

Virtuous Transformation

W. Jay Wood 4-24-2008

Among my favorite films from last year was *Ratatouille*, the delightful story of Remy, a French rat who overcomes seemingly insurmountable obstacles to find fulfillment as the culinary artist he was meant to be. It is also the story of Anton Ego, the famous and fearsome food critic whose preoccupation with criticism has damaged his ability to enjoy the very thing he professes to love: food. "I don't like food, I LOVE it... if I don't LOVE it I don't SWALLOW." What touched so many who saw the movie was the double transformation of these two characters. Remy, who leaves the sewers and garbage strewn back alleys of Paris toward the upward goal of becoming a great chef, and Anton Ego, who descends from his proud heights to recover the simple love of food he lost to a hypercritical spirit. This transformation motif is standard storytelling fare, and one finds it in many other movies and novels.

Christians, of course, will recognize this plot line not just as the stuff of movies but a story line that ought to describe all Christian lives. For each Christian redeemed by Christ contains within himself the potential for a double transformation. We, like Anton Ego, are in the process of being freed from assorted shackles that impede our becoming the persons God wants us to be: shackles such as pride, envy, greed, and a hyper-critical spirit, and many other vices. At the same time, one hopes, we are being filled with compassion, patience, joy, peaceableness and other virtues. And in this transformation from vice to virtue we discover our true selves, our truly free selves, the selves we were meant to be.

Transformation in Christ

How, exactly, are virtues essential to our growth in Christ? To answer this question, let's ground our thinking about virtuous transformation in a pivotal text from II Peter 1: 3-10: *"His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence (arete), by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, that through these you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion, and become partakers of the divine nature. For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brother affection with love. For if these things are yours and abound, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these things is blind and shortsighted and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins."*

This rich and powerful text offers many lessons. Notice first the command to supplement our faith with virtue. You might say, "I thought faith was all I needed." *Sola fidei, Sola gratia*, cried the Reformers. This text does not say virtue is necessary for salvation; it tells us what is essential for being *effective* and *fruitful* for Christ, as opposed to blind and shortsighted.

Second, this passage also tells us that becoming effective for Christ means that we are to undergo what is surely a most remarkable transformation, next to which The Swan and Extreme Makeover are purely cosmetic, merely skin deep. Elsewhere, scripture tells us that we are to die to self daily and become new creatures in Christ. The radical call of Christ is nothing less than to “put off the old nature with its practices and put on Christ.” The Word became flesh to make us “*partakers of the divine nature*.” This is not the moral and spiritual equivalent of tummy tuck or nose job; it’s a transformation so thorough, that when the process is completed, what remains is not just a tucked and trim you, it’s a whole new you. It’s still you—you don’t become someone else, but you do become a new you.) Athanasius put it this way: “For the Son of God became man so that we might become God.” And Thomas Aquinas says “The only-begotten Son of God, wanting to make us sharers in his divinity, assumed our nature, so that he, made man, might make men gods” (Aquinas). Now, if you’re like me, you’re thinking “Whoa, that’s radical: I’m struggling just to do my laundry and show up for work on time, and you’re saying I need to be like God! I don’t know if I’m quite up to that this week.

The ancient Fathers of the Church made an important distinction between being in the *image* of God and *likeness* of God. To be created in God’s image is to be created with a repertoire of cognitive and volitional powers analogous to Gods. God is an intellectual being, who knows the difference between truth and falsity, and so too are

we. God is a person, as are we. God is a relational being, capable of loving and interacting with other persons, and so too are we. God is a moral being, knowing the difference between good and bad, justice and injustice, and so too are we. God has a will, and is capable of forming and executing plans and intentions, and so too do we. God is a creative being, and again, so too are we, albeit in a manner commensurate with our own created status. We have been equipped with a cluster of powers that resemble God's, and for this reason are said to be created in his image.

But as we all know, these powers are subject to a wide range of development and maturation. Our moral powers for discerning justice and injustice, (our consciences if you will), are notorious for underperformance, even malfunction. Our wills often fail to love God and things God loves. We suffer from what the Greeks called "akrasia," weakness of will, whereby we yield to temptations we should resist. Sometimes, our intellects mask the truth through self-deception, or we dogmatically resist criticism of our preferred ways of thinking, or we turn our intellectual powers to terrible things, such as how to build weapons of mass destruction. Though possessed of powers analogous to God's, we have not brought all these powers to perfection or, as Aristotle would put it, their highest state of actualization. To the extent that this repertoire of powers is being completed or perfected, we are being transformed into the likeness of God. So, in I Corinthians 3:18 we read: "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his *likeness* from one glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit." And in Ephesians 4:22, Paul writes: "Put off the

old nature which belongs to your former manner of life . . . and put on the new nature created after the *likeness* of God.”

