of creating a new tree of humanity (or in another metaphor a vine), which is a new kind of humanity.

It was something else Christ had told His students before His crucifixion that they failed to comprehend until after the fact:

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman ... Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

How is this abiding accomplished? By the Holy Spirit of God indwelling in the inwardness, the Chicagoland, of a person!

Remember what Christ said:

"when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you."

The Son reveals the Father and the Holy Spirit of God communicates the Son to the inwardness of whoever He indwells.

Doesn't this communication get rather crowded, what with how many human beings there are now and have been in the past? No actually.

The "persons" of the Godhead are co-eternal. That means that communication among the "persons" and to human persons, stand outside of time and have nothing to do with duration. And the Record says that **"God is Spirit,"** one consequence of which is that God stands outside of space as well as time. There are no limits to this communication. One individual can have the whole of Almighty God's attention for all time, and this will not decrease God's attention to another individual one wit less. Every individual who has ever been and will ever be has the whole of God's infinite and eternal attention, without fail. As Christ told His students, **"the very hairs of your head are all numbered."**

When this connection occurs, a new thing occurs: sonship by adoption. Or as the Record reads:

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ..."

Prior to the New Testament, the expression "Sons of God" (plural) was an expression that was used to distinguish the race of angelic messengers from the race of human beings, who were referred to as "Sons of Man" (Adam). In the above, we now have that term applied to human beings. They became that by an "adoption" that occurred when the Spirit of God came to indwell them. A good metaphor for what happened is the Greek myth of Pygmalion.

Metaphor 26 - Pymalion

Pygmalion was a sculptor who one day created an ivory statue of a beautiful girl. Over the course of time, the sculptor fell in love with the statue, even though he knew it was just a statue.

Then one day the Greek goddess of love, Aphrodite, was so moved by Pygmalion's love, that she turned his statue into a real human being.

That statue is humanity indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God. They have left the "less than real" sphere of created being, and entered, in some degree, into the entirely real sphere of uncreated being by "adoption" of the Father, by the agency of the Son, through the "medium" of the Holy Spirit of God.

A new link has been forged in the Chain of Being, right between God and His most holy angels. That new link is Spirit indwelt humanity. And Christ, being Son of Man and Son of God, and the sender of the Holy Spirit of God, is the Originator of that new creation. His role as Second Adam extends from the old creation which He took into crucifixion, to the new creation of which He is the Head. To be immersed in the Holy Spirit of God, is to be immersed in Him as the Head of this new order of being. Hence the New Testaments speak of being "in Christ."

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [creation]: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. "

Metaphor 27 - The Right Hand of God

But where is Christ? He went away to prepare a place for those who are "in" Him through the immersion of the Holy Spirit of God into their spirits.

But where is that? In the New Testament, there is a metaphor for this place that is sort like a metaphor that we use today. We say that Tom is Harry's "right hand man." Tom is therefore a person so indispensable to Harry and so authoritative under Harry that he can in fact act for Harry in Harry's name. This is sort of like the idea of an executive officer in the Navy. The Captain of the ship remains in his cabin and leaves the daily enforcement of his orders up to his executive officer.

So the Record speaks of the Son with respect to the Father as:

"Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high..."

And the Record speaks of the Father with respect to the Son as having

"set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come."

And the Son makes a promise to those He indwells through the Holy Spirit of God

"To him that overcometh [by the Holy Spirit of God] will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

Startling as it may be to consider, these metaphors are telling us that to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God - to be "in Christ" - is nothing less than to be brought into the fellowship of the "Persons" of the Godhead, to become part of their eternal love of each other, and to partake of their eternal joy of happiness in each other. Or as the Record reads:

"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." [Footnote 25]

So, let us consider the long road we have taken. Let us consider some of all the forms of human happiness there can be, great and small. The bright in-breaking of glorious sunshine after a dark cloudy rain storm. The satisfaction of a sharp hunger or thirst by good food and good drink. The ultimate moment of the finest piece of music. The satisfaction of ambition. One's first true love. The bright face of a new baby.

Let us also consider all the kinds of human happiness that we may have missed out on in life that in some of us, are the cankers of life that haunt our every waking moment.

The Record reads that

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

What this says is that every true (and not false) human happiness has its source in God, and is therefore a mirror, in some way, of what He is like. But, being creatures in time and space, these gifts of happiness are mediated by time and chance, and are developed through processes, and often stained with the sin of a fallen creation. [Footnote 26]

But suppose for a minute, that there might be an unprocessed happiness, or an abstract of happiness, if you will, or even a distillation of happiness, in which all the little processes have been eliminated, along with the passing of time that attenuates it, and the chance that might take it from us, and that what you instead have is a full, complete, uninterrupted, unvarnished, but mediated happiness that lasts for all eternity.

This is the fellowship of the Persons of the Godhead. Or as the Record puts it

"But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn [i.e. Christ, the Second Adam of the new creation], which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men [humans] made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling [His blood, which eternally cleanses]"

This is what you were looking for when you started viewing this blog book. This is where happiness is to be found and that eternally. Eternal happiness is in the fellowship of eternal God. It is a thing Christ requested of the Father for His students:

"And this is life eternal, that they might know [i.e. experience] thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. " [Footnote 27]

And when you find this happiness, you will find to your surprise that you are grasped by it and not the reverse, as Christ said in His metaphor of the Good Shepard:

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one." [Footnote 28]

(25) The Holy Spirit of God is not mentioned here because He indwells the ones having this fellowship and is the living medium of that fellowship.

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(26) The Record says that the creation we live in now is actually a fallen version that fell when Man, the head of it, lost his relationship to his creator: "the creature [creation] itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." Imagine what it will be like when the children of God receive their glorious liberty.

(27) Again, the Holy Spirit indwells the ones being prayed for as the living medium of that eternal life.

(28) The Holy Spirit of God is in both the keeper, and the ones being kept.

The Consequential Homework Assignment

In all this discussion so far, I have still not told you how the union with God is to be realized and consummated. I have not shown you how you can realize the best and most complete happiness you can ever know for all time and eternity. I haven't shown you how you can enter into the fellowship which the Godhead has among its Persons.

I have shown you a model of some mechanisms for how it might be working. I have given you metaphors for the moving parts of the things you cannot directly know about because they concern the parts of you that cannot be seen, or heard, or touched. But I have not told you how the union with God is accomplished, how the Spirit of God comes into your heart, comes to reside with your own spirit and begins to give witness to it that your union with God is indeed consummated.

This is where the consequential homework assignment comes in.

Your assignment is to pick up a Bible (what I have all this time been calling The Record), look at the table of contents, and pick one of what are called the Gospels. As I said earlier, "Gospel" is the Middle English word for "good news." And they contain very good news indeed, though it looks very bad at first. There are four of them, so you should choose one unless you want to read all of them.

I have one little side note before you start. If you are the kind of person who is upset by momentary contraventions of the so-called "laws of nature," you may want to read a little book by C.S. Lewis, called *Miracles*. That book of his will help you out a great deal, and will help you to relax and accept the way the universe really works.

If you do not have the time to read that whole book, I'll give you something briefer, though less satisfying. It is this: remember what Arthur C. Clark said about sufficiently advanced technologies. Specifically he said: "any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic." Replace the word "magic" with "miracle," and you are all set to go.

Now to return to the gospels, the gospel according to Matthew was written specifically for people of the Jewish faith. If you are Jewish, you will see many familiar things in Matthew. It presents Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ, the Messiah of Israel.

The gospel according to Luke is for philosophical types. It was written by a Greek physician, and begins as a letter written with a classical Greek form of address, and goes on to give an eyewitness account of the story being told. Its theme is Christ, the perfect man, as Son of Man from Heaven (the Greeks had been long looking for a perfect man since they considered Man to be "the measure of all things").

If you are of a mystical bent, read the gospel according to John. In some old Bibles, that gospel is called "The Gospel According to St. John the Divine." Divine in that context is

the old English word for theologian. If that is your thing, that's the gospel you may want to read. It presents Christ as the Son of God from Heaven.

The gospel according to Mark is for regular "working stiffs." It is a brief, no frills account that (in the King James Version) uses the word "straightway" ("right away!") a good deal. It presents Christ as the perfect "doer" (He gets things done!).

Now why am I asking you to read one of the gospels? Because the Bible itself recommends it:

"faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

Does it seem strange to you to think of the Bible as being "the Word of God? Well just remember this: the same Holy Spirit of God, the third Person of the Trinity, that wants to reside with your own spirit and witness to it that you are in union with God, is the same Holy Spirit that was in all the different men of all those different times who each wrote one or more of the books that make up the Bible. Or as the Bible itself puts it:

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost [Spirit]."

Is there something specific you should be doing while you read one or more of the gospels? Yes, and I will give you a metaphor for it.

A Spaceship Lands

Picture a spaceship from an advanced civilization landing on a planet whose people are still living in a Stone Age. Now lets say a member of the crew, say Lt. So-and-so, starts to become good friends with one of the Stone Age cavemen on this planet, whom we will call "Unk." Over time, they learn a good deal about each other, but Lt So-and-so never shows Unk how his "raygun" works or what it does.

Now suppose one day, Unk is beside a hill somewhere, and Lt. So-and-so is within object-throwing distance of Unk. Unk can see behind the hill. Lt. So-and-so cannot see behind the hill because the hill is in his way. Suddenly, Unk and Lt. So-and-so, can hear the charge of a large beast coming from behind the hill. Unk looks behind him and can see the beast coming towards him. Lt. So-and-so can hear the beast going after Unk, but cannot hit the beast with his tiny raygun because the hill is in the way. So Lt. So-and-so throws his raygun to Unk and implores him to use it on the beast.

Unk now has a choice to make that will mean he either lives or dies. His friend, Lt. So-and-so, had just thrown him an object that cannot be used as a club and is smaller than any stone that might possibly be thrown to good affect. But there is a button on it, and it can be pointed. Under what conditions will Unk point the raygun at the beast and push the button?

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1.) if he believes Lt. So-and-so. I.e., if he believes that Lt. So-and-so has correctly determined what kind of trouble he is in, and that Lt. So-and-so has provided the correct remedy for his immediate predicament.

2.) if he believes in Lt. So-and-so. I.e. if he has come to trust in the character of Lt. So-and-so so that he believes Lt So-and-so would want him to continue living, and would not play him false in an emergency.

This is not "positive thinking," because the ray gun does not work because Unk's thinking it will work will make it work, but rather because he is using a thing brought into being in the realm that Lt. So-and-so comes from. All Unk knows is that he trusts Lt. So-and-so.

And so the tiny little gizmo brings down the big bad beast quicker the blink of an eye. Unk doesn't know how it was done, or how the gizmo works, but he does know that he trusted Lt. So-and-so, and Lt. So-and-so's timely provision saved his life.

So what is this story a metaphor of? It is a metaphor of faith.

While you read a given gospel, as the gospel shows you its picture of Christ (His words and His deeds, what He says about the human race that you are part of, and what He says about Himself), begin to ask yourself:

- 1.) Do I believe Jesus Christ?
- 2.) Do I believe in Jesus Christ?

It is all He asks for.

"Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake."

"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"

"This" - the belief of Christ and in Christ, is what forges the union of the Holy Spirit of God with your spirit. It is the belief in and of Christ and His finished work for you on the cross that allows the Holy Spirit of God to enter your spirit and begin to witness to you that you are now His, and He is now yours, and that eternally. And therein is all the happiness you will ever want or need, both now and forever.

Hey, Wait a Minute!

I have just finished telling you that the grasp of happiness I have been long speaking of comes from a union with God. And I had earlier told you about how the first people to have had that happiness made available to them miraculously spoke the praise of God in a language other than their own.

But your first question to me will probably be: if that actually did occur, and a union with God is possible to any human being on the planet, anywhere on the planet, why is the world still the messed up place it is? Why doesn't it reflect that fact? And didn't Christianity eventually go on to commit an obscenity called The Spanish Inquisition? And etc. etc. etc, ad nauseum.

This is a fair question, for which I have multiple answers.

The first answer is that when a union with eternal God occurs with a creature that still exists in time, the union takes on some of characteristics of time. I.e., beside the part of the union that is unalterable and unbreakable, there is also a process of growth over time. The apostle Paul speaks of the Holy Spirit of God as being a "down payment" at a given point in time, and not the whole lump sum at once. And the apostle Peter speaks of growing in grace and in the knowledge of Christ. Part of the union involves growth.

The second answer is that human beings still have free will. They can refuse this union. Or on entering into it, they can seriously impede its growth if they are stubborn enough. The fact is that even though the Holy Spirit of God has taken up residence in a human being, He, in a sense, shares space with that human being's broken Chicagoland version 1.1 (or "carnal nature," or "old man," as Paul calls it).

Every person today who has this union with God through the spirit of God has to make a decision every moment of his waking life as to whether he will be ruled by the Spirit of God, or the carnal nature. And he makes this moment by moment decision on the basis of faith in the fact that it is possible. As the apostle Paul puts it:

"put off concerning the former conversation (i.e. "way of life") the old man (the carnal nature), which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind."

The quality and quantity of that decision making, and the degree of faith that each decision requires, is what makes the growth rate of the union vary from person to person. No one becomes Christ-like over night. But many people insist on remaining spiritual infants all their lives.

And my next to last answer is: not everyone who professes to have this union has this union. Christianity had started out in its original form in **"the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."** But it eventually ended up with an apostle being excommunicated from his own church.

"I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not." (3 John 1:9)

This was something the apostle Paul predicted would happen in time.

"For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." (Acts 20:29-30).

And one of the startling things that the apostle Paul is on record as saying is:

"The Lord knoweth them that are his."

I.e., he himself had seen that people had started coming into the Christian assemblies who were after earthly rewards (money, status, power) rather than the union with God.

And even while the apostles were still alive this declension was on-going. And it caused Christianity to split up into hundreds of denominations and traditions, all competing with each other and being nasty to each other. It was then that the more spectacular signs of spiritual union began to fade, and Christianity became more of a private experience of the soul.

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

Through out the history of the Christian community, there have been individuals and institutions capable of great evil, but also individuals, who are exemplars of great good.

And my final answer is: there are still a great many people who are ignorant that this spiritual union is possible. That's why Christian communities continue to send out missionaries to various places on the globe. This is no longer just about sending people of European descent to Africa and other places like it. In 2002 there was a visitation of African preachers to "darkest" Fort Worth, Texas, courtesy of the Church of Christ. As it is said, "Whatever goes around comes around."

Q & A

And what happens when you do believe?

Do you remember when I said that Christ's students went on to realize that what happened to Him (crucifixion), happened to them also? Well, at the moment that you believe, what happened to Christ will happen to you in your inner world of Chicagoland. Your act of faith in time becomes his act of obedience in time (enduring the crucifixion), which was also an act in eternity that stands out of time, and therefore becomes available to you now.

Remember that Christ, being the head of humanity by virtue of the incarnation, took the root of Chicagoland's spiritual "tree" down with Him into death, rendering it inoperable in all those who were born into it.

So in your inner world, in your deepest self, the faulty Chicagoland Version 1.1 is now dead to you and you to it. And that being the case, the resurrected Christ, as head of the new creation, places next to your dead Chicagoland Version 1.1, His own "down payment" on your future eternal life - the very Holy Spirit of God, the third person of the Godhead.

You are "born again." Or rather, as an alternate translation of that Greek phrase allows, "born from above." You are plucked from the spiritual tree of Chicagoland Version 1.1, and made a branch of the spiritual vine, who is Christ, and made a part of the new creation that He is the Head of. You are made another part of the second immersion that occurred along time ago. Your spirit becomes immersed in the Holy Spirit of God, and by Him you become spiritually immersed "in Christ."

Doubtless you have many questions about this new condition you find yourself in.

Well, what happens next?

Yes, that's a good start. I will layout some items in a logical order, but which may occur in a different order for different kinds of people.

The Holy Spirit of God who is now resident inside your inner world (quite possibly in the background at first), will start to witness to your spirit that your union with the eternal God through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, is real, and that your sonship by adoption is valid. Or as Romans 8:14-17 has it:

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba [quite literally, "Daddy"!], Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

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And how does that work?

Well, remember when I said that demons have the ability to place thoughts in your mind that you go on to mistake for thoughts of your own? Well, the Holy Spirit of God has a like facility in you now. From time to time you will find yourself having thoughts that you never suspected you were capable of having before. Thoughts about God. Thoughts about the Son of God, Jesus Christ your Lord and Savior. Thoughts about other people. (And they will be good thoughts.)And some of your new thoughts will be about yourself. But they will be truthful this time. And that may mean that some of them will hurt. But you will recover from them and heal. And eventually there will be fewer thoughts that focus on yourself. This is the witness that Holy Spirit of God begins to make to your spirit in the deep places where you really live.

And this witness will not always be just thoughts. They may be what the Victorians used to call "affections." Or as the apostle Paul writes in Colossians 3:1-3:

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

The thought of the spiritual riches that God has for you in "**the heavenly places in Christ Jesus**" (Ephesians 1:3) will surprise you from time to time and nourish your very soul. I'll give you a metaphor for this.

The Forgotten Joke

Once, during a very busy day at work, someone stopped by my desk to tell me a very funny joke. And as I was in the middle of laughing at it, another person came by and interrupted me with a bit of serious business. But after that was finished, I found that, for the life of me, I could not recall what the joke was that I had just heard. But for the better part of the day I still had that happy feeling of humor in my soul.

That is my metaphor for some of the kinds of things that may begin to happen to your soul, going forward. Your spirit will experience those little moments when God Himself, through His Holy Spirit that is in you, bisects your spirit and then is gone before you even know He has been there, and leaves behind, in your spirit, intimations of His greatness and glory.

Which is going a long way to say that you will begin to start doing what you were originally designed for in the first place: worship. It will start to become a part of you spontaneously.

Is there anything I can do to help that process along?

I won't say that you can "force it." But I will say that having a set time when you can be quiet and read the Bible and pray certainly helps it along a great deal. It's kind of like being an artist. An artist spends a great deal of time at making sure he or she performs and refines his or her craft every day. More often than not, it is plain old donkey work that seems like rolling a boulder up a hill. But what makes up for the donkey work are those divine moments when the craft seems to take over the artist and work its will through him or her, and something results that the artist cannot believe he or she has created. The worship of the eternal God that results from prayer and Bible study is like that.

Is Bible study really necessary?

Absolutely. It is pivotal to your spiritual growth, as the apostle Peter makes plain in 1st Peter 2:2-3:

"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious."

You have tasted that the Lord is gracious (He has shown you unmerited favor in what He has done to you and for you on the cross). The milk of your growth in Him is in reading the Bible, which gives you even more of a taste of Him. Repeat as necessary.

But I will grant you that it is difficult. It requires a workman-like attitude to do it right, as the apostle Paul tells his young apprentice, Timothy in 2nd Timothy 2:15:

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

That "rightly dividing" means to break it down for your understanding and figure out how all the parts fit together into a unified message from God to Man. Eventually, you will arrive at what the apostle Paul called "**the form of sound words**" or "an outline of sound doctrine." (2 Timothy 1:13). (This document you are holding is the author's).

Remember that you are a being of fecundity. Your intelligence has to be gradually built up. The quality of your worship of God will go up as you begin to acquire the ideas about God that God has of Himself. What you will worship will cease to be that of an idolatrous daydream of your own making and become instead the very God of Heaven Himself.

There are basically two kinds of Bible reading. You will start out doing the first kind, and then gradually you will graduate to the second kind.

The first kind is the simple donkey's work of actually reading it, studying it, taking notes, breaking it apart, find out what's in it and how it all fits together. There is a lifetime in just that.

But then later, as you become more familiar with the Bible, and more of it sticks in your mind, you will begin to experience the truth of what Christ said to His students:

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost [Spirit], whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

Do you remember what the apostle Peter said about how the scriptures were written?

"... no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost [Spirit]."

Well, the second type of Bible reading is when you realize that the Holy Spirit of God who caused the Bible to be written is the same Holy Spirit of God who now resides in you, and He begins to take the scriptures you have read and show you what they really mean in such a way that it causes a mysterious stab of worship to arise in your heart. I'll give you two examples of this from my own life.

When I was a young man, I had always been aware of Christ being referred to as "the man of sorrows." This was accurate, taken from Isaiah's prophecy about Him (Isaiah 53:1-6):

"Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

But I had assumed that His sorrow had to do with under going the crucifixion for us all, as the above passage seems to indicate. Later, as an older man, two other passages of scripture came together in my mind to show me the true extent of Christ's sorrows. The first was Ecclesiastes 1:17-18:

"And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit. For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow."

I had found this to be true as an adolescent when I graduated from the children's section of my local public library to the adult section. In the adult section I learned a great deal more about Tomas de Torquemada, Vlad Tepes, Adolf Hitler, Ivan the Terrible, Adolph Eichmann, Joseph Mengele, Joseph Stalin, Richard Speck, and H. H. Holmes, then was perhaps good for me.

The second passage was the crucial one of John 2:23-25:

"Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man."

With this last passage the Holy Spirit of God had shown me something about Christ that I have never forgotten since. He knows every human being who has ever been on the planet. And He has seen every sorrow there is to see.

Here is the second example of something the Holy Spirit of God showed me, which demonstrates that sometimes He will use something you've seen in The World to press home a point.

One time I was changing the channels on the television set and stopped momentarily on a talk show. This was at the time when there was a vogue for actor Jack Nicholson because he was considered the definition of "cool." I caught the host of the talk show in mid-joke talking about his night on the town the previous night. The host said that he found this cool nightclub that had a cooler bar, an even cooler clientele, and that there was an even cooler private room in the back where Jack Nicholson would sit and be the coolest of all, all by himself.

That was one night.

Some time later I was reading the epistle to the Hebrews, and read the following that is in reference to the worship sanctuary of the ancient Hebrews (Hebrews 9:1-3):

"Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly [i.e. earthly, physical] sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle [a tent] made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread [bread for showing to God]; which is called the sanctuary. And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all."

When I read that last verse, I had a picture arise in my imagination.

In the Hebrew's worship of eternal holy God, there was an outer courtyard that was "common." Then there was a tent that was "holy." And then inside that tent was another tent, where the manifestation of eternal God on earth would reside, that was considered "the Holiest of all." And ...

"into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people."

Where the talk show host had been talking about the narrowing down of the quality called "cool" into one person in a room by himself, this verse gave me a vision of the quality called "holiness" being narrowed to the possession one particular Being, in a particular tent by Himself and with no other.

I got a vision the God's synesthesia and perfect pitch. And it fed my soul for days.

Those are my two examples of the second kind of Bible reading that you will graduate to eventually. Sometimes there comes a point where this second kind of Bible reading (the visionary) starts to interfere with the first kind (the fact gathering). Then you can't get very far in gathering more facts without the Holy Spirit of God showing you something that will feed your soul. But that is a happy problem to have.

Does prayer really work?

After receiving my Chicagoland metaphor, need you even ask? Your body may be here on earth and make you feel lonely, and like you are taking into the empty air while you pray, but rest assured, your spirit is available to be heard by Christ in the Heavens and His Father also, **"which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."** (Matthew 6:6).

And realize this: if the Holy Spirit of God is able to put thoughts into your head because he indwells you, don't you think the Holy Spirit of God is able to put thoughts into other people's heads because He indwells them too? In fact, since the age of the Holy Spirit of God on earth has begun, He is now referred to as **"he who now letteth"** (2nd Thessalonians 2:8 KJV) or "He who restrains." This means He has access to even bad people's thoughts and therefore restrains some of the evil things they plan to carry out.

So when you pray, God begins to put thoughts in other peoples minds that can bring about a chain of events leading to the thing you pray for coming into being. Prayer works.

Hmmmm? In that case how is prayer different from magick? Is it possible for me to pray wrong? What if I'm not good at praying?

Well now, that is an interesting question. And it is not an idle one either.

Aleister Crowley once warned his "disciples" that trying to get results from magick could have unintended side-effects. One wants X to occur. One instead may get -X. Or half an X. Or double an X. The classic example of a side-effect is the couple performing a magick ceremony to receive \$5,000, and then getting it as a result of a settlement from the life insurance policy on one of their children who got killed in an accident.

The difference between prayer and magick is that prayer is always subject to the will of eternal, holy God, to whom we pray. **"Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."** (Matthew 6:10). And God decides whether or not anything will come of the prayer. **"Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts."** (James 4:3).

One reads the Bible to become better educated about the kinds of things that God wills. In Magick, the only consideration is one's own will (Crowley's famous dictum was "DO WHAT THOU WILT SHALL BE THE WHOLE OF THE LAW.") And one pays the consequences for that (especially since the only beings who will carry out whatever you request are those from the diabolic realm).

Another difference is that magick requires skill and exactitude in making requests. You have to get it exactly right for anything to happen (which might be bad anyway). In prayer, even an unskilled person is taken in hand by the Holy Spirit of God. And sometimes even inexpressible things can be prayed because the Holy Spirit indwells one (Romans 8:26):

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

But over time, and with Bible reading, you will eventually know how to pray, and it will hopefully become second nature to you.

But if God has His own will, why does He take prayer requests from mere human beings?

Because prayer is really God's way of letting us participate in the great things He is planning and doing in the world today. And while we are doing it, it gives Him a greater access to our spirit for Him to work on it and leave us better off than we were before we prayed.

Overtime, with our education in the scriptures by the Holy Spirit of God, and our frequently putting our spirits into the presence of Christ, prayer becomes less and less

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about what we want, and more and more about what God wants, and true prayer becomes more and more effectual. When I think of all the wonderful things prayer does for us, I consider it the greatest thing since sliced bread. It is more than well worth your time.

Hey, I just re-read Romans 8:14-17 above. What's that bit about "suffering with Him?"

Oh, that.

Well, besides any physical suffering that becoming a Christian may entail [Footnote 29], there is often mental suffering that goes on inside a Christian because a battle begins to take place between the Holy Spirit of God that is now in him and the remnants of his corrupt Chicagoland Version 1.1, or "old nature" or "carnal nature," or simply "the Flesh" as the apostle Paul puts it. Paul went through all that and has described it well in Romans 7:15-23:

"For that which I do I allow [understand] not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law [the expression of God's personality] that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? [the sinful nature, The Flesh]"

There it is in a nutshell - the strife that goes on between the old nature, and the new. This is the battle that you will have with your second enemy, The Flesh (Chicagoland v.1.1). But it is also the battle that you will have with your first enemy, The World, because the thing The World principally does is tempt your Flesh. If you overcome the Flesh, The World will follow.

No, Christianity does not mean you become sinless.

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1st John 1:8-9).

But it does mean you sin *less*.

But I am going to give you a leg up on ending this strife. You have only to remember this: the Chicagoland v.1.1 that is still in you only seems like it is still alive in you and controlling you. Let me give you a gristly metaphor of this so that you will never forget this.

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The Accident Victim

A great while ago, I had a relative who attended a defensive driving course conducted by the State Police. During the course, one of the State Troopers told some grisly stories about accident scenes he had encountered (this was with a view to getting his audience to remember to use their seat belts).

One time this Trooper came to an accident scene and found a man with a large bump on his head limping and lurching around aimlessly talking to himself. He had just been in a frontal collision and had hit his head on the dashboard of his car. But here he was, limping and lurching aimlessly around while talking, apparently alive.

But then the State Trooper walked up to the man and listened to what he was saying, and discovered that the man's brain was simply reeling off the man's childhood memories, making him babble like a four year old. The man was actually dead, killed the minute his head hit the dashboard. The other parts of his brain hadn't died yet, and they kept his body moving around until a few minutes later, when the rest of his brain finally died.

Now that grisly occurrence is a good metaphor for your inner Chicagoland v.1.1, also known as The Flesh. It underwent crucifixion and death with Christ the moment you believed in Him and what He did for you. But you still think it is alive and is the same thing as yourself. You think it is the part of you that is the most real. But you think that only because you have a long history of obeying its promptings.

The surprise of your life will come when you begin to start disobeying its promptings and realize that it no longer has power over you. And you will do that once you understand the significance of the following sentence from Colossians 2:6:

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk [i.e. "live"] ye in him."

The significance of this verse is in two questions about it.

1.) How did you "receive" Christ?

Answer: By faith.

2.) So how do you walk (i.e. live your life) "in Christ?"

Answer: By faith.

Believe it or not (but do believe it), this is the key to growth in the spiritual life in Christ.

Many Christians spend their entire defeated lives thinking that the only time they have to have faith in Christ is when they "receive Him." They don't realize that the key to denying the promptings of The Flesh (and The World that tempts The Flesh), is to deny the promptings by faith in Christ.

It may take many repetitions of this lesson for even some of the promptings to cease. But that is how The Flesh is overcome. It is overcome by the daily exercise of faith as you live your life and that's the long and short of it. It comes down to how much you are willing to exercise your faith and believe that what Christ has done to you, has been done to you.

But having said that, you should realize that your faith is the very thing that is going to come under attack from time to time by the diabolic realm or The Devil. He is your third and last enemy in the Christian life.

Your faith is such a very affective weapon in helping you against the temptations of The World and The Flesh that The Devil (or more likely, a devil) is going to whisper things into your inner self that you will start to believe are your own thoughts. And they will be things that are designed to weaken your faith.

And that is the good news. Why? Because that is how you will recognize those thoughts for what they are. And you need only remember that because the Holy Spirit of God is now in your inner self, the diabolic realm cannot now enter there. The devils can only whisper in from without. Remember Romans 8:37-39:

"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

I'll give you a metaphor for what diabolic realm tries to do to a Christian since it can do nothing else.

The Fake Punch

When I was in high school, there was a strict rule about fighting and hitting people. You couldn't hit someone without getting put on detention. So the bullies in high school used to come over to their victims and launch a hard and fast punch that they would pull back on just before it hit. The point was to make the intended victim flinch enough so that they would fall over and hurt themselves.

That in a nutshell is how the diabolic realm tries to hurt spirit indwelt Christians whom they cannot otherwise hurt. The Christian has to learn not to listen to the voices of the Slanderers when they come by. Or as Colossians 1:23 puts it:

"...continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard ..."

And that is the other reason for continued Bible reading. To become grounded and settled. so that when the Slanderers come around, you will not be pushed around all over the place like a lightweight.

So that is your inner journey in the Christian faith: Overcoming the World and The Flesh, by faith in Christ, and turning aside The Devil by being grounded and immovable in the hope of the gospel.

But what is it all geared toward? What is the end that is in view?

Well, if you are born again into a new creation, it is expected that you will grow up into becoming a being that is characteristic of that new creation. And who is the Head of that new creation? Christ, the Lord. So He is what you are meant to spiritually grow up into being like. Or as Romans 8:28 & 29 puts it:

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."

Goodness. Does that mean I will lose my personal identity?

Oh dear, I hear the voices of many Star-Trek(tm) fans in that question. No, being "in Christ" is not like being "assimilated" into the "Borg." [Footnote 30] According to Genesis 5:3:

"When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth."

That is what is meant by "image" when speaking of being **"conformed to the image of Christ."** We are all sons of Adam (and daughters of Eve), so we are in their "image," and yet we are all distinct individuals with all our individual quirks. This will also be true when we become conformed to the image of Christ. We are just passing from an old creation into a new one. 1st Corinthians 15:47-49 makes this clear:

"The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

We will not lose an iota of ourselves in that process, except for the willingness to sin. Spiritually, in our inner selves, we are to grow into the kind, or order, of being that Christ now is. This is only natural as His presence will one day be our habitation when our bodies are as redeemed as our spirits are.

Our bodies are going to be redeemed one day?

Oh yes. The Record is quite clear on that, as 1 Corinthians 15:35-38, and 42-44 makes clear:

"But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.

...

So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body."

If perchance your physical body does die at sometime, it will be a case of "absent from the body, present with the Lord." 2nd Corinthians 5:6-8:

"Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."

In my Chicagoland metaphor, your current robot body may indeed get run over by a Mack truck, but your spirit will still be "in the tank in Chicago" so to speak, only it will be in the presence of the risen Christ, and your smashed up robot body will be likened to a seed that does not look anything like the very pretty flower it will become when it is returned to you at the resurrection from among the dead. Trust me, you won't mind having your body "planted," if it ever comes to that.

There's going to be a resurrection from among the dead?

Oh my, yes. The Record is quite clear on that too. And it also says that some of us will not see death at all when it happens. 1 Thessalonians 4: 13-17:

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep [he means the big one], that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [precede] them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

1 Corinthians 15:51-54 also sheds some light on this.

"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

But what kind of body is this?

Well Philippians 3:20-21 tells us:

"For our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, [Footnote 31] that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

It is going to be a body like His, which is fit for the fellowship of the Persons of the Godhead.

But what ultimately will go on in that fellowship? Won't I get bored strumming a harp in heaven for all eternity?

Ah, the primal fear of all earthly creatures. Afraid heaven will be boring! Such a "fraidy" cat. You should really be more concerned about whether heaven is going to be too much for you! But I hear your concern, and I'm afraid the only way I can address it is by reaching into a less than worthy place for an illustration.

That less than worthy place is Aldous Huxley's *Heaven and Hell*. The reason it is less than worthy is that Aldous Huxley breached the two estates which are the human realm and the angelic realm in order to get the observation I'm about to use here. He did that by taking mescaline, a consciousness-altering drug similar to LSD. And true to form, the diabolic realm served him up a landscape for his belief.

But it's not so much the landscape that he saw that I am interested in as much as the comments he made on it. This is what he saw and his comment on it. (Notice that he thinks some of it comes out of his own mind rather than objective reality):

"Let us begin with the human or, rather, the more than human inhabitants of these far-off regions. Blake called them the Cherubim. [Footnote 40] And in effect that is what, no doubt, they are - the psychological originals of those beings who, in the theology of every religion, serve as intermediaries between man and the Clear Light. The more than human personages of visionary experience never 'do anything.' (Similarly the blessed never 'do anything' in heaven.) They are content merely to exist. "

"Under many names and attired in an endless variety of costumes, those heroic figures of man's visionary experience have appeared in the religious art of every culture. Sometimes they are shown at rest, sometimes in historical or mythological action. But action, as we have seen, does not come naturally to the inhabitants of the mind's antipodes. To be busy is the law of our being. The law of theirs is to do nothing. When we force these serene strangers to play a part in one of our all too human dramas, we are being false to visionary truth. That is why the most transporting (through not necessarily the most beautiful) representation of "the Cherubim" are those which show them as they are in their native habitat - doing nothing in particular."

Now, what is he saying here? He is saying that in another state of consciousness, what we think would be incredibly boring because it looks so static, will actually be quite what I previously described the fellowship of the Persons of the Godhead as being - a distillation of happiness. Remember that? All true kinds of happiness we can ever know have their source and origin in **"the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."** If we remove all the little processes from our kinds of happiness, and the time and chance that may attenuate them, a distillation of pure happiness results that can be held as one moment of time which lasts for all eternity, "fading never."

What looks to be a static, boring picture of happiness in heaven, will, in another state of consciousness, be more happiness than you can possibly stand now in your human, time and space bound form. It would overpower you.

Take this theophany (appearance of God) from Isaiah 6:1-3:

"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: 'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.'"

On the bald face of it, going around and around and around all day, saying "Holy, Holy, Holy" all day does not strike one as very exciting work. But if you consider that the above is what a person with our consciousness would describe when seeing a manifestation from a realm where a different consciousness prevails, you get a better sense that something absolutely fabulous was revealed to his man, Isaiah.

Now, I'm going to tell you something else that may interest you. Remember when I said that this new creation we are in by being "in Christ" is a new link in the Chain of Being that was inserted between God and the angels?

Well that means that when our existence in time is done, and we enter eternity, we will be displacing the Seraphs and getting between them and God in His order of worship above. The apostle Paul reveals this in a question he posed to the Corinthian Christians who were having trouble settling legal matter amongst themselves:

"Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?" (1st Corinthians 6:3).

The holiest of the angels of God have always known obedience. We humans who have been redeemed by Christ have known disobedience, but have been brought back into obedience by the sacrifice of Christ, **"once for all."** (Hebrews 10:10). That gives us a privileged place of priority in God's order of worship, **"which things the angels desire to look into."** (1st Peter 1:12).

Okay. But what's that business with the harps and stuff?

Oh, that. Well, imagine, if you will, a composer going on vacation to the most scenic area of the Swiss Alps. He takes in the majestic view, breathes the fresh, clean air, and experiences the mellow voice of nature on his ears. What do you think he will do when he gets back from vacation? Indeed, what might he start doing even on the first day of his supposed vacation in the Alps? I'll tell you. He will start writing a concerto, a symphony, a tone poem, a sonata. The sheer exposure to what is good brings out of any good person an unadulterated praise of that good thing.

We do a little of something like that all the time and don't even notice it. We say, "Isn't that a pretty girl?" or "Isn't that a fabulous sunset?" or "Isn't he an honest man?" Or "Wasn't she a brave girl?" The response to good is praise of the good.

One of the limitations I feel in life is the fact that I love classical music, but can't for the life of me make any of my own. I am clumsy and uncoordinated, so I can't play an instrument. And something doesn't quite come together for me when I try to match a piece of music with the notations on paper that make up its specification. I'll never compose music.

But when I listen to a concerto, or symphony, I pretend in my mind that I am the conductor of the music, and that the music is coming directly out of my very soul. That pretense allows me to get an empathic understanding of what the nonverbal message is that is in the music. And O the glory, O the glory, the original composer speaks directly to my soul with most (if not all) of his genius.

The bit with the harp tells me that one day, I will be given a body that is perfectly suited for the fellowship of the Persons of the Godhead, and that I will be fitted with an instrument that is perfectly suited to the fellowship of the Persons of the Godhead, and that I will be given the talent to play it that is perfectly suited to the fellowship of the Persons of the Godhead, and that when that final unveiling takes place, when the eternal Son begins to reveal to me by the Holy Spirit of God the essentially unknowable eternal Father in the perpetuity of eternity, I shall sound with a perfect note that shall be held as one moment of time through out all eternity.

Can you recommend any books to read?

Indeed I can. I highly recommend reading *Desiring God: Meditations Of A Christian Hedonist* by John Piper. You may get the feeling, later on in your Christian life, that you have been sentenced to the spiritual equivalent of eating spinach for the rest of your life. Piper will demonstrate abundantly to you that this is just not the case. Most of what the World calls pleasure in fact does not feed the human soul, but deadens it. Piper will teach you that the true pleasures in life, and your own personal "bliss," will be found, eventually, in the service of Christ. Go to it!

I also recommend *The Complete Green Letters* by Miles J. Stanford. After you have been a young Christian for a good while, you eventually will burn off your quite natural initial enthusiasm. Then will come the time for some deeper growth processes that will be a good deal quieter. This book is about that. And it will give you some relief from well meaning Christians who think that a big oak tree takes the same amount of time to grow as a summer squash. It is the pivotal book that the present author read that allowed him to begin and complete this document.

I would also recommend two books having to do with Watchman Nee. Nee's own book of doctrine, *The Normal Christian Life*, and a biography of him by Angus Kinnear, called *Against the Tide : Watchman Nee*.

The biography will tell you that the Christian life is a journey that doesn't come to you all at once - that your understanding of it will change over time. And it shows you some of the ways you can go wrong when things get a little boring.

Nee's book on the Christian life brings out many of the points I've made here, only in different words.

The last thing about Nee is that you will see for yourself that Christianity is a universal faith, and not just something for people of European descent.

You mentioned other Christians, is there some church I should go to?

Alas, this is one area in which you may have to fend for yourself. I simply do not know what is in the area where you live. I would like to say that any church is better than no church, but that would be a falsehood considering that the Swedenborgians call themselves a church, but are in fact occultists who use symbolism from the Bible to expound their doctrines.

Probably the best thing for you to do is to take the New Testament and read the letters (called "epistles") the apostles wrote to the young churches of their day. Note what they say about what a church should be and how it should operate. Then go out and look for a church in your area that has the closest approximation of what you have learned. This is called the Berean method of church finding. [Footnote 32] You search the scriptures to find out if what they say is so. It will, for the most part, keep you out of the hands of the cult groups. [Footnote 33]

Am I being overly dramatic? I would like to think so, but what I see around me in Christendom makes me think of what Christ told His students when He sent them forth to teach in His name:

"behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves." (Luke 10:3).

And I am reminded by that of the apostle Paul's prophecy about what would soon happen to the church after his passing:

"For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." (Acts 20:29-30).

Paul looked at the church - actually the people in the church - the Christians, as being "members" (limbs) of a spiritually connected "body of Christ," each member having a particular function to perform in that body. (1 Corinthians 12:12-31).

And Peter looked at Christians as being the "living stones" of a spiritual temple, raised up to eternal God's worship, with Christ being the chief cornerstone of that temple. (1st Peter 2:5-10).

But as I look around at Christendom today, I have to conclude that it is more like a first grade classroom who's Teacher has momentarily left it to consult with the Principal. Yes, there are a few good students here and there, keeping their heads down, doing their homework, and minding their own business. But there are far more kids in the classroom cutting up, making lots of noise, misbehaving, and bullying the other kids.

One day, the Teacher is going to suddenly return. But until then, we have to make sure that we, at least, behave ourselves. And our guide to that is the Word of God.

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." (2 Peter 1:19).

Do you have any last words of advice before you go?

Yes, I do. I have a sentence and a prayer I want to give you that will keep you on the right course in your life as a Christian. The sentence is this:

Christianity is not a behaviorism, but rather, the reception of a Personality.

What is a behaviorism? A behaviorism is any system of rewards or punishments that tries to change your behavior without changing your underlying personality which supplies the impulses behind the behavior.

Legalism is a behaviorism. In legalism, you have a set of laws and a schedule of penalties for the transgression of each law. The penalties are designed to be hurtful enough so that you will be encouraged to change to your behavior. But they cannot change your personality.

A Skinner box is a behaviorism. The experimental rat is placed in the Skinner box, and each time the rat performs a desired behavior, it is rewarded with a pellet of food dropped into the box. The rewards condition the rat to perform the desired behavior. It does not matter what kind of personality the rat has, it's just his behavior that has been conditioned.

The rinky dink "rules" of some churches, whether expressed or implied, can be a behaviorism.

The ultimate behaviorism is the Clockwork Orange I wrote about previously. In a science fiction novel, *The Clockwork Orange*, Anthony Burgess conceived of a criminal being subjected to behavior modification techniques that would condition him to become ill whenever he even thought of committing a crime. Burgess was pointing out that such a

program would only change the behavior of the criminal, and not the criminal himself. The impulse to crime would still remain.

Christianity is not a behaviorism. It is the reception of the personality of Christ through the Holy Spirit of God, who comes to reside inside the Christian's heart by faith in Christ. That Personality then begins to displace Christian's old one which has its roots in the carnal nature. That is Christianity.

The apostle Paul has the last word on this. He had once preached the gospel to the Galatians, who then received Christ by faith. But they went on to start using the law as their "rule of life." This is what Paul asked them in a follow up letter (Galatians 3:2,3):

"This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?"

(i.e., "Can you fix the Flesh by the law?") This is another way of stating an earlier sentence of Paul's (Colossians 2:6):

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk[i.e. "live"] ye in him."

And how is that? By faith. It is the whole thing, from start to finish, and it is how you receive, and go on receiving, Christ's personality through the Holy Spirit of God.

And now I will give you a prayer you can use that will encourage you in the reception of His Personality and discourage you from falling into behaviorism. The prayer is this:

Lord, teach me to love what you love, and hate what you hate.

If you pray this prayer, doing what God wants you to do, and not doing what God does not want you to do will become, over time, a matter personal preference rather than a matter of keeping a set of rules.

What God hates will not surprise you (for the most part). Who God is capable of loving startles the holiest of His archangels.

(29) The Philippian Christians that the apostle Paul wrote a letter to were Roman citizens who could no longer say "Caesar is Lord." They became subject to death for treason the moment they believed. A Muslim who becomes a believer in Jesus Christ is immediately subject to being murdered by his fellow Muslims. More Christians have been murdered for their faith in the 20th century than in any other. And the 21st looks like its shaping up to be even more brutal.

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(30) Gene Roddenberry, the creator of the Star-Trek(tm) universe had leanings toward the Objectivist (and atheist) philosophy of Ayn Rand, and hated Christianity. There was an episode in the original series where these hooded figures when around saying "You are not of the body. You have not been converted," who were basically just robots of a creature of some sort. In the new series, this theme shows up again as the Borg Collective.

(31) Trust me as someone past forty. It will get plenty vile.

(41) William Blake (1757-1827). A visionary English poet, painter, and printer, who seems to have been able to see angels (he drew pictures of them). He called them "Cherubim." That is the correct name of some orthodox angels, but the ones Blake saw are likely demons who deceived him. Blake's father was a Swedenborgian, as was Blake himself for a time. The Swedenborg Church is basically an occult group that uses imagery from the Bible to expound its doctrines (which gives it a Christian veneer). There was a Christian rock group a while ago that had song lyrics about William Blake, taking him for a Christian. That he was not.

(32) Acts 17:10 & 11 "And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."

(33) Long before Jim Jones' followers were all made to commit suicide in Guyana with him, Jim Jones had held a preaching meeting in which he held up a Bible, proclaimed that something in it was wrong, threw it down on the floor, and then told his congregation to follow him instead of the Bible. The people who left his church that day were not among those who died in Jones Town.

Appendix-Necromany,Recarnation, and The Last Judgment - A Speculation

Recently, America has been treated to a daily daytime television show called *Crossing Over*. In it, the host of the show, John Edward, appears to be bringing messages or impressions of departed persons to their bereaved loved ones. This supposedly proves that there is nothing to be feared from death, that death is just a dream within a dream.

A great while ago, before the advent of *Crossing Over*, there was a vogue for what is called Past Life Regression. In Past Life Regression, a hypnotist puts a person into a hypnotic trance, and in that trance leads them backward through all the ages they have been - adult, teenager, child, infant - and then back even farther to before they were born, where they seem to experience having been someone else in a previous life. In some cases a hypnotic subject can supposedly be regressed back into a series of previous lives. This hypnotic technique is supposed to have conclusively proven the Hindu doctrine of reincarnation.

In Christian doctrine the first phenomenon, communication with the dead, is accounted for as being the sin called necromancy. It is condemned as such in the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 18:10-12), which records a particular instance of it in the last days of bad King Saul (1st Samuel 28). The New Testament condemns it under the general term for occult practices, sorcery.

In Christian theory, the story behind necromancy is that demons are said to mimic and imitate the spirits of the departed in order to work a deception on unsuspecting necromancers, with a view towards either taking possession of them, or to simply invalidate Christian doctrine concerning the dead. This theory has never been proven from the scriptures, but the apostle Paul's contention that demons are behind the supernatural powers that pagans worship as idols (1st Corinthians 10:20) has been seen as a general justification of this theory.

But in the second phenomenon, reincarnation, we have something seemingly new, that the Christian scriptures do not seem to have any explanation for. The Christian position on the dead has always been that **"it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment"** (Hebrews 9:27). Christians who have the union with Christ in the heavenlies, and are thereby regenerated, are considered to have **"fallen asleep in Christ."** (1st Corinthians 15:6). They are with the dead, but also "in the presence of Christ" (2nd Corinthians 5:8). There will be a first resurrection **"from among the dead"** (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18), at which the sleeping Christians will be re-united with their bodies, which will have been changed to be like **"Christ's glorious body."** (Philippians 3:21). Then, later, there will be a general resurrection of the dead who remain, to receive their final judgment and disposition (Revelation 20:11-15). [Footnote 34]

But here today, we have reincarnation hopping and skipping about in front of us all, seemingly upsetting our Christian applectart in regard to the doctrine of The Last Judgment. And the story about demons mimicking the departed seems a little farfetched, almost like it is a patch over something unaccounted for by Christian doctrine. When one

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starts looking over the transcripts that have been made of mediumistic seances, the doctrine of demonic mimicry starts to seem like its just too pat an answer for what is going on.

What, the Christian may ask, is going on here? Is Christianity wrong and the Hindu and the necromancer right about what happens after death?

Well, I am going to layout some general facts here, and then engage in a speculation that I think will be helpful until the day we actually do find out what really happens after death (something no Christian should be afraid of). And I will show that the phenomenon of necromancy and the phenomenon of Past Life Regression are part of a single phenomenon that the diabolic realm has been casting in a light favorable to their view of death, and unfavorable to the Christian view of death.

"In the Spirit and Power of "

To buttress my speculation, I'm going to point out something that sometimes happens in Biblical prophecy. Malachi 4:5-6 records a prophecy about the Old Testament prophet Elijah. This prophet had been interrupted in his ministry on earth to the nation of Israel by being taken up into heaven (2nd Kings 2:11). The prophecy of Malachi 4:5-6 says that he would one day be returned to Israel at the terrible time known as "**The Day of the Lord.**" The prophecy reads as follows:

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

In the book of Revelation we find an indication that indeed that is when he will show up (Revelation 11:3-5). But part of his ministry is to "**turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers.**" And so when we turn to the New Testament, we find that the Jewish people were in expectation that Elijah would appear to them and perform that function (Matthew 17:10 - "**And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?**"). But instead we find that function being performed by John the Baptist. (Luke 1:17 - "**And he [John the Baptist] shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord**").

Hence, the disciples question of Matt. 17:10 to Christ. The Lord replies:

"Elias [Elijah] truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist" (Matthew 17:11-13).

Luke gives the explanation that John the Baptist came "**in the spirit and power of Elias [Elijah].**"

But what is my point here? My point here is that sometimes in prophecy a predicted function will take place, but the performer of that function may be someone else if he performs it "in the spirit and power" of that original person.

Now why am I making this point? Because I think that in the book of Revelation, which is a book of prophecy, a function is predicted to be performed by some objects which I believe will instead be performed by something even better than those objects.

Revelation 20:11-15 is what is popularly know as "The Last Judgment." There, the dead, "small and great" stand before God, and "the books will be opened," out of which the dead will be judged.

I pose the question: "why books?" My answer is that the apostle John, living in a "low tech" age, only knew of one means of recording present events for recall at a future time: books. So in his vision of The Last Judgment when he saw "the books" opening, what he saw and wrote of was actual books opening. So in John's prophecy, "the books" are performing the function of recalling all the deeds of every person who has lived on the planet.

I have a suspicion that when The Last Judgment actually takes place, the things that will be opened will not be books per se, but something even more "high tech" that will be "in the spirit and power" of "the books."

Think about it. In our high tech age, we have all kinds of things that are more efficient and effective than books at recording present events for future recall. We have tape recorders, video tapes, Dictaphones, CD-ROMs, holograms, etc., etc., etc.

Do I believe that "the books" of the Last Judgment will be video CD player consoles? No. I believe the technology is even more advanced than that, and that the recordings that are going on, even as you read this, are on a medium that exists only in the spiritual world. I believe "the books" of Revelation 20:12 are nothing less than "the shells of the dead."

The Shells of the Dead

"The shells of the dead?" you ask. Yes. I will explain the origin of this expression a little later, but for now I will give you a model of it.

Let's go back to my Chicagoland metaphor. Remember that the pseudo-Frenchman is in the tank in Chicago, while his robot body is in Paris. We speculated that the robot body might be operated by "soul waves" or "spirit waves" so that even his thoughts would be transmitted when operating the remote body from Chicago.

Now I want you to imagine that in the laboratory in Chicago, there is a device that records the "soul waves" being transmitted between Chicago and Paris. Imagine a device that records everything the pseudo-Frenchman sees, hears, smells, tastes, and touches and says as well as thinks. This recording starts the moment the pseudo-Frenchman is "born into" his robot body, and ceases the moment his robot body gets creamed by the Mack truck.

What would be the purpose of keeping such a recording? Well, suppose we wanted to judge the pseudo-Frenchman's whole life before we decide what to do about him being blacked out in the tank in Chicago, no longer receiving any inputs and presuming himself to be dead. Suppose he committed some crimes with his robot body, or was planning to before he got stopped by the Mack truck. There is a principal of empathic justice that says "Don't judge a person until you've walked in their shoes. "

Just so. If we fit a jury of twelve men and women with a input device similar to the one the pseudo-Frenchman in the tank has, and then connect it to the device that recorded his "soul waves" and then replayed it to the jury, starting from the moment of his "birth" to his pseudo-death, what would be the result?

Well, that pseudo-Frenchman in the tank would get the most empathetic justice that was ever given in the history of man. That jury of twelve would have experienced his whole life, as he lived it, from birth to death, experiencing everything he ever experienced, and knowing everything he ever thought, and everything he ever said, and everything he ever did.

I believe that in the spiritual world, which we can't see, there is such a record being kept of all that happens to us and through us. When we die, our essential, conscious self goes one place, and this recording of our life stays put where it is, just like a hermit crab leaving a seashell that has become too small for it. This happens to all of us, and these things we leave behind in the spiritual world are aptly called "the shells of the dead."

As I said before, I believe that these are "the books" that are going to be opened at The Last Judgment.

There is a reason why I believe this. The reason is that Christ said something very much like it in Luke 12:2-3:

"For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops."

I believe that at The Last Judgment, all the "shells" of every human being who will be judged will be experienced by every other human being who will be judged, as well as all the hosts of heaven. The secret information of all the human souls who have ever been will at last become the public property of heaven.

Think about what this means in terms of final justice.

The man who sins against his fellow man will finally get to see what his sin did to that other man's life. The parents that sin against their children will finally fully know what their sin did to their children's lives. The children who sin against their parents will finally know what their sin did to their parents. The robber will finally be brought into full knowledge of what his act did to his victim's life and the lives of that victim's loved ones, as will the rapist and the murderer. The bomber pilot will finally fully know just how precious all the lives were that he maimed and snuffed out with his payload. The lecher will finally know just how many women's lives he effected for the worst by providing a market for pornography. The centerfold model will find out just how many men were moved that much closer to hell by her display of herself. Osama bin Laden is going to know exactly what went through the minds of the estimated 200+ people who jumped from the World Trade Center towers in order to avoid being incinerated a second sooner. Adolf Hitler is going to know exactly what he did to every single one of the millions he maimed and murdered as well as their loved ones, as will Joseph Stalin, and Pol Pot.

The Last Judgment is going to be a final and complete judgment of all (including God) upon all (except God). And then all created beings will know what has been before the face of Almighty God since creation. And the Record says that at its end, "every knee shall bow" (Romans 14:10-12, Philippians 2:9-11) to its justness before the final, eternal, penalty is imposed.

A Breach in the Estates

You may ask, if the "shells of the dead" are part of the spiritual world which we cannot sense, then how were they made known? Easy. Somebody breached the estates of the human realm and the angelic realm!

From all that I have read, I have come to the conclusion that, in a nutshell, the way a human being becomes aware of the spiritual world is by becoming unaware of the physical world. There are a number of ways of doing that, but the two most common ones are hypnosis and the Eastern form of meditation.

Now let me stop right here for a moment and clarify something about the hypnotic state.

A hypnotic trance can occur naturally, and has nothing wrong with it, in and of itself. If you have ever driven home in a car the same way every day, day after day, you will have at some point have dropped into a light hypnotic trance. The evidence of this is that at some point you will have driven home, gotten out of your car, and then realized you cannot remember what happened during your drive home.

The reason is that the naturally occurring hypnotic trance is a by product of the efficiency of the human brain. Your brain would just choke up with too much information if you had to exactly concentrate on remembering to do every little thing you do when you do a complex series of tasks (like driving) every day.

What the human brain does is figure out when it is doing a complex set of actions on a routine basis, and then begin to isolate and store those routines in your subconscious mind until you get to the point where you can automatically do them without interfering with another task (like "wool gathering").

The basis of the natural hypnotic trance is those automatic routines which come up and take over while you day dream and wool gather.

In this sense, military training and sports training rely on naturally occurring hypnotic trances. One practices a complex set of actions over and over again until they become a reflex action that completely bypasses your conscious mind.

That is naturally occurring hypnosis.

The other kind is induced hypnosis. How does that kind of hypnosis work? In its simplest form, it works like advertising. We human beings are creatures of the senses, like the animals are. But unlike the animals, we also use words to convey mental pictures of something we want to communicate to our fellows.

If an ape wanted to show another ape a tree, he would have to uproot one and take it over to that other ape for his or her inspection. We humans have the advantage that we can say "tree" to another human being, and that human being will get a picture in his or her mind of a tree.

But the interesting thing about this process is that the mental images that we call up from the words presented to us often have emotional qualities attached to them that can actually affect how we feel.

For example, if I said to you "evergreen," besides recalling a picture of an evergreen, you might also think of winter and feel just a little bit cooler than before, or you might think of Christmas and feel a little happier than before (provided you have enjoyed your Christmases for the most part). But if I say "cactus" you might start feeling a little warmer than before, or a little bit thirstier than before.

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These slightly associated feelings might not be very strong at first, but if you were presented with enough images associated with a particular feeling, you would start to feel it more. This is the part of hypnosis that is like advertising. The same principle is used in television commercials. If the product is associated in your mind with enough tantalizing images, you will eventually buy the product.

And so now we come to the work of the hypnotist. He starts off by saying things to his subject that recall mental images of relaxation. He will frequently say the word "relax," and maybe even tell a little story about someone sitting down and relaxing in the shade of an oak tree. So the subject begins to relax.

Then the next step comes. The hypnotist starts to change the mental images he suggests from things that are outside the subject's body, to things that are part of, or inside the subject's body. He may mention the feel of air on the skin, the heaviness of the legs, the feeling that hair makes on the scalp. And then he will go on to mention the subject's digestive processes.

The hypnotist is leading the attention of his subject away from the outer world to the inner world of the mind. And this is where hypnosis is sort of like reading a very interesting book. Have you ever read something interesting and not noticed some activities going on around you? That was a naturally occurring light hypnotic trance. Essentially a directing and concentrating of your consciousness away from one place and exclusively towards another place that is inside your mind.

Then finally the hypnotist uses words to suggest that the subject no longer needs to notice what his eyes see, his ears hear (except for the hypnotist's voice!), his nose smells, his tongue tastes, and his skin feels. The subject is now completely unaware of the physical world around him. Attention to the outside physical world has now been withdrawn and taken completely into the subject's own mind.

Now, I'll stop here for a moment and tell you something you may not have known before. The Eastern form of Meditation works exactly the same way. It is a form of self-hypnosis. Remember that "thought-stopping" exercise I mentioned before? Well that is a good example of how a meditative state is achieved, which is also a self-hypnotic state. On one's own, without the aid of a hypnotist, one gradually ignores more and more of the outside world around one, and one begins to draw one's focus of attention inward until one ignores even one's own five senses. The same state of hypnosis is achieved. Just a different method is used. [Footnote 35]

Most people are just not very good at achieving this total state of inwardness, even with the help of a hypnotist. There is always some inputs that keeps getting in through the senses.

But some people are very good at this. They are able to lose contact with the physical world, and they become aware of the spiritual world. And that is where the mischief begins.

The degree of mischief you can get into depends on the intentions you had before getting into this state, and whether you had any immediate ancestors who had gotten into mischief in this state. I believe that this state is the basis state for all occult phenomena.

I do not say that mischief will occur every time somebody gets into this state. But I will say that if you get into a state like this without the protection of eternal God, you are really asking for it.

The main mischief that concerns me right now is encountering a "shell of the dead" while in such a deep hypnotic trance. There are two problems you can have when you do. The first problem is getting into communication with one. The second problem is getting enmeshed in one.

Communication with a Shell

Let's take the communication problem first.

Because it retains so much of a departed person's personality, a "shell of the dead" is able to respond to questions put to it, and thereby acquires some of the aspects of a seemingly conscious existence of its own. If you recall my metaphor of The Accident Victim - the man who was actually dead even though parts of his brain were still alive and able to move his body around - you will get a picture of what a "shell" is like. It can be thought of as a psychic collection of not only all the departed persons memories, but also all his accumulated unconscious habits.

Indeed, it is this communication that first gave this spiritual phenomenon its name. The term comes from the occult use of what is called the Kabbala (or "the tradition"), which is the tradition of Jewish mystical thought. In the Kabbala of Jewish tradition, the "Qlippoth" (Literally "shells.") are the empty husks of various kinds of spiritual entities.

But the occult practitioners of deep hypnotic states, in their trances, encountered these automated mannequins of their former owners, and called them "shells of the dead." In doing so, they recognized that they were not dealing with real persons, but with spiritual "afterimages" of departed persons.

And here we discover where the necromancer makes a mistake that a student of the Kabbala does not. The student of the Kabbala knows these things are not real people. The necromancer does not. The necromancer mistakes the animation of a shell for a person who is alive, and ends up having stilted, stylized conversations with the castoff demi-personality. And this is the basic way that a mediumistic seance works. It's not real people being contacted. It is their shells.

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These shells can disgorge all kind of information that seemingly proves the identity of the person who the shell came from.

An interesting side effect can sometimes occur to a person who has undergone this kind of communication with a shell during a trance. That person can develop the ability to see these shells when outside of the trance. I.e., the person can develop an Extra Sensory Perception of the shells during normal, waking hours.

This can then be passed down to the person's descendants as an unsuspected "psychic power." This is very likely the source of the phenomena of "ghosts." If you saw the movie *The Sixth Sense*, you could just about assume that the young boy in it, who can "see dead people," likely had a grandfather or great grandfather who dabbled in the occult in some fashion. He has inherited the ability, without knowing it's an inherited trait. And interestingly enough, he reports that the "dead people" "do not know they are dead."

Then, too, there is the interesting fact that since a shell was once worn by a human being, it can also be "slipped into" by a being of the diabolic realm, just like a hermit crab can slip into an abandoned seashell. Yes, that does bring us full circle back to the old Christian idea of demons mimicking the departed, but this time with a twist to it that no longer seems so farfetched. In some doctrines of the traditional Kabbala, the "Qlippoth" are actually considered the incarnations of demonic beings. Sometimes these beings will, when introducing themselves, actually admit to using a departed person's discarded persona before revealing themselves as a yet more higher level kind of being.

And this sheds even more light on another phenomenon of necromantic séances: false religious systems. C.G. Jung got his start in looking into the occult when he attended a séance being conducted by a young woman with mediumistic talents. The thing that attracted his attention was that this uneducated young woman was able to declaim a very complex and sophisticated Gnostic system during her trance states. And then too, our next topic, reincarnation, is often a staple of the doctrines propounded by the beings who show up during séances after they have dispensed with the shells of the dead they used for their disguise.

Enmeshment with a Shell

So now we come to the next problem with "shells of the dead", *enmeshment*.

What is that? That is when the hypnotic subject's consciousness gets "enmeshed" with a "shell of the dead." The result is that the hypnotic subject starts to experience the memories of that shell. The subject's consciousness has "bumped into" the shell, in a sense, and the result is that the subject mistakenly thinks he or she has lived another life as another person, when in fact he or she is just remembering with the memories of the shell.

This typically happens during a Past Life Regression performed by a hypnotist, although it can happen during a meditational state as well. And in fact, during a Past Life Regression, some people brush against more than one shell and end up with the illusion of having lived many lives in the past.

So I have now dealt with the two major challenges to the Christian view of death, necromancy and reincarnation. But I have had to reach a little, and have not been able to completely nail this down with Scripture, as all true Berean's must do. So I am calling this "A Speculation." If it helps your faith, fine. If it hinders it, feel free to drop it at once.

But before I go, I want to consider what light my speculation sheds on two major world religions: Hinduism, and Buddhism.

Hinduism and Buddhism

Aldous Huxley said that while Western religion concerned itself with belief and morality, Eastern religion concerned itself with practices for altering consciousness and mapping those altered states.

The latter statement reminds me of a science-fiction book I once read, Jack Vance's *The Eyes of the Over World*. In this novel there was a society of mud-hut dwellers living a very miserable external existence. They lived in mud huts, and they ate food not much better than mud. But each of the members of this society owned a single piece of advanced technology, called "The Eyes of the Over World." It was a virtual reality machine built into something like glasses that the mud-hut dwellers could then wear. And when they wore them, they were no longer mud-hut dwellers, but aristocrats living in ivory palaces in which they were served gourmet food, and which had grand entertainments, and in which they could spend their time plotting against each other. Because of those glasses they remained mud-hut dwellers.

Now I don't mean to suggest that lands of Eastern culture are populated solely by mud-hut dwellers. And I don't mean to suggest that Eastern culture has not produced many fine and beautiful material things, including aristocrats of their own.

But I do take that novel's mud-hut dwellers as a metaphor for the difference in direction that Eastern culture went in, versus Western culture. In Eastern culture, the material has been sacrificed to the "spiritual." In Western culture almost the reverse has taken place.

In Hinduism, there is a whole plethora of different practices for altering ones consciousness, from meditation to yoga. And once there, the practitioner finds him or herself in a spiritual world populated with "**gods many, and lords many**", and in mental states in which the doctrine of reincarnation seems like the only logical explanation for existence. Hindu philosophy is then constructed on this ever-changing bedrock of idols and the deceptions of reincarnation. And underneath it all are the demons, working their deception game.

And then there is Buddhism. It is the Eastern religion which arose in response to the endless hopelessness of successively more dreary reincarnations. Where the Hindu seeks to change his consciousness, the Buddhist seeks to eliminate his and stop the endless cycle of reincarnation. And if Hinduism is a deception wrought by demons, what does that make Buddhism but the reaction to something that was false in the first place?

If I have invalidated Hinduism and its doctrine of reincarnation with my speculation into what is really behind it, and if I have invalidated Buddhism as a reaction to the falsities in Hinduism, then what do I leave behind in their place? I leave behind a hope that one day these two false systems of belief will be replaced by the true union of the human spirit with Christ in the Heavens by the Holy Spirit of God. For then will there be the true joining of the spiritual and the material. We are all not only meant to be mystics, but also platypuses.

(34) I have heard Revelation 20:11-15 called "the scariest verses in the Bible." But I'm afraid that I find Genesis 11:6 a whole lot scarier. Perhaps Genesis 11:6 accounts for Revelation 20:11-15?

(35) This can be contrasted with the meditation that is found in the Bible. In the Bible, the word "meditation" would be better rendered in today's world as "rumination." In Biblical meditation, one goes over the scriptures one has learned again and again, "comparing scripture with scripture," and mulling it over, much like a cow chews a cud. The purpose of this rumination is to better understand what the scriptures mean, and how they apply to one's life.

A Berean Appendix

"And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." Acts 17:10-11

It is now time for me to demonstrate that in regard to all I have written here in this document, I have not been "pulling it all out of my hindquarters" (to clean up a vernacular expression). Yes, most of what I have written here is indeed found in the scriptures in one form or another. With my little metaphors, I have mostly been making what seems to be implicit, explicit. Here, I will copy a sentence of mine, and then give the scriptures that support it.

"We must solve the problem of happiness."

Some may question the idea that the pursuit of happiness is the way to pursue God. I do not. We are talking about happiness, not pleasure, per se. A distinction C.S. Lewis appreciated.

"Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" Romans 2:4

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Hebrews 12:1-2.

There is a great deal one will go through for the prospect of eternal joy.

"to an object in eternity, every moment in time being is experienced as happening now."

"LORD, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye

children of men. For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. Psalm 90:1-4.

But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 2 Peter 3:8

"The Chain of Being starts at the absolute top, with a designer and creator at the top"

For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. Hebrews 6:13-14.

"But most the significant, and the most worthy Object of happiness of such a Creator is Himself because all else derives from Him"

"And turn ye not aside: for then should ye go after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver; for they are vain. For the LORD will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people." 1 Samuel 12:21-22

"Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction. For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it: for how should my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another. Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last." Isaiah 48:10-12

Anciently, one's name was one's person.

"What are people for?"

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish. " Psalm 1:1-6

"Fecundity versus Fullness"

Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her. Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. Matthew 22:28-30

At the resurrection from among the dead, we will past from Fecundity into Fullness.

"the idea of there being not only free will, but also responsibility for it"

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it. Isaiah 1:18-20.

"The Novel as a Metaphor of Time in Eternity"

The question of human free will versus predestination (which relates to God being all-knowing, even of the future) is a vexing one in theology and Christian doctrine. There are verses supporting human free will, and there are verses which explicitly say that predestination is true. In Christian theology, the doctrines that support the total free will of humans is called Arminianism, and the doctrines that support predestination are called Calvinism.

Freewill:

From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matthew 4:17.

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." 2 Peter 3:9

Predestination:

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. Romans 8:28-30

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will. Ephesians 1:3-5

The smartest person I ever heard address this problem was A.W. Tozer, who said "I preach like an Arminian, but I believe like a Calvinist." I am pretty much ditto that.

"a deadness to anything whatsoever that even hints of a higher being who might make a claim to be our felicity. "

After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. Genesis 15:1

"Chicagoland Metaphor"

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. 2 Corinthians 4:6-7.

There is a not generally known cultural fact in the above verse. In the time of the apostles, all writing, including the scriptures, was done on rolls of papyrus, which are paper that is made from pressed and dried water reeds. Since this was organic matter, papyrus rolls had to be made safe from papyrus-eating insects. The way this was done was to put a papyrus roll into a clay jar which had a clay top on it. The clay jar would be checked for bugs before storing a roll in it. That is the reference to earthen vessels in the above verse. The apostle is likening the body to a clay jar, and the spirit to the scriptures that are contained in it. In our day the apostle would likely have used the analogy of hardware versus software.

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. 2 II Corinthians 5: 1-9.

Here the apostle's metaphor changes from a clay jar to a tent. A tabernacle is just the old English word for "tent." We will be switched from an earthly tent to a tent suitable for heaven. The "earnest of the spirit" is the Holy Spirit in down payment. The Spirit occupies the tent. When you are not longer occupying your earthly tent, you are with the Lord.

Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. 2 Peter 1:13-14.

For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ. Colossians 2:5

We use the expression "with you in spirit" all the time while believing, most of the time, that we are all alone inside our skulls. I don't believe that was just an expression to the apostles.

For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. Philippians 1:23-24

Here we see it again, to be absent from the body is to be present with Christ, and presumably other Christians who are also absent from their bodies. The body and the spirit are two separate things, though they are joined and seem inseparable most of the time.

"The Wise Hunter"

And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. Genesis 2:15-17.

"original sin"

Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. ...For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Romans 3:19-20,23.

But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. Galatians 3:22

"Synesthesia and Perfect Pitch"

And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. Genesis 17:1

And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother. Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your arments: Genesis 35:1-2

And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre; upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be. And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD. Exodus 28: 36-38.

For I am the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy. Leviticus 11:45.

And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. Luke 5: 5-8.

"Imagination as a Metaphor of Creation"

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. Genesis 1:1-3.

"and in all likelihood He has dropped out of your contemplation because what you have done is contrary to what He is. "

Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Romans 1:21-23

"As a human metaphor we call it wrath."

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Romans 1:18-20

"We have eternity in our hearts."

He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end. Ecclesiastes 3:11

"the idea of eternal hell, latent in anybody with a conscience"

For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) Romans 2:14-15.

"That is the classic definition of idolatry. "

Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and

to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. Romans 1:21-25.

"The Letter Strict Teenager"

For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. Galatians 3:10.

"For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.... Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;" Hebrews 10:1-4,8-12

For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. James 2:10,11.

But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. 1 Timothy 1:8-11.

"God wants to make what is unconscious, conscious, what is latent, explicit."

Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. Romans 3:19-20.

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. Galatians 3:24

"And in our current state, we can't stand God, and He can't stand us."

And he brought me into the inner court of the LORD's house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east. Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? for they have filled the land with violence, and have returned to provoke me to anger: and, lo, they put the branch to their nose. [put their thumb on the tip of their nose and waggle their fingers. A very ancient insult.] Therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, either will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them. Ezekiel 8:16-18

"angels"

And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. Hebrews 1:7.

But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord. 2 Peter 2:10-11.

Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee. Jude 1:9.

"Satan and his demons"

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. 1 Peter 5:8-9.

And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen. Romans 16:20.

He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. 1 John 3:8.

What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.

1 Corinthians 10:19-20.

"demonic possession"

And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones. But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him, And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not. For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit. And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many. And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country. Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding. And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea. Mark 5:2-13.

"deception"

But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Hebrews 3:13.

"slandrous thoughts"

And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just. Romans 3:8

For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ. 2 Corinthians 2:15-17.

"No Exit"

See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: Hebrews 12:25

The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: 2 Peter 2:9

For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Hebrews 10:26-31

For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? 1 Peter 4:17-18

"while treating us as if we had not lost those qualities ourselves"

But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Romans 3:21-26.

"And the Trinity is reality"

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost [Spirit] Matthew 8:18 & 19.

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: Romans 1:1-4.

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. 1 Peter 4:1-2.

"The Sims"

Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. John 5:19-20

"The Incarnation"

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:5-11

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. Hebrews 2:14

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. Galatians 4:4-5.

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: Romans 1:1-4.

"the eternal wrath of God against all sin for all eternity and all time, past, present and future."

So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. Hebrews 9:28.

By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Hebrews 10:10.

"Something had just occurred in the Godhead that has reconciled us all to God."

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. 2 Corinthians 5:17-19.

"The Abend of Death"

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. ... Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. Hebrews 2:9,14

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation ["way of life."] received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. 1 Peter 1:18-21.

Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. Galatians 1:3-5.

"The old tree of humanity having been dealt with at the cross, God is now in the process of creating a new tree of humanity"

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. [i.e. become explicit.] But where sin abounded,

grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 5:12-21.

*For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.
2 Corinthians 5:14-15.*

"sonship by adoption"

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. Galatians 4:4-7

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will. Ephesians 1:3-5.

*Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.
1 John 3:1-2.*

"in Christ"

*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.
Romans 8:1.*

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. Galatians 2:20.

And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. 1 John 5:20.

And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. 1 Corinthians 1:28-31.

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:26-28.

For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church. 1 Corinthians 4:15,17

"The Right Hand of God"

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Romans 8:32-34

Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. Hebrews 8:1-2.

... by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him. 1 Peter 3:21-22.

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son [the Greek literally says "in Son"], whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high: Hebrews 1:1-3.

"distillation of happiness"

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Corinthians 3:18.

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. Colossians 1:12-20.

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. 2 Corinthians 4:17-18.

It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man [in our current state] to utter. 2 Corinthians 12:1-4.

"mediated happiness"

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. 1 Timothy 2:5-6.

How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. Hebrews 9:14-16.

"Holy Spirit of God as being a down payment"

Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. 2 Corinthians 1:21-22.

Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 5:5

In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. Ephesians 1:13-14.

In old English, "earnest money" was a substantial enough down payment on a loan to prove that you were "earnest" about paying the whole thing back. Today we would call it a "down payment."

"faith"

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh. By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city. By faith Abraham, when he was tried,

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offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure. By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff. By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones. By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them. By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days. By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace. And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions. Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.
Hebrews 11:1-40.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. Ephesians 2:8-9.

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. Romans 5:1-5.

"The Word of God"

Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. 1 Peter 1:22-23.

For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ. 2 Corinthians 2:17

Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. James 1:18

"individuals and institutions capable of great evil"

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. Jude 1:3-4.

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not. 2 Peter 2:1-3.

Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil. Romans 16:17-19.

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? 1 Corinthians 1:10-13.

"missionaries"

How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. Romans 10:14-18.

"immersion into Christ"

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin [the "Flesh," "Chicagoland v. 1.1"] might be destroyed [rendered inoperative], that henceforth we should not serve sin. Romans 6:3-6.

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Galatians 3:26-27.

"Thoughts about God"

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen. Romans 11:33-36.

Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Hebrews 10:15-17.

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. James 1:5-7.

And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. 1 John 5:20.

"Thoughts about other people"

We love him, because he first loved us. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also. 1 John 4:19-21.

"some of them will hurt"

For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season. Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. 2 Corinthians 7:8-10.

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Hebrews 4:12.

And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Hebrews 12:5-11.

"Is Bible study really necessary?"

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. Colossians 3:16.

And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? 1 Corinthians 3:1-3.

Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. 2 Corinthians :1-2.

"Prayer works."

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. 1 Timothy 2:1-8.

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:15-16.

And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. 1 John 5:14-15.

"Suffering with Him"

For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; Philippians 1:29

Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. 1 Peter 4:1-2.

Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. Hebrews 12:4.

Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. 2 Timothy 2:3-4.

"the old nature, and the new"

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. Galatians 5:16-17.

The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. Romans 13:12-14.

If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye put off concerning the former conversation ["way of life"] the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Ephesians 4:21-24.

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify [consider dead] the deeds of the body, ye shall live. Romans 8:1-13.

"If you overcome the Flesh, The World will follow."

For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. 1 John 5:4

But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. Galatians 6:14.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. Romans 12:1-2.

"The Accident Victim"

Mortify [consider dead] therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; Colossians 3:5-9.

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Romans 6:1-2.

Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves [consider, think of yourselves] to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. Romans 6:8-13.

Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 6:16-23.

"walking by faith in Christ"

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. Romans 8:3-5.

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. Galatians 5:16-17.

And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Galatians 5:24-25.

"To become grounded and settled"

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: Ephesians 4:13-15.

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein. Hebrews 13:8-9.

For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulnes; Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Colossians 1:9-12.

*But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.
2 Thessalonians 3:3*

"What is the end that is in view?"

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. Hebrews 2:9-12.

*My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,
Galatians 4:19*

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Corinthians 3:18. But speaking the truth in love, [we] may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: Ephesians 4:15.

"distillation of happiness"

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. Colossians 1:12-20.

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. 2 Corinthians 4:17-18.

It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful [in our current estate] for a man to utter. 2 Corinthians 12:1-4.

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high: Hebrews 1:1-3.

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Romans 8:32.

Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.

1 John 2:24-25.

"harps and stuff"

Psalm 33

1 Rejoice in the LORD, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright. 2 Praise the LORD with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings. 3 Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise. 4 For the word of the LORD is right; and all his works are done in truth. 5 He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD. 6 By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. 7 He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses. 8 Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. 9 For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. 10 The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect. 11 The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations. 12 Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance. 13 The LORD looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men. 14 From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth. 15 He fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their works. 16 There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. 17 An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength. 18 Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy; 19 To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine. 20 Our soul waiteth for the LORD: he is our help and our shield. 21 For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name. 22 Let thy mercy, O LORD, be upon us, according as we hope in thee.

"Behaviorism vs. Personality"

Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law Romans 13:8-10.

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. 1 John 5:2-4.

And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another. And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it. 2 John 1:5-6.

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Statement of Faith

I believe reading the scriptures does more for a Christian than simply reciting a creed or a statement of faith. But some may need a summary of what I am putting forth here. Here is my statement of faith.

I believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who is of one Being with them, co-equal and co-eternal, and that He has spoken through the Prophets.

I believe that by true belief in the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of sins, the believer is spiritually baptized into the Holy Spirit, who indwells and seals the believer for eternal salvation, and makes the believer a spiritual member of the spiritual Body of Christ on earth, the church.

I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the age to come.