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## **The Nature of Grace**

### **The early Christian belief in free will**

In the early patristic period, during the first four centuries A.D., practically all Christian authors agreed that it was the power of the divine grace which saved us. We could not save ourselves until we turned to something external to ourselves and sought help from that source. It required the intrusion of some outside divine power, coming from God, to lift us out of our compulsive self-destructiveness and put us on the path which led to the healing of the soul and a good life. But these early Christian writers also believed equally strongly in human free will. We had to rely on God's grace, but we also had to make decisions and conscious choices if we wished to be saved.

The only exceptions to this belief in human free will in the early Christian world came in some of the unorthodox gnostic sects of the second and third century. Some of these taught that this fallen world was dominated by astrological fatalism (presided over by the seven

planetary archons or rulers), where not only external events, but also our inner emotions and feelings and attitudes towards the world were controlled by the positions of the planets in the zodiac. There was also one kind of gnostic belief which taught a system of predestination, in which human beings were born as either *somatic* (tied to the body, Greek *sôma*), *psychic* (tied to the *psychê*, the seat of the emotions and passions), or *pneumatic* (deeply in touch with the *pneuma*, the indwelling spirit of light, in an automatic and natural way). It was impossible for the first group to be saved, and the second group could be saved only by great effort on their part, for the deep spiritual truths of gnosticism could be grasped by them only with great difficulty. Only the third group of people found the path to salvation easy and immediately intuitive.

Orthodox Christianity however rejected this kind of gnostic belief. God predestined no one to damnation, and all human beings were offered the gift of God's grace repeatedly over the course of their lives. Why was it that not all human beings found the spiritual path? We were saved *sola gratia*, by grace alone, but because we have free will, our own wills also play a small but necessary role in our salvation. This is called a doctrine of synergism, from the Greek word *synergeô*. The verb *ergô* means "to work" in Greek, so synergism refers to two things working together, co-operating in conjunction with one another, to accomplish some goal.

The great Aristotle scholar Werner Jaeger wrote the best description I have ever read of this aspect of early Christian belief, and in particular, shows how it liberated the ancient world from the conviction, found in so much of the pagan philosophy of the period, that all change was bad, and that salvation was to be found in attaining

complete changelessness. True salvation, these early Christian thinkers proclaimed, was to be found, not in trying to block change and achieve a static changelessness, but in delighting in a life of continual spiritual progress, meeting new challenges with yet deeper spiritual growth, and going on “from glory to glory”<sup>1</sup> in a life of ever new discoveries and adventures. Change did not necessarily have to mean “decay,” the corrupting second half of the Aristotelian philosophical understanding of “the coming to be and the passing away.” It did not have to mean *degradation*, because it could also mean *progress* and *transformation*, God and a human being working together to bring that man or woman to the mastery of a new and enhanced kind of life.<sup>2</sup>

John Wesley, one of the two cofounders of the modern evangelical movement during the 1730’s and 40’s, taught patristics at Oxford University, and bequeathed this early Christian doctrine of free will and synergism to the Methodist, Wesleyan, and holiness churches which have made up one of the two major strands of the modern evangelical tradition.<sup>3</sup> In the twentieth century, in the early Alcoholics Anonymous movement (from its founding in 1935 down to 1948, when Richmond Walker published *Twenty-Four Hours a Day*), the most commonly used meditational book in A.A. was *The Upper Room*, published by the Southern Methodists, so the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous (published in 1939) and all of the early A.A. literature which I have read, simply assumes that kind of early Christian/Wesleyan combination of a belief in salvation *sola gratia* (by grace alone) with a weakly synergistic doctrine of human free will. One will still hear A.A. members make statements in meetings like

“sober today by the grace of God, the help of you people, and a little bit of footwork on my part.”<sup>4</sup>

### **Predestination and fatalism in St. Augustine**

Christianity in most of its western versions (both Catholic and Protestant) underwent a sharp mutation however in the late fourth and early fifth centuries, under the influence of Augustine (354-430), the great African saint. During his youth in Africa, Augustine had no firsthand access to either the world of Greek philosophy or to the great theologians of the early Christian period (who had almost all written in Greek). There were no books of that sort available in that entire part of Africa. He did pick up some of the fatalistic teachings of the Greek Stoic philosophers at second hand from Latin literary authors like Cicero and the essayist Seneca. And he also belonged for a while to a gnostic sect called the Manichaeans, which meant that he was definitely exposed to the gnostic belief in astrological fatalism, and may also have known about some of the gnostic predestinarian systems.<sup>5</sup>

It was only when Augustine finally got out of Africa in 383, and eventually ended up in Milan in 384-386, teaching university and serving as the Roman emperor’s public spokesman, that he got his first exposure to real Greek philosophy. In his *Confessions*, he says that someone in Milan allowed him to read copies of “the books of the *platonici*,” as he called them, the works of the Platonists.<sup>6</sup> After his conversion to Christianity, which occurred at the end of this period, in 386, Augustine began writing a series of works on philosophical theology which dominated the western world during the entire Middle

Ages and down into the period of the Protestant Reformation. Unfortunately, he had never read any of the sophisticated early Christian theology written by the great eastern teachers like St. Athanasius, St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory of Nyssa, and so on, and his knowledge of Greek philosophy had large gaps. Being an extraordinary genius, however, Augustine took the bits and scraps of theology and philosophy which he had managed to pick up, and created a philosophical theology of incredible breadth and depth. But it was very different in many ways from anything written by a Christian theologian before.

In particular, by the time he was around half way through writing his *City of God*, he declared that the Roman Stoic author Seneca had been correct in saying that God ruled the universe through the power of Fate (*fatum*). Everything that happened in the universe, down to the smallest detail, was determined by God's decree. He said in the *City of God* that he usually tried to avoid using the actual word *fatum*, because the common people thought that this meant astrological fatalism, and he felt that trying to predict the future by astrology and calculating people's horoscopes and the positions of the planets, was silly and ridiculous, and simply did not work. But if by Fate one meant what the Stoics had taught — and they were totally rigid fatalists — then he believed exactly what the Stoics had believed. God had an absolute and fatalistic control over every aspect of the universe and human life.