This radical transformation of character is essential if we are to live into God’s purposes for having created us. I believe God created us for friendship with himself, to be drawn into a relationship of filial love. So, Jesus, in one of his final discourses to the disciples says, “I no longer call you servants, I call you friends.” And in one of the first post-resurrection appearances calls out from the shore, “Friends, have you caught anything?” I think it is important to acknowledge that if we are to be friends with Christ, we must be like him. Why does being friends with Jesus require that we become virtuous?

Aristotle distinguished 3 levels of friendship: friendships of utility, of pleasure, and of virtue. Friendships of utility are the sort you might have with a running buddy, a study partner: it is a relationship built upon each finding the other useful in some way. When the mutual benefit dissolves—say, your running buddy moves to another town—the friendship dissolves. Superior to that are what Aristotle calls friendships of pleasure. Here, the friendship turns not finding the other useful, but finding the other simply enjoyable to be with. You enjoy the other’s humor, taste in music, conversation skills, and they, in turn enjoy you and your distinctive personality: My friends always say to me, Wood, we love your geeky professorial personality, because we all feel so hip by comparison. But the highest form of friendship is what

Aristotle called friendships of virtue which turn on the good will each has for the other because of the other's excellence of character: you recognize in each other admirable qualities such as generosity, patience, wisdom, kindness. Friends of this sort have kindred souls; they're "soul-mates" if you will, and their friendships are the deepest and most enduring. Typically, these three forms of friendship occur among equals, though Aristotle did teach that friendships between unequals is possible. This is good, since we will always be unequal to God. And in these cases, says Aristotle, the loving must be proportional: the superior person must "be loved more than he loves." Just here we see one of the ways the Christian faith surpasses Aristotle. *God is love*, and in his divine generosity loves with an infinite, unsurpassable love no created being can equal or return.

However much our love falls short of God's, we are nevertheless commanded to love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, in other words, with every aspect of our being. So, now we see why it's so important for the totality of our character to undergo transformation: so that we may enter into the love relationship for which God created us. If we are to become friends of God, we must become like God. He is compassionate, loving, merciful, kind, forgiving, forbearing, and we too need to become like him in all these and in other respects. So, let's take a closer look at what virtues are, how we acquire them, and how they transform us.

The Virtues of Mind, Heart, and Body

What are Virtues? They are acquired dispositions (or habits) that allow us to function well in generic human activities or contexts that are difficult and important: activities such as thinking, forming friendships, organizing life in community, facing dangers, dealing with pleasures and success, seeing others surpass you in various ways, handling money, and other situations common to human life. A disposition is a like the default setting on your computer or thermostat; given a certain situation, say the room being too cold, your furnace automatically kicks into action. Unlike the default setting on a furnace or computer, however, virtues are not a part of the standard issue equipment with which we're born. We don't pop from the womb locked and loaded to function well when we're facing danger, handling pleasures, or being outshone by our peers. In fact, we probably tend to run hard in the opposite direction. We must be trained to virtue through experience and the various disciplines that help to foster them. The opposite of a virtue, of course, is a vice, a settled tendency to function poorly in thinking, willing, and acting, to function in a way that actually undermines our flourishing.

So, for the sake of example, let's consider the generically human phenomenon of handling money and possessions. Christian generosity demands that we have a pretty light grip on wealth, having as our default mode the willingness to give cheerfully and abundantly to others. The Jerry Root example. Not all of us are like Jerry, however, and we can go awry in so many different ways. We succumb to acquisitiveness, the inordinate desire to accumulate wealth; stinginess, the inordinate desire to retain wealth; possessiveness, the inordinate preoccupation with something's being mine,

belonging to me; and covetousness, the desire to possess some specific good already belonging to another.

The classical world focused on the 4 cardinal virtues: Prudence, Justice, Temperance, and Fortitude. When the Christian church adopted the language of virtues and vices, they added to the 4 cardinal virtues, the 3 theological (or deiform) virtues, faith, hope, and charity. On the Christian view, faith, hope, and charity are not only virtues in their own right, but they need to inform all our other virtues to bring them to completion. From the writings of John Cassia and Evagrius of Pontus, the Church also settled on the seven deadly vices, Pride, anger, greed, gluttony, lust, envy, and sloth, which nicely balanced the 7 virtues. Neither the Greeks nor the Christians thought that virtues and vices were limited to 7 in number. These were considered “capital” virtues, because they were at the head of many subsidiary traits, the way a headwater is the source of many tributaries that flow from it. So, temperance, the ability to regulate one’s appetites, admits of various species. For example, when we’re temperate with respect to sex, it called chastity; in drinking sobriety, and in eating, continence (a fine word that has now been co-opted to refer to bladder control, leaving virtue theorists without an adequate replacement).

It is important to notice that there are virtues appropriate to every facet of the human person. The ancient world operated with a tri-partite conception of person that is still pretty useful today: humans are complex beings consisting of mind, will/heart,

and body. Our minds allow us to generate and store images, beliefs, thoughts, ideologies: Our will, or heart, as the New Testament calls it, is the locus of love, cares, attachments, and emotions. Our bodies, of course, are the center of appetites for food, drink, sex, sleep, recreation: all those good things necessary for life, but all subject to abuse. And each part of the person needs to be trained to virtue and strengthened against vice.

Now the particular combination of various virtues and vices we possess determines what sort of character we are said to have. One of the meanings of the Latin root for character (*signum*) referred to the tattoos Roman legionnaires received on their arms to identify their particular units. When these guys walked down the street, people had only to look at their biceps to know exactly who they were and what they were a part of. By extension, we can think of character traits, the virtues of mind, heart, and body, as tattoos on our soul: permanent marks etched into our personality that ideally ought to make us easily identifiable as Christians. Over time, we develop patterns of mind, will, and bodily appetite, that take up permanent residence in us, and these patterns combine to form a composite portrait of our total character, our real self at the time, and this we can call the soul. So when Jesus tells us that one of the greatest commandments is to love God with all our heart, mind, soul, with all our strength, he was saying, in effect, that every aspect of who you are needs to be incorporated into this love. And you cannot love God and neighbor as you ought without a character steeped in virtue. That is why Peter insists that we make every effort to add to our faith virtue.

To be transformed by virtues is to have all the parts of our person, body, mind, and heart, functioning optimally and in concert. Let's consider first the moral virtue of compassion, an emotion, and thus a part of the will. Compassionate people are adept at seeing and seeking to alleviate the suffering of others, be it emotional or physical suffering. What I want to underscore here is the way this virtue draws on the faculties of a whole person. Take the intellect first: the compassionate person has acute powers of moral perception; they notice when others are suffering. Some guys are pretty obtuse on this score (my wife assures me I'm among that number). A guy walks into the house and his wife is weeping on the sofa. Without even looking up he tosses his coat over a chair and starts rifling through the mail and asks "How are you honey?" And before she can reply: What's for dinner? Say, did you remember to pick up my shirts at the dry cleaners?" Finally, looking up: what's the matter, you been cutting onions or something? You got something in your eye? Of course guys want to fix stuff, our man offers: Just pull the lid down, hold your nose, and blow—works every time! Hey, I'm going to go check my email. Call me when it's dinner time, would ya" That's a gross exaggeration, of course. Compassionate people, by contrast, have finely tuned moral radar. They see that someone is suffering, they can accurately diagnose the cause of the suffering, and they strategize effectively about how best to alleviate the suffering. So there is a strong intellectual component to compassion. But notice that compassion is itself an emotion; we feel compassion. In fact being compassionate opens us up to a whole range of emotions. A compassionate person will be sad that another person is

suffering, hopeful that the suffering can be alleviated, anxious if the suffering persists, glad when the person is no longer in pain. Finally, compassion requires that we do something. We can't merely notice and say "be warmed, be filled, God's blessings go with you." And tending to those who are hurting often requires that our actions are gentle, tactful, reassuring, as so forth. So we see that having the virtue of compassion draws together all the parts of our personality.

We've just seen how a moral virtue requires that we draw upon the contributions of intellect and body. But the same pattern shows itself when we focus on intellectual virtues. Intellectual virtues are dispositions to excellent functioning when it comes to acquiring intellectual goods, such as knowledge, experiential acquaintance, wisdom, and understanding. Humans were created with a unique repertoire of cognitive powers that distinguishes us from the rest of the beasts ("Man is the rational animal," the Greeks used to say). We have powers of perception, memory, apriori intuition, introspection, and inferential reasoning. Others think that we have a *sensus divinitatus* (a divine sense), or a conscience, or an aesthetic sense. Whatever we designate as our standard issue intellectual powers, they need to be trained to full maturity; they don't come fully developed right out of the box. Suitably matured, these powers give rise to intellectual virtues such as love of truth, teachableness, intellectual humility, open-mindedness, interpretive sensitivity, all of which facilitate our gaining intellectual goods, such as knowledge, wisdom, and experiential acquaintance. Unfortunately, these powers can remain underdeveloped, even distorted in various ways, giving rise to

intellectual vices such as willful naiveté, self-deception, close-mindedness, crippling doubt, dogmatism, gullibility, biased and superstitious thinking, and more.

But we are not purely cerebral, cogitating machines. Mr. Spock and Data may be able to think without emotions, but we don't. Think, for instance, the way a racist hears and processes the evidence presented against a person of color. His emotions will most likely affect his judgment about the strength of evidence put forward by prosecution and defense. Here emotions impede proper intellectual functioning. But they may also assist it. Raskolnikov, the wayward philosophy student and nihilist of Dostoyevsky's Crime and Punishment, abandons his philosophical nihilism, not as the result of argument, but in response to the powerful love of Sonya. After Raskolnikov confesses to having murdered a pawnbroker and her sister, Sonya perceives what a wretchedly tormented soul he is, and in compassion moves to embrace and kiss him, prompting this response:

You're so strange, Sonya—you embrace and kiss me, when I've just told you about that. You're forgetting yourself A feeling long unfamiliar to him flooded his soul and softened it all at once. He did not resist: two tears rolled from his eyes and hung on his lashes.¹

He does not merely observe Sonya's expression of love; he experiences himself *as loved* by her. Through his emotional experience, Raskolnikov construes himself as an object of value, a fact his philosophical theory can't allow. It cannot simultaneously be true that

¹Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Crime and Punishment, trans. by Pevear and Volokhonsky (New York: Vintage Classics, 1993), p. 412.

the world is without value (the nihilist view) and that he is himself valuable.

Raskolnikov allows his experience to override his philosophical theory; Dostoyevsky's phrase "he did not resist" suggests that Raskolnikov might have resolved the tension the other way, by allowing his prior philosophical commitments to undermine his experience as unveridical. In Raskolnikov's case, and so often in our own, a change of mind is precipitated by a change of heart. This is why St. Paul prays in Ephesians that "the eyes of the heart may be enlightened that we may know . . ." And Jesus asks the Pharisees, "why are you thinking these things in your hearts? Jesus and Paul realized the important connection between the disposition of our heart, or will and the orientation of our thinking.

The Bible assures us that our intellectual nature, no less than our moral nature, is in need of transformation. So Paul says in Colossians "Put off the old nature with its practices and put on the new nature which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator." And in Romans 12 he says: "Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind." To be conformed is to have the patterns of our thinking stamped in the mold of the world, like so much cookie dough under the press of a cookie cutter. What are some of the false thought patterns to which the world would shape our thinking? How about: Lord Acton's "Knowledge is power," "Might makes right;" "He who dies with the most toys wins;" "if you've got it, flaunt it," "the grass is always greener on the other side," and so on. These express ideologies of domination, greed, ambition, vanity, and discontent. The transformed mind sees

from the standpoint of eternity: its patterns of thought include “blessed are the poor in spirit, for they shall see God;” “my power is made manifest in weakness;” “the first shall be last, and the last first;” “Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.” This is foolishness to a mind stamped by the ideologies of the world. But to a transformed mind, indeed to those who have “the mind of Christ,” it is the path to participation in the divine nature.

Finally, and briefly, we look at the virtues most closely associated with the body and its appetites. We are material beings, but we are not merely material. We are more than molecules in motion, animated meat. We share with animals appetites for food, sex, sleep, drink, recreation, and whatever else contributes to the health and perpetuation of the species. And God, in his wisdom, made what preserves us pleasurable. But humans alone apply intelligence to their pursuit of pleasure, and thus pursue it to a level of intensity and distortion of which the animals know nothing. No animal develops a pornography industry, *vomitoria*, or suffers from bad body image. (Scriptures speak of those with “eyes full of adultery” and “whose god is their belly.”) In humans, the bodily appetites are abetted by mind and will, showing once again that these three parts of our nature have reciprocal influence and reinforce each other. We enlist the mind and emotions to concoct rationalizations and whole philosophies of life that elevate bodily pleasure to a level of first importance.

So, the body too is in need of transformation. It's not the having of a body that's the problem, nor is there anything wrong with food, sex, drink, sleep, