

THE GREAT ADVENTURE -- MAN IN PARTNERSHIP WITH GOD

LECTURE GIVEN BY WILLIAM S. SADLER, JR.
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William S. Sadler, Jr.

We pondered at length what we could talk
to you about that would be
most interesting, most useful,
to all of you.

We could talk about the facts of
The Urantia Book
and that could be covered
in about six months
of intensive discussion.

We could talk about the meanings
which can be derived from these facts,
and that could possibly be covered in
about two years.

But we thought we could share with you our
feelings for this Book -- not the facts,
not the meanings --
but what value this Book has in the
lives of human beings here on earth.

So we picked as a title for this discussion,
"The Great Adventure --
Man In Partnership With God."

The Urantia Book has appeal because it presents
the story of evolution in contrast to
fiat creation.
God can, and does, work apart from time,
but when he works apart from time,
no creature can participate in
that development.

When God works in time, he slows down the
 creative process to something which
 we call evolutionary growth,
 and this enables creatures,
 even human beings,
 to sense what is happening,
 and if they so elect,
 to go in partnership with God,
 to become a partner with God in
 this growth process.

You might like the idea of sharing in the
 creative adventure with Deity, and
 when we speak of partnership
 with God
 we mean no disrespect;
 We know we are the junior partners
 and God is the senior partner,

but there is a difference when
 you are a partner.

Even if you are a junior partner,
 you have something to say about policy.
 You don't change God's mind,
 but it is your decision as to whether
 or not he can change your mind.

How does God equip his junior partners --
 human beings?

Well, quite obviously, we have bodies and
 minds,

but these don't come from God.

What equipment does God give us that he is
 willing to enter into any kind of a
 limited partnership with us?

He gives us two priceless pieces of equipment.
First of all, he gives us an absolute sense of
direction.

He incarcerates a part of his love inside us.
He lives in us -- even as the Bible says,
"The true light which lighteth every
man that cometh into the world."

This part of God that lives in us is God's love
made real to each one of us,
this part of God that lives in us
knows the way to God.
It points just as unerringly God-ward
as the compass needle points
northward.

It came from God,
so it knows the way back to God.
It is our unerring pilot.

And God gives us a second priceless endowment --
he endows us with relative free will,
freedom of choice.
The pilot is not the captain.
We are captain.
The pilot can steer only as we choose.

Of all the priceless gifts which God could make to us,
none would transcend the endowment
of freedom of choice.
Otherwise we would be machines.
With freedom of choice we are persons --
We can be daughters and sons of God.

What does freedom of choice mean?
It means that we don't have to respond
slavishly to what happens to us.
We have something to say about what we
become.

Even physically, we have something to say.

We can't avoid wrinkles, but we can
choose which kind will etch
themselves into our face.

We can frown or we can smile.

In the sense that we have relative freedom of will,
we are made in the image of God.

We have been liberated from marching in lock-step
to antecedent causation.

This Book teaches that the more outside
of ourselves we go toward the material level,
the less choosing we can do.

We can't choose to be older or
younger.

The more we move inward away from
the material level,
inward and spiritward,
the greater is our liberation of choice,
until when we reach the supreme choice,
pro or con concerning God,
here our choices know no restriction --

As to whether we choose to be His child;
to do His will --

We are absolutely on our own.
Here our choice is absolute.

God has given us this perfectly splendid equipment --
freedom of choice and an absolute sense of
direction.

We can't miss if we let the pilot do
a good steering job.

At the same time, God has confronted us
with a great challenge.

All religions teach this challenge.

It is expressed in various forms.

The challenge presented by medieval
Christianity was not so much the
hope of heaven
as it was the fear of the devil
in hell.

This could be still true today;
many people operate on a
negative basis.

This Book teaches that we have a challenge,
but it is not the challenge of fear --
it is the challenge of a situation.

This Book tells us that we are confronted
with this kind of a challenge,
and we quote the Book --

"In the evolutionary universes, energy-matter is dominant,
save in personality,
where spirit,
through the mediation of mind
is striving for the mastery."

That is a rather long sentence;
let's break it down.

Energy-matter is here first.

Just consider our planet.

It passed through its astro-physical
evolution before life ever appeared,
and it has been around here for about a
billion years.

Life has been here for only about two-thirds
of that time.

Human life has been around here for
only about a million years,
less than a tenth of one percent
of physical planetary history.

And when man did appear on earth, he was confronted
with a rather hostile material environment.

He had to adjust to it, strive to
dominate it,
in order to survive.

Mind can whip matter because mind can be
ingenious,
it can manipulate matter.
But that is not the challenge.

The challenge is -- can spirit dominate
matter,
using mind as its tool?
And this challenge holds true only in personality.
How come?

Only in personality, which possesses this
priceless endowment of free will,
can mind choose to attack matter
on the outside,
while at the same time subordinating itself
to spirit direction on the inside.

This Book gives us a mature philosophy of religion,
 it gives us a theology which is spiritually satisfying
 and at the same time intellectually
 stimulating.

This Book enables us to avoid the two great errors
 which cut across human thinking
 all over
 this world.

Error No. 1 --

"You strive with spirit alone --
 spirit without mind."

If you really believe this, you will substitute
 prayer
 for
 work.

When you attack the problems of living
 with spirit alone,
 you are forced to deny
 the reality of matter,
 and you wind up with a
 theology which is full
 of illusion.

Error No. 2 --

"You strive with mind alone --
mind without spirit --

All too many people,
especially occidental people,
fall victim to this second alternative;
this error is to attack
the physical problems
of this world
with mind alone,
without spirit.
This is at the root of secularism.

Consider the medieval Christian viewpoint.
Let's take Florence --
pre-renaissance Florence.

It's about 900 A.D. --
the plague hits the city,
and the devout Christian Florentine
bows his head as he buries his loved
ones and says --
"The Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away,
blessed be the name
of the Lord."

Comes the renaissance
 and people begin to rebel against
 this passive acceptance of material
 happenstance,
 and in their rebellion they swing all the
 way in the other direction.

They become secularists --
 man is the measure of all things.
 There is an answer to the black death.

We don't look down our nose
 at the fruits of secularism --
 this has resulted in modern science,
 representative government,
 relatively universal education,
 the highest standard of living
 we have ever had --
 But something is wrong.

With all of our unprecedented material progress
 have men ever been so scared as they
 are today?

When mind attacks the problem without spirit,
 it progresses, but its progress
 is thwarted and jeopardized by
 selfishness,
 by fear,
 by lack of ethics and morality
 and love.

We can't successfully run a free society
 without God anymore than you could
 run the solar system without gravity.

We feel sorry for our friends
 who say --
 "I'll do it all with prayer."

We tremble for the future of our secularistic
 society which is trying to work out
 all these problems with
 MIND ALONE.
 What a harvest of fear we are reaping.

You know, that in one short lifetime,
 in major wars,
 we have scientifically
 killed off more human beings
 than have been killed in all the
 recorded history of war.

There is something wrong with
 secularistic society,
 isn't there?
 But the alternative is not
 "spiritistic" society.

This Book tells us when you conjoin
 mind and spirit, you can have
 peace on earth,
 survival in death,
 and in the cosmos you can have
 the great adventure.

This is the most acceptable
 sane philosophy
 we have ever encountered.
 It presents no easy path
 to peace on earth
 or salvation in the future --
 it offers lots of hard work.

Matter presents a challenge to each of us.

Mind develops the techniques for solving
this challenge of the reality of
physical mass energy.

What are we doing to this planet to civilize it?

What is a pipeline, but an artery?

What is a ^{telephone} telegraph wire, but a nerve?

We are doing to this planet what a contractor
does to a sub-division when he takes
rolling hills and dales and
makes them habitable
through bringing in utilities,
conveniences and so on.

Matter challenges us --

mind develops the technique --
spirit provides the motivation.

Without spirit direction,
this problem-solving mind
eventually winds up in a
cul-de-sac of
hate,
fear,
jealousy,
and perhaps death.

Chicago has the magnificence of civilization
aborning about it.

Carl Sandburg well called it
"hog butcher to the world."
It's a beautiful city.

It has taken Americans nearly 150 years to build
this city.

It can be blown to pieces in less than
150 seconds
with the techniques we have developed today.

When you ponder this, you can know fear,
Without spirit motivation, mind can be a

Juggernaut --

a Frankenstein's monster --

because it knows power,
it knows power without restraint.

It is personality --

it's this equipment which God has given us --
that can choose to subordinate this questing,
adventurous, problem-solving mind,
to spirit-direction.

We can meet this mortal challenge
without committing human suicide.

There is nothing magical or mystical
about Western civilization,
as we study history.

Rome went down,
Babylon went down,
Assyria went down.

China has gone down half a
dozen times.

Egypt broke up,
Greece came and went.

We don't have any guarantee of the future.

In the struggle in which we are engaged right now,
material techniques aren't enough.

The biggest thing that is missing
in our ideology is God.

These Papers tell us that one of the things
 that is taking place out here
 in these evolutionary universes
 is the unification of power
 and personality.
 This is what we have been discussing.

That mind
 which dominates matter -- power --
 is the mind of a
 choosing
 personality.

But if this powerful person is to persist
 then that person must be spirit-motivated.
 Force alone never survives.
 No matter how much force you mobilize,
 Eventually, if your power begets fear,
 there arises a coalition
 stronger than you are
 which drags you down
 in defeat.

What is the effect of spirit on power --
 power, meaning just what we mean by that word,
 a powerful person?
 If a powerful person is spirit-motivated --
 and he can choose to be this -- (
 then he is an ethical person,
 he is a moral person;
 he uses power with restraint.

The power which he possesses causes him to be
 an object of admiration, not fear.
 He is a love-motivated individual.
 And this Book defines love very wonderfully --
 "Love is the desire to do good to others."

Such an individual lives up to one of the
 really great quotes from this Book --
 "To have power and refuse to use it
 purely for selfish aggrandizement,
 this is the mark of a high civilization."

This challenge is the challenge which comes from a
 loving God, but not a soft God.
 God's love is not a soft love -- it is a
 stimulating love.
 It is like the love of a wise parent
 who would never do a child's homework
 for him until the child had exhausted
 his own efforts.

This challenge is well stated by the Book
 when it says --
 "The weak indulge in resolutions,
 but the strong act.
 Life is but a day's work -- do it well.
 The act is ours; the consequences God's."

Jesus lived such a life. Jesus was an intensely
 practical man.
 Among other things, he said
 "Render unto Caesar the things
 which are Caesar's."
 We tend to forget that half of the quote,
 don't we?

He said
 "Cast not your pearls before swine."
 These are not the statements you
 might get from a starry-eyed,
 impractical dreamer.

The Christ that we paint anemic pictures of
 might just possibly have appealed to the
 ladies aid society of Capernaum,
 but he could have never carried those
 hard-boiled fishermen with him.

He told his followers to be as "wise as serpents"
 as well as "harmless as doves.

When they didn't have any money
 in the treasury, did he say --

"Shall we pray?"

He said "No, we will go fishing
 and we will sell the fish and
 finance ourselves,
 then we will go preach.

He was a good carpenter in Nazareth
 and he worked for money,
 he didn't pray for it.

Incidentally, he was such a
 good carpenter that even when
 there was a depression,
 he had plenty of work to do.

- Cruise -

He didn't just "sprangle" through Galilee
 and Judea with 12 fellows --
 he organized them.

they had jobs to do.

It was a simple but effective
 organization.

He didn't just take these 12 men upon the mountain,
 place hands on them,

imbue them with power from on high
 and say

"Go spread the message."

NO!

He gave these 12 men between four and five
 years of the most intelligently
 practical sales training
 we know anything about.

When he finished with them,
 he tested them,
 and he commissioned nine of them
 to spread the good news.
 One was dead, and two he sent back to
 the fish nets.

He recognized human differences;
 he knew that prayer
 couldn't change a man's I.Q.
 He gave Peter one set of instructions,
 He gave the Alpheus twins,
 who weren't very bright,
 but were very lovable,
 another set of instructions.

To Peter, he said "Be a good shepherd,
 feed my sheep."
 To these slow-thinking but wonderful
 Alpheus twins,
 he said
 "Boys, go back to your fishnets, and remember,
 to a God-knowing kingdom believer,
 there is no such thing as secular work.
 "All work is sacred."

We see this union of mind and spirit best exemplified
 in the inspiring but intensely
 practical life of Joshua ben Joseph,
 whom we know as
 Jesus of Nazareth.

When mind attacks matter,
 you get skill.

Now, when you subordinate mind to spirit,
 you get love,
 and when you combine love and skill --
 when you combine problem-solving ability
 with the desire to do good to others --
 you get something pretty
 wonderful --
 you get wisdom.

From a temporal standpoint,
 considering everything below the level
 of spirit,
 wisdom is the pearl of great price.
 If we have this kind of wisdom,
 we can attack the stimulating
 adventure of this life with
 courage,
 with tenderness,
 with worship,
 with humor.
 That is an unbeatable combination.

And so,
 as we distill the teachings of this Book, --
 not the facts,
 not the meanings,
 but the value,

 we see wisdom in this life,
 sonship with God in the next life,
 and forevermore spiritual growth
 in the business of knowing God,
 finding out more and more about him.

This Book well teaches
that God is the first truth
and the last fact.

He is the first divine reality
that we will ever understand
because he is infinite.

And we have the feeling
that if we choose to use
mind's courage and
spirit's love
wisely
together in meeting
the challenge of matter,
we can enter upon a never-ending
partnership with God.

And this partnership is one of
adventurous service,
in the execution of God's will
in the ever-growing universes,
throughout all the endless
cycles of eternity.