We could only be saved by means of God's grace, and only God had the power to decide whom to send his grace to. Furthermore, since God was all-powerful, those human beings to whom he sent his grace had no choice but to accept it. The question of which human

beings were going to be saved, and which were going to be damned, was therefore completely predestined. We human beings had no free will or choice on the matter.<sup>7</sup> And in particular, Augustine's views on the nature of history as an unending conflict between the City of God and the Earthly City, completely determined by the unseen power of hidden divine grace and control, cast its shadow over western theories about the nature of history for many centuries to follow.

### **Eusebius of Caesarea and human free will**

Augustine's opposite number in the pages of early Christian theology was Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 260 - c. 340), archbishop of the capital city of Roman Palestine, and the greatest Christian scholar of the fourth century.<sup>8</sup> His *Ecclesiastical History*, which told the story of the first three centuries of the Christian religion, along with his other historical writings, almost completely dominated the way history was written in the western world for over a thousand years to follow. His *Chronicle* was still our major source for most of the dates of historical events and people's lives in the study of ancient history in general (including Greek, Roman, and ancient near eastern history) until past the middle of the twentieth century.

Eusebius was a librarian in the great library in Caesarea, one of the two or three most important libraries in the ancient world, when the Great Persecution was begun by the Roman emperor Diocletian in 303. The bishop of Caesarea, where Eusebius lived, was arrested and, under torture, denied the faith. Eusebius himself eventually fled north to the city of Tyre in Lebanon, where he remained until the persecution ended in 313. At that point, the bishop of Tyre

consecrated Eusebius as a bishop and sent him back to Caesarea to rebuild the shattered Christian flock in that city.

Eusebius's various writings give us an alternative to the starkly fatalistic doctrines of predestination and foreordination which we find in Augustine's theory of history. He follows the general Christian tradition of the first three centuries by teaching a doctrine of salvation *sola gratia* (by grace alone) which nevertheless allowed a necessary role for human free will.

### **The laws of nature**

Arising from the rational character of the Logos (the second level within the ground of being), the universe as it came into being out of that creative ground was structured by natural laws (*nomoi*): rules that determined such things as the position of the earth in the universe, the regularly changing pattern of day and night, the regular motion of the sun, moon, and planets, the yearly cycle of the seasons, the geological structures that caused the continental masses to remain pushed up above the level of the water that fills the ocean basins, and the meteorological structures that provided for transfer of moisture through evaporation and precipitation.<sup>9</sup> These laws (*nomoi*) not only specified the nature (*physis*) of each kind of living creature, they also determined its natural physical limitations (*horoi*). That was important to Eusebius's understanding of nature. All creatures had limitations; there were things they could not do. Fish could not live on the dry land because of their natural limitations, while the laws of nature likewise prevented land creatures from living permanently beneath the surface of the water. In the same way, a limitation that was part of

their nature prevented human beings from soaring aloft on wings like the eagle.<sup>10</sup>

### **Miracles and the accidents of history**

God was capable of working miracles, where instead of events taking place as they would have according to nature (*kata physin*), he acted to make something else happen instead.<sup>11</sup> He would make human beings hear his voice talking inside their heads. He could show them a vision of the divine light shining all around them, something which was beyond our normal human limitations.

The commonest way however in which God made special interventions in the course of history was not through performing miracles, but through arranging *ta symbebêkota*, the “accidents” of history, as Eusebius called them. He got this technical term from the philosopher Aristotle, who had used it in his *Physics* in his analysis of the role of chance in nature. Aristotle had said that, in the analysis of cause and effect in natural processes, “Fortune is an accidental cause,” *hê tychê aitia kata symbebêkos*.<sup>12</sup>

The cosmos as a whole was made up of countless natural entities, each one attempting to carry out its own natural processes: acorns growing into oaks, fish swimming under the water, land animals breathing air, planets moving through the heavens. Insofar as each entity was following its own laws (*nomoi*), the laws of nature formed a structure of universal specifications that unified the whole cosmos at an abstract level.<sup>13</sup> But the impingement of the concrete natural activity of one concrete natural entity on the concrete natural activity of another concrete natural entity was “accidental.” If a squirrel came



upon an acorn and ate it, this was an “accident,” from the acorn’s point of view at any rate. Since the cosmos was made up of countless natural entities of this sort, each struggling to go its own way according to its own natural behavioral patterns and sequences, the progress through time of the cosmos as a whole was constituted of the accidental *conjunctures* of these countless individual natural processes.<sup>14</sup>

A squirrel happens upon an acorn and eats it. A giant meteorite collides with earth and the resultant dust clouds cause a global chilling which kills off millions of species of plants and animals. In East Asia about 15,000 years ago, human beings domesticated some of the local wolves, and modern domesticated dogs (in all parts of the world) are descended from those first dogs. The flap of a butterfly’s wings in Brazil sets off a tornado in Texas, or at least a famous meteorologist once calculated that this was theoretically possible.<sup>15</sup> Had Mark Antony and Queen Cleopatra of Egypt not fallen in love with one another, the history of the entire Mediterranean world in the first century B.C. would have been quite different. These conjunctures or accidents or synchronicities — call them what we will — can shape the course both of the physical universe and of human history in amazing ways.

Eusebius’s technical term, *ta symbebêkota*, meant “chance events” or “accidents” of this sort. But what made the term particularly useful was that it was the perfect participle of the verb *ymbainô*, “to happen,” which meant that the participle could also be translated literally as “those things that have happened.” So the *symbebêkota* were, to Eusebius, those aspects of the historical context in which a person found himself or herself at any given moment, *as that*

*historical situation had been created by the sum of all the things that had happened in the past.*<sup>16</sup>

This meant that, in existentialist language, the *symbebêkota* furnished the basis of our fundamental existence itself as that-into-which-we-had-been-thrown. None of us ever had the freedom to project our future onto just any kind of ultimate-for-the-sake-of-which that might pop into our heads. It was in the context of our *throwness* at any given time that each one of us — if we wished to live authentically in that moment — had to devise and live out a *destiny* which was the organic working out of that specific and unique life situation.

### **General providence and the general graciousness of the universe**

Eusebius used this kind of analysis to make a distinction much like the one made by later theologians between “general” and “special” providence: (1) By means of the laws of nature, God exercised a general provision for what took place in the universe. (2) Through miracles and through his control of the accidents of history, God dealt with specific individuals in specific situations in acts of special providence.

Those who believe in a God who is only an impersonal absolute can speak in terms of a general providence, but of course have to deny any kind of special providence. Nevertheless, even then, those who regard God as only an impersonal (or largely impersonal) absolute can use the concept of a general providence carried out through the

workings of the laws of nature, to speak of a kind of divine grace which is a sort of “general graciousness” operating through the general workings of the universe.

### **Emmet Fox and New Thought: a universal power of grace**

We can use the kind of theology which is called New Thought to give good examples of the way in which the universal laws of nature can be regarded as powerful vehicles of grace and healing. Emmet Fox (1886-1951), who was a pastor in the Divine Science Church, was one of the most famous teachers of New Thought during the first part of the twentieth century. His book on Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount — a spiritual classic that had an enormous influence on the early Alcoholics Anonymous and twelve step movement — is still widely read today.<sup>17</sup> *As a Man Thinketh* by James Allen (1864-1912) was another much read New Thought book which took the same basic position.<sup>18</sup> *A Course in Miracles*, as developed by psychologists Helen Schucman and William Thetford during the 1960’s and 70’s, was a later development within that same basic tradition, although this teaching is often described as New Age rather than New Thought.

But let us stick to Emmet Fox’s teaching. If I might explain his position in my own words, he argues that just as the physical world has its unbreakable laws of cause and consequence, so too does the spiritual dimension. If we want to lead a good spiritual life, we have to learn how to live in harmony with the laws of that realm, which also are in fact scientific laws — the denomination to which he belonged

called itself quite deliberately the Divine *Science* Church — and these laws can be scientifically *demonstrated* in the same way as the laws of physics.

Now if I break my arm, the laws of nature provide for the healing of that broken bone as part of a natural healing process. I may need to put a splint or cast on that arm to hold the broken ends together for several weeks, in order to allow for the natural healing process to occur. But it is important to note that physicians do not heal broken arms, they merely help the natural healing process go as smoothly as possible. The same observation applies if I cut my arm. If the cut is extremely deep, it might be helpful to have a physician put stitches in it, but even then, it is the natural healing processes of nature which are going to heal that cut.

In the same way, there is a universal healing power which can heal a wounded spirit. But I have to quit doing things which keep the spiritual wound open. Rehearsing my anger and resentment over and over in my mind prevents spiritual healing, for example, and has much the same effect as continually wiggling a broken arm so the two halves of the broken bone can never heal back together. Refusal to forgive the other human being who wounded me will also keep the spiritual wound pulled open where it cannot heal properly.

Thinking the right thoughts inside my head will not only promote healing, but can also bring me peace and prosperity. Thinking the wrong kind of thoughts however will bring misery and catastrophe down on my head. If I think continual thoughts of anger towards other people, I will find myself increasingly cast into situations in which more and more things are being done to me which make me angry. If I think continual thoughts of love towards other people, I will find my

life increasingly filled with loving people all around me. If I think continual thoughts of being ground down in poverty, I will bring even worse poverty down on my head. If I think thoughts of prosperity and gratitude for all the good things I am going to receive from the universe, I will find my life filled with an overflowing material prosperity.

There is nothing truly “supernatural” about this law of spiritual cause and consequence in New Thought, not really, because we can see that these effects are not violating natural law, once we realize that spiritual laws are just as real as the kind of laws of nature which physicists study.

There are many other ways also in which we can encourage people to turn to a kind of universal power of grace, which is built into the laws of nature and the very structure of the universe itself. Every good physician whom I have ever asked has given me their observations on the profound effect which their patients’ mental states have on their recovery rates. They tell me how they have had patients die whom modern medical science could otherwise have healed, because these patients gave up their will to live. And contrariwise, patients who were willing to fight to live could often pull through when all the normal medical odds seemed against them. What are apparently very simple things can sometimes have major effects: important studies, for example, have shown that patients who have just undergone surgery and are put into a recovery room with a window where they can see the world outside the hospital, have a higher survival rate and a more rapid recovery than those who are put in windowless rooms.

In the early twentieth century, not just the Alcoholics Anonymous movement, but also the Emmanuel Movement and the Jacoby Club,<sup>19</sup> showed that bringing alcoholics together into fellowship groups, and encouraging them to give psychological and emotional aid and support to one another, could by that means alone enable alcoholics to carry out a much more successful struggle against their desire to drink.

So there are a lot of things that we can do to help people which do not involve any real notions of miracles (where the laws of nature are broken) or any special acts of divine grace where a personal God decides to intervene actively in the course of an individual human being's life at a particular time and place.

### **The power of coincidence: Carl Jung's concept of synchronicity**

The Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung (1875-1961) wrote a paper in 1952 entitled "Synchronicity — An Acausal Connecting Principle," in which he discussed experiences in which we observe two events taking place simultaneously, which are related to one another conceptually in a deeply meaningful manner, yet which appear to be totally unconnected causally. At the level of normal cause and effect, we would be forced to say that these two things happening simultaneously was merely coincidence, yet Jung insisted that their synchronous appearance was in fact the bearer of a healing and life-giving message from the divine realm of the archetypes and the collective unconsciousness. The example of synchronicity which he gave in this article involved a patient's dream about one of the scarab

beetles made out of gold which the ancient Egyptians used as amulets and placed in their tombs:

A young woman I was treating had, at a critical moment, a dream in which she was given a golden scarab. While she was telling me this dream I sat with my back to the closed window. Suddenly I heard a noise behind me, like a gentle tapping. I turned round and saw a flying insect knocking against the window-pane from outside. I opened the window and caught the creature in the air as it flew in.

It was a large European beetle, not a scarab, but belonging to the same family. Now up to that point, Jung had been having difficulty in working with the young woman because she was such a total rationalist. She had been steadfastly denying the reality of symbolic meanings and irrational urges and unconscious forces operating within the mind. He had been trying to explain to her that the scarab in Egyptian mythology was one of the classic symbols of rebirth, where new life comes out of death and decay, and what we have been rejecting as “excrement” in our lives.

But suddenly Jung was able to thrust into her sight this large insect with its iridescent metallic shell: the symbol within her dream suddenly appearing in real life. The shock effect of this suddenly made her realize that the realm of feelings, emotions, and the kinds of knowledge which could only be represented in symbols and archetypes, was completely real. From that point on, she was able to start coming into contact with her own unconscious, and raising to the

level of consciousness those pieces of knowledge which she had to have in order to heal and find a happy life.

When Jung spoke of synchronicity, it is important to note that he was not talking about just any kind of odd coincidence, but something that he had observed happening when patients were involved in productive therapy, and when people living the spiritual life were deeply engaged in a program of continuous spiritual growth. Synchronicity was one of the ways, in that kind of context, that reality gave us “messages.” That is, it was one of the ways that the transcendent world attempted to communicate with us in ways that would heal our souls if we were willing to heed the content of these messages.

**“Coincidence” and divine  
grace in the twelve step program:  
Father Ralph Pfau**

In the twelve step program, people find that what Eusebius of Caesarea called *ta symbebêkota* (the accidents of history) are deeply interwoven into the fabric of the spiritual life. One vivid example of this comes from the story of the way that Ralph Pfau came into the Alcoholics Anonymous program. Father Ralph, the first Roman Catholic priest to get sober in A.A., was a priest in southern Indiana, and one of the four most published early A.A. authors.<sup>20</sup>

The year was 1943, and Ralph, who was thirty-eight, had been getting in trouble because of his drinking ever since he was ordained to the priesthood.<sup>21</sup> From May to October of that year, he had been



sent to a sanitarium in Wisconsin to see if the psychiatrists there could help him. After giving him a series of shock treatments by running 1,000 milliamps of 110-volt AC current through his brain (enough to light up a one hundred watt incandescent light bulb) they had released him, saying that they had done all that they knew how to do.

The bishop of Indianapolis had now sent Father Ralph to be one of the assistant pastors at St. Joan of Arc parish in Indianapolis. He had only been in his new post for a week or two, when a friend offered him a drink, and he accepted. He was a full-fledged alcoholic by now, and that one drink was all that was required to send him off on the kind of nonstop extended binge drinking where he drank himself into a total blackout. When he finally came to, unable to account for where he had been or what he had done during that period of time, he became truly frightened.

He went to see one doctor who gave him such a large dose of Benzedrine, that he was out of his mind for two hours. Then he went to another doctor, who gave him barbital instead, which made him see brightly colored pictures of imaginary scenes, much like the hallucinations produced by LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide), the illegal drug which was used by hippies of the 1960's. Somehow or other Ralph managed to avoid drinking, because he was even more frightened of going into another alcoholic blackout than he was of the effects of these drugs. But the craving for a drink was still obsessing him, and he had still never found any way of defeating the desire for alcohol except by turning to drugs instead.

Then something very odd occurred. We could call it coincidence, or an accident, or an example of what Carl Jung called synchronicity. Ralph was called at two o'clock one morning to give the last rites to a

man who was supposed to be dying. It turned out the man was not dying, but had just passed out from combining alcohol with barbitals. This was an ominous message to Ralph, who had been playing with doing exactly the same thing — drinking while also taking the barbitals that his physician had prescribed for him to “calm him down.” And then as he was leaving the man’s home, he saw a book on the mantel in the living room with the curious title *Alcoholics Anonymous*. This was the so-called Big Book, which described the A.A. way of dealing with alcoholism, which had only been published four years earlier in 1939, and was still not widely known. When he picked it up to look at it, the man’s family told him to go ahead and take the book with him if he was interested, so he carried it back to the rectory, and there at three o’clock in the morning started reading it. He could not put it down until he had finished the whole book.

For the next three or four weeks, Ralph read the Big Book through at least once a day, sometimes twice. And he didn’t drink. Something very strange was happening. He also noticed that there were A.A. pamphlets set out on a side table in the vestibule of the rectory. When he inquired, he was told that they had been left there by a good Irish Catholic named Doherty Sheerin, who was a wonderfully fine man, the other priests all said, a retired manufacturer. Ralph started reading these pamphlets too, and they gripped him the same way the Big Book had: “They told stark, simple stories of despair and hopelessness and terror and defeat,” but also — even more importantly — announced a way out of the horror. So finally on November 10, 1943 (the evening of his thirty-ninth birthday) Ralph phoned Dohr, who came over to the rectory, and talked the priest into going to an A.A. meeting. The next one would be on Thursday night, at 8 p.m., at a small branch library

called the Rauh Library. A.A. in Indianapolis was still small and struggling; there were only seven people at the meeting.

But Ralph was now on the path which God had intended for him. He never drank again, and died sober twenty-four years later on February 19, 1967, after helping A.A. to spread and grow from that tiny handful of groups that had been formed by 1943. He ended up aiding thousands and thousands of alcoholics, not just in Indiana, but all over the United States and Canada, and ultimately all over the world.

It was the pure coincidence, if that is the way that you would like to view it, of visiting the home of a man who almost died from mixing alcohol with the same kind of drugs that he was taking, a man who just accidentally happened to have a copy of the A.A. Big Book sitting on his mantel. Or you can read it as a healing and life-giving message having been sent from God and the divine realm. Father Ralph heard the message, took it seriously, and it saved his life.

### **The understanding of apparent coincidence in the twelve step program**

A.A. people, and people in other twelve step programs like Al-Anon, talk about the role of these synchronicities and accidents on a regular basis. The oldtimers, for example, may point to something which just happened in a newcomer's life, and then say with a big smile, "Coincidence?" And if the newcomer wishes to argue that this was all it was, just a coincidence, the oldtimers simply smile again, and shrug, and refuse to argue, and just walk away still smiling.

Taken one at a time, there is no way that one could “prove” scientifically that a particular synchronicity was anything other than pure coincidence. The problem with that approach however, is that among those who are truly working the twelve step program with real dedication, there are entirely too many of these coincidences for them to be coincidences. It is not just Father Ralph Pfau’s story of how he came into the twelve step program where this sort of thing happened. If one goes to twelve step meetings for a long enough time, one will hear hundreds and hundreds of people tell how they too came into the twelve step program under circumstances where there were also some quite extraordinary coincidences.

People who are newcomers to the program regularly experience the phenomenon where they go to three or four meetings in a row, attending different groups in different parts of town, but find that the topic to be discussed is exactly the same in each of these meetings. Perhaps the topic which keeps on being repeated is tolerance for other people’s opinions, or learning how to quit exploding with rage when I do not receive instant gratification for one of my desires, or doing the fourth step (which is always painful, but necessary for continuance and growth in recovery). When a newcomer comments on this, the oldtimers will smile and comment, “Perhaps God is trying to send you a message?”

Newcomers to A.A. and Al-Anon are told, “When the student is ready, the teacher will appear.” And I may need to spend two years, five years, or ten years working the program before I become ready to deal with one of the aspects of my life. If I feel like I am spinning my wheels in one particular area, it may be that it is simply not time yet for me to deal with that issue. But in a strange fashion, at precisely the

right moment, when I finally reach that point of readiness, someone new will appear who knows exactly how to teach me what I need to learn next. The important thing to remember is, that this will be the time when I will need to throw myself wholeheartedly and without reservation into that next major learning experience of my life.

The people who come into the twelve step program, and hear these messages, and act on them, stay in recovery and keep on growing into greater and greater amounts of joy and happiness and serenity. The people who scoff at these things as meaningless coincidence, go around congratulating themselves on being hardheaded rationalists, but their lives seem to invariably just keep getting worse and worse. They end up going back to alcohol or drugs or whatever, filled with greater and greater rage at the world and feelings of self-pity and futile despair. So who in fact is the more intelligent?

These coincidences appear in many other kinds of contexts as well, among people who truly dedicate themselves to the twelve step program. A woman named Sue C. was in charge of a project being carried out by the city government in the Indiana town in which she lived, where a huge abandoned factory building was cleaned up and fixed up and subdivided into smaller rooms, and turned into a place where dozens of smaller businesses could be set up. Sue had a number of years in Al-Anon, and was deeply devoted to the program. Her second-in-command was a man named Lee B., a former officer in the Los Angeles Police Department, who was an equally devoted member of Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous. After successfully completing their task, some sort of political machination going on in the city government (which was totally outside their

knowledge and control), got them both removed from their jobs with only twelve hours notice.

Two days before this unexpected event, Lee had received a job offer from another business which was so attractive that he had already decided that he was going to have to take it. One day after this event, Sue then received a job offer from the city's largest and most prestigious real estate company.

What would the good oldtimers in the twelve step program say? Coincidence?

God is more than simply some kind of general graciousness to the universe, although he is that too. God is more than simply some universally accessible healing power in the universe, although he is that too. For sake of those whom he loves, he can and will control these conspicuous accidents of history, whatever we may choose to call them — coincidence, synchronicity, acts of chance — to send them saving grace, communicate vital messages, and provide them all the help they need along the way. God is a personal being. He has free will, and makes these decisions to send his gifts of special providence to whomever he chooses, whenever and wherever he wishes.

**Random distribution and patterns of meaning:  
correspondence vs. interdependence**

The pages of this book were run off (in its first edition) by a laser printer which printed at 600 dots per inch. That meant that each square inch of the page was subdivided by the computer which

governed the press's operation into 600 times 600 = 360,000 pixels. Each individual pixel was designated by the computer program as either black or white in color. If one looked at a portion of the printed page under high magnification, each letter on the page (a, b, c, d, e ... A, B, C, D, E ...) would be seen to be made up of hundreds of tiny little black dots.

Now if one analyzed the distribution of the black dots on any given page of this book simply in terms of the probability of any given pixel being black as opposed to white, the distribution of dots on the page would be, in terms of a first-order application of the laws of probability, totally random. The dark areas would appear to be just as random as those which would appear from bird droppings if the piece of paper had been used to line the bottom of a canary's cage for a suitable length of time. That is because, at that initial level of analysis, one must calculate the probability of each event or thing in complete isolation from the probability of preceding or succeeding events. The odds of flipping a coin, and having it come up heads instead of tails the first time one flips the coin, is 50%. But regardless of whether it came up heads or tails the first time, the odds of flipping the coin a second time and having it come up heads instead of tails is still 50%. That is, as long as we are operating at that level of analysis, looking at the page pixel by pixel, and calculating only the probabilities that that particular pixel would be black instead of white.

If one did a little more complicated analysis of the distribution of black dots on any given page of this book, looking for patterns this time, one would soon discover that certain patterns of dots appeared with great regularity, forming the various letters of the alphabet and marks of punctuation. In the English language, the marks "e" and "t"

would be found to occur with greater frequency than any other little patterns. But past that point, the marks and patterns would still appear to be fairly randomly distributed, as long as we went no further than that level of analysis.

The fact that the black dots on the pages of the book are not random at all, only appears when we start fitting the letters of the alphabet into words, and turning the words into meaningful statements. *It is only when we start looking for messages*, in other words, that we realize that someone is trying to use the pages of that book to communicate with us.

We talked in Chapter 15 (and will speak further in Chapter 21) about the learning psychologist Jean Piaget and the distinction he made between correspondence and interdependence.<sup>22</sup> It may be simplest to explain the difference by giving an example: physics is related to chemistry by *interdependence*, but logic/mathematics is related to physics/chemistry by *correspondence*. The physicists' description and the chemists' description are interdependent because one can set up a series of logical statements and mathematical equations describing a particular experimental situation using the terminology of the physicists, which are *isomorphic* to the description of that very same experimental situation using the terminology of the chemists.

But one cannot derive the laws of physics or the research findings of the chemists from a study of pure mathematical logic alone. There is a *correspondence*, because in physics and chemistry both, we have to put all our statements in language which is mathematically and logically correct. But physics and chemistry cannot be *reduced* to the study of logic and mathematics. We cannot prove on the grounds of



pure logic alone that a molecule of water is made up of two hydrogen atoms and one oxygen atom. Physics and chemistry add additional information about the world that is not present in pure mathematics and logic, but requires mathematical and logical statements as a vehicle for presenting that additional information.

In the spiritual life, at one level of analysis, some events in the world appear to be random accidents and pure coincidences. But at another level of analysis, these events can be seen to convey messages filled with meaning. There is a correspondence between the two levels of analysis, but they are not interdependent.

We remember in the first chapter of this book, we talked about the x-factor in conversion. The stories at the end of the Big Book talked about men and women who were destroying themselves with their out-of-control drinking, but whose lives suddenly turned around in dramatic fashion at a certain point, in spite of the fact that no immediate logical cause was given, at least at the level which a psychologist or sociologist or professor of English literature or secular historian would wish to see. From their critical and hostile point of view, the kinds of patterns and messages and synchronicities which we saw when we were studying the spiritual life were no more than random events and sheer coincidences. What we saw as the periodic appearance of some inexplicable x-factor which momentarily disturbed and disrupted the smooth flow of the this-worldly events, their critical eyes saw as only places where we were still ignorant of some of the things that had been happening in those people's lives.

In the face of that kind of criticism, how could we say that we were talking about anything real when we claimed that God and his grace were acting at those specific places in individual human lives?

Well, if one looks at the pages of this book, not as a purely random distribution of black dots on a white sheet of paper, but as a set of messages and meaningful statements, there is a lot of meaning being conveyed in and through the words of this book. We can also note that people traveled from all over the world to undergo psychoanalysis with Carl Jung, because it was discovered that those who learned from him how to read the healing messages of synchronicities and archetypal images, often underwent spectacular recoveries from their psychological problems. Likewise, people who enter a twelve step fellowship and begin working the steps and learning how to read the coincidences in their lives as messages and gifts of grace from a loving personal higher power, make equally spectacular recoveries from alcoholism, narcotics addiction, gambling addictions, eating disorders, and a host of other extraordinarily destructive problems.

How does one prove that a particular method of reading messages works? The proof lies in the fact that it works.

### **The two planes of existence**

My dear friend and teacher, Professor Jean Laporte, once commented to me, that in the ancient world it was believed that human beings had the souls of angels in the bodies of monkeys. Ernest Kurtz, the outstanding thinker of the second generation within the A.A. tradition, made a closely similar statement in his little book on *Shame & Guilt*.<sup>23</sup>

Man, located on the scale of reality between “beast” and “angel,” contains within himself both “beast” and

“angel.” To be human, then, is to experience from within the contradictory pulls to be both angel and beast, both more and less than merely human. Because of these contradictory pulls, to be human is to live in a tension: because one is pulled to both, one can exclusively attain neither.

We therefore are compelled to live on two planes of existence simultaneously. This was at the heart of Eusebius of Caesarea’s understanding of the accidents of history. To him, certain kinds of events, that seemed to be accidents when one looked only at proximate causes, in fact fell into empirically observable patterns when one looked at the overall course of history over the centuries. Eusebius therefore postulated a second network of empirically observable cause-effect relationships, separate from yet involving the same objects as the network of ordinary cause-effect relationships. There were two interpenetrating networks of cause-effect relationships — the network of cause-effect chains exposed by ordinary historical analysis, in which human beings contended with each other and with the elements, and a second, separate network of interrelationships in which a human being stood before a personal deity as a free and morally responsible agent. Within each network it was possible to give a complete (but different) explanation of why the same particular event had occurred: the same event that appeared as a clear-cut instance of a divine message or warning or gift of grace within the “theological” cause-effect network appeared as an “accident” within the cause-effect networks explored by the pragmatic causal analysis of naturalistic empiricism. The same event was therefore “doubly

determined” in Eusebius’s understanding of how God works in history — determined by a set of pragmatic causes, but also determined by a set of theological causes.<sup>24</sup>

### **Miracles and the supernatural**

As we mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Eusebius of Caesarea saw God shaping the course of human lives in three different ways. (1) There was a kind of general providence, where the laws of nature provided universal mechanisms for supplying grace and healing to human beings who learned how to use them. This sort of grace did not necessarily require belief in a personal God, because even though these were principles of love, forgiveness, healing, and positive thinking, they nevertheless operated just like any other laws of nature, without regard to individuals or persons. (2) Eusebius however believed in a personal God, who could control the accidents of history in such a way as to send messages and gifts of grace to specific human beings in specific ways, tailored to each individual person, at times and places which God chose. (3) And he also believed that this personal God had the power, whenever he chose, to change events in ways which violated the laws of nature.

When I was a very young man, I was completely skeptical about reports of people seeing visions and hearing heavenly voices and being prompted by direct acts of God’s grace. But over the past forty-six years, I have had a few direct experiences of such things myself, and I have talked with so many other people who have experienced such things, that I now believe that these events are real, and must be taken with total seriousness.

Let us give a famous example from the twelve-step tradition. Marty Mann was one of the first women to gain long term sobriety in A.A. (she eventually founded the National Council on Alcoholism and played a major role in revising the whole attitude toward alcoholism in the United States). But she had to hit bottom before she could start her spiritual journey towards sobriety, and the place where she hit her bottom was at a psychiatric center called Blythewood Sanitarium in Greenwich, Connecticut, at the very beginning of 1939. She had developed a massive resentment at Blythewood's business manager, and stormed into her room, literally seeing red. She decided that she was going to sneak out of the psychiatric center, buy two big bottles of whiskey, get totally drunk, and then kill the business manager. But then she saw, lying open on her bed, one of the multilithed copies of the prepublication draft of *Alcoholics Anonymous* that was being circulated for people's comments and suggestions.<sup>25</sup>

In the middle of the page was a line that stood out as if carved in raised block letters, black, high, sharp — **“We cannot live with anger.”** That did it. Somehow those words were the battering ram that knocked down my resistance.

Marty fell to her knees beside the bed, and began weeping on the bed's coverlet, while praying for the first time in years. She felt that the room was alive with light and beauty and the sense of the divine presence of God. Now the interesting thing is that even the words she saw on the page were a divine vision, not anything natural that she was seeing with her physical eyes, because the closest one can find to that

particular line in the multilithed draft of the Big Book is one that reads “If we are to live, we must be free of anger.”<sup>26</sup>

To give another example, a man I knew who went by the nickname Fod, was a Methodist minister who told about how he received his call to preach. He was a young man working at an atomic energy facility, he said, when — on a hot August afternoon — he suddenly found himself standing in front of the judgment bench of God. “I did not see any image in front of my eyes,” he told me, “but I knew somehow that this was where I was standing. And I did not hear any heavenly voice speaking words. But I knew somehow that I was being told, that although there was nothing evil about the life I had been living, nevertheless if I continued along that route, I would be separated from God forever. If I wished to continue to live in God’s presence, I was going to have to totally change my career, and begin working full time for God. I gave up the career I had been pursuing in science, and enrolled in seminary. And strange to say, although this was probably the single most important decision I ever made in my life, it was the only major decision I think I have ever made, where I never once questioned it or had second thoughts later on. I heard what God was telling me, and I made the right decision, and I will be grateful until my dying day that I did so.”

In the twelve step program, I have talked with people who saw angels, had visions of heavenly light, or suddenly heard a voice from heaven speaking to them. At the moment when God’s grace touched him for the first time, Brooklyn Bob (one of the South Bend A.A. old timers) says that he felt a feeling of incredible warmth sweeping through his entire body.

But particular acts of God's grace may come in subtler form, by way of an insistent, inexplicable prodding coming into my mind somehow, where something is poking at me and compelling me to do something for no reason that I can understand. Chic L., in Goshen, Indiana, regularly told the story of how he came into A.A. He was working at his job, when he suddenly decided that he had to do something about his out-of-control drinking, and got in his car to return home. Just after he had gone into his house, he saw another automobile drive up. A man who was no more than a casual acquaintance got out, and came up his front walk and knocked on his door. He told Chic that he did not know why he had decided to pay this visit, but that some inexplicable urge had seized him. But at any rate, he had had a drinking problem, and had recently joined Alcoholics Anonymous. He did not know whether Chic would be interested or not, but just wanted to let him know, that if he ever wanted to know more about A.A., he would be glad to talk about his own experiences in the program.

Another man tells about something that happened to him a couple of weeks before he came into A.A. He was at the supermarket when he saw a stack of free magazines sitting over against the wall. "For some reason," he said, "I felt compelled to go over and pick one of the magazines up. It was a magazine for young singles, and I was happily married, but in spite of that, I felt this irresistible compulsion to take one of them and start reading in it. I began reading an article written by a psychotherapist which was describing the way she treated patients who were suffering from emotional problems that sounded a whole lot like what I was experiencing. And then she mentioned two books on the subject. Well, again I cannot make any sense out of my own

behavior. I have never done anything like this before, but I felt an irresistible compulsion to drop everything else and go to the nearest mall and check the bookstores there. One of the books was written by an A.A. member, and the other was written by an Al-Anon member. I bought the two books and, oblivious to everything going on around me, I felt irresistibly compelled to sit down on a bench in front of the bookstore and start reading in them. This was God's way of 'priming the pump,' I later realized, before setting the wheels in motion to sweep me into my first A.A. meeting a couple of weeks later."

### **Salvation by grace alone**

There is no version of the Protestant tradition which is even remotely orthodox, that does not teach a doctrine of salvation *sola gratia*, by grace alone. Lutherans and Calvinists believe that no human beings can be saved who are not touched by particular acts of God's grace which irresistibly compel them and prod them into accepting God's gift of salvation; our human wills are so deeply in bondage to evil, death, and self-destruction that they can play no effective role in bringing about our salvation. Methodists and other Wesleyans, on the other hand, believe that human beings can reject that prodding of grace, and turn a blind eye and a deaf ear to God, if they are determined enough to turn down God's offer of salvation. But they believe just as strongly as the Lutherans and Calvinists that no human beings turn to God of their own accord. There is always first God reaching out to each of us, at particular times and places, in ways which God precisely tailors to each of our idiosyncrasies as individuals.



That means a personal God, one who makes personal decisions, and acts towards each of us human beings in a deeply personal way.

The Protestants have thought more deeply about this issue than the Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox traditions, but in the case of these traditions too, how can we read the spiritual teaching of St. Teresa of Avila's *Interior Castle* or St. Macarius's *Fifty Spiritual Homilies*, to give two good examples, without seeing the principle of *sola gratia* being proclaimed here too? Both St. Teresa and St. Macarius teach a personal God who wills to send particular acts of grace to aid and guide individual human beings at particular times and places, matching each divine action to where that individual human being is at that precise point in his or her spiritual life.

We are not talking here about stories of people walking on water, or the Red Sea being parted in two, or tales like the one about Balaam's talking donkey in Numbers 22:28-30, or biblical references to a giant sea serpent called Leviathan living beneath the earth and shaking its tail (which was what the ancient Israelites believed caused earthquakes). If modern people want to reject these sorts of thing as unbelievable ancient myths and legends, I would have no problem with that. This is not what is at stake here.

We are talking here about a different kind of supernatural. We are talking here about a God who reaches out to each one of us, as one person touching another, and prods us and cajoles us and arranges the coincidences of our lives, in order to lead us — if we will allow this — to the fullness of happiness and serenity. Most grace is supernatural. We cannot explain how the synchronicities are produced, or how God can reach into our minds and souls and hearts.

But look seriously at this extraordinary universe. How can we “explain” any of it? The thousands and thousands of galaxies spreading through space for countless light years. The marvels of all the animals and plants that live on the earth, from the largest to the smallest. The beauty of the sunsets, and the mountain ranges. The incredible mathematical intricacy of the laws of nature. All is unexplainable grace.

The highest and best response to the world is one of overpowering wonder and gratitude. What we are asked to do is to enjoy the extraordinary beauty and magnificence and opportunities for joy which this universe gives us, and not to hurt others.

Choose life and not death. All is grace. All is God’s gift.

## NOTES

1. See 2 Corinthians 3:17-18, “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from glory to glory; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”

2. Werner Jaeger, *Two Rediscovered Works of Ancient Christian Literature: Gregory of Nyssa and Macarius* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1954), Part One, Chapter 5 (pp. 70-114) describes St. Gregory of Nyssa’s use of a

synergistic doctrine of free will instead of a doctrine of predestination in his discussion of Gregory's theology and its background. See also Jean Daniélou, Introduction (pp. 1-78) to Gregory of Nyssa, *From Glory to Glory: Texts from Gregory of Nyssa's Mystical Writings*, ed. Herbert Musurillo (New York: Scribner, 1961).

3. The other major strand within the modern evangelical tradition is more affected by Calvinism, and tends to accept, in whole or in part, some sort of rigid Calvinistic doctrine of predestination. John Wesley taught classics and theology at Oxford University. What an undergraduate degree in theology at Oxford meant, not only in the eighteenth century, but when I was a student there in the 1960's, was a strong concentration on the New Testament and on patristic theology down to the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D. It should be emphasized very firmly that Wesley's synergistic doctrine came from the early patristic period, not from the Philippist heresy taught by Philipp Melancthon (1497-1560) in the Lutheran tradition, nor from the Arminian heresy taught by Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609) in the Reformed (Calvinist) tradition. For more about those two figures, see the article on "synergismus" in the *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms: Drawn Principally from Protestant Scholastic Theology*, ed. Richard A. Muller (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1985). Wesley's synergistic doctrine was structured very differently from either of those two theological positions, although when Wesley found himself accused of Arminianism by the eighteenth-century English Calvinists, he found it more expedient to simply challenge the basic underlying Calvinist doctrine of predestination head on, than to get involved in endless scholastic squabbles about the actual differences between his teaching and Arminius's. In fact, to bait the Calvinists, Wesley began the publication in 1778 of a Methodist periodical called *The Arminian Magazine*. Albert Outler, the greatest Wesley scholar of the twentieth century, once told me however that he had found no evidence that Wesley had ever read a single word which Arminius

wrote, so studying that figure, and the Calvinist heresy by that name, is not a useful way of investigating Wesley's position on free will and grace. It will do nothing but point you in wrong directions.

4. The one possible exception in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous comes in a line in one of the stories added in the third edition, which came out in 1976, called "Doctor, Alcoholic, Addict," where the author (Paul Ohliger, M.D.) said on page 449, "When I am disturbed ... I can find no serenity until I accept that person, place, thing or situation as being exactly the way it is supposed to be at this moment. Nothing, absolutely nothing, happens in God's world by mistake." This third edition came out five years after Bill Wilson's death, and I have often wondered whether he would have allowed that last line into the book without further elaboration. Ohliger's story was also included in the fourth edition of the Big Book which came out in 2001, retitled "Acceptance Was the Answer," but with the text unchanged (see page 417). As the A.A. author Father Ralph Pfau says, however, everything that happens in the universe happens either because God decreed it to be so, or *allowed it* to be so, which provides a way of giving a Catholic interpretation of this passage, as opposed to having to read it in terms of some kind of Calvinist doctrine of predestination and foreordination. *Alcoholics Anonymous* (New York: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, 3rd edit. 1955, 4th edit. 2001).

5. See Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*.

6. This seems to have been a collection of Latin translations of Neo-Platonic works, perhaps some written by Plotinus (c. 205-270 A.D.), although some scholars see definite signs that Augustine had read at least one work either written by (or influenced by) the later Neo-Platonic philosopher Proclus, one of the most famous heads of Plato's Academy in Athens, whose life overlapped with Augustine's — Proclus lived down to 485, shortly after Augustine arrived in Milan.

7. One of the best studies of the developments of Augustine's ideas in this area is J. Patout Burns, *The Development of Augustine's Doctrine of Operative Grace* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1980). See also Glenn F. Chesnut, "The Pattern of the Past: Augustine's Debate with Eusebius and Sallust," pp. 69-95 in John Deschner, Leroy T. Howe, and Klaus Penzel (eds.), *Our Common History as Christians: Essays in Honor of Albert C. Outler* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), on the City of God and the Earthly City, original sin, and providence in Augustine's theology of history.

8. Chesnut, *First Christian Histories*.

9. Chesnut, *First Christian Histories*, p. 43. Eusebius *PE* 7. 10. 1-3 (314bd); *De laud.* 12. 5; cf. 11. 17. For a more complete discussion of what the Logos concept meant in the ancient Christian world, see Chesnut, *Images of Christ*, pp. 35-38, 44-47, 52-53, 92-93, 99, 139.

10. Chesnut, *First Christian Histories*, pp. 43-44. Eusebius *Contra Hier.* 6. Cf. *De laud.* 12. 5, duplicated in *Theoph.* 1. 23.

11. Chesnut, *First Christian Histories* p. 47.

12. Chesnut, *First Christian Histories*, p. 41. Aristotle, *Physics* 2. 5. 197a.

13. Cf. Plutarch, "On Fate," 568cd and 569d-570a.

14. Chesnut, *First Christian Histories*, p. 44.

15. Taken from the title of a talk by American mathematician and meteorologist Edward Lorenz at the meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1972.

16. Chesnut, *First Christian Histories*, p. 42.

17. Emmet Fox, *Sermon on the Mount*.

18. James Allen, *As a Man Thinketh* (orig. pub. 1902), in Mel B., *Three Recovery Classics: As a Man Thinketh (by James Allen), The Greatest Thing in the World (by Henry Drummond), An Instrument of Peace (the St. Francis Prayer)*, Hindsfoot Foundation Series on Spirituality and Theology (New York: iUniverse, 2004).

19. Richard M. Dubiel, *The Road to Fellowship: The Role of the Emmanuel Movement and the Jacoby Club in the Development of Alcoholics Anonymous*, Hindsfoot Foundation Series on the History of Alcoholism Treatment, ed. Glenn F. Chesnut (New York: iUniverse, 2004).

20. The other three were Bill Wilson, Richmond Walker, and Ed Webster. Ralph Pfau was the author (under the pseudonym Father John Doe) of the set of booklets called the Golden Books: the *Spiritual Side* (1947), *Tolerance* (1948), *Attitudes* (1949), *Action* (1950), *Happiness* (1951), *Excuses* (1952), *Sponsorship* (1953), *Principles* (1954), *Resentments* (1955), *Decisions* (1957), *Passion* (1960), *Sanity* (1963), *Sanctity* (1964), and *Living* (1964). He also published three larger volumes: *Sobriety and Beyond* (1955), *Sobriety Without End* (1957), and an autobiography, which he entitled *Prodigal Shepherd*, in 1958. They were all originally published by SMT Guild in Indianapolis, Indiana, but are kept in print now by Hazelden in Center City, Minnesota.

21. The story that follows is taken from Ralph Pfau and Al Hirshberg, *Prodigal Shepherd* (Indianapolis, Indiana: SMT Guild, 1958).

22. Jean Piaget (1896-1980) was one of the great figures in the study of how human beings gain knowledge about the world. The best introduction which I know to Piaget's theories of knowledge was written by the American psychologist John H. Flavell (now professor emeritus at Stanford University), who is also recognized for his own research into childhood development in the area of metacognition (knowing about knowing). On the

distinction Piaget made between correspondence and interdependence see Flavell's *Developmental Psychology of Jean Piaget*, p. 260.

23. Ernest Kurtz, *Shame & Guilt*, Hindsfoot Foundation Series on Treatment and Recovery, 2nd rev. ed. (New York: iUniverse, 2007; orig. pub. 1981), Part II, Ch. 1, page 15.

24. Chesnut, *First Christian Histories* 50-51.

25. Sally Brown and David R. Brown, *A Biography of Mrs. Marty Mann: The First Lady of Alcoholics Anonymous* (Center City, Minnesota: Hazelden, 2001) 107-108.

26. *Ibid.*, pp. 107-108 and 336 n 10. Also see Marty's story, "Women Suffer Too," in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, 4th ed. (New York: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, 2001) 200-207.

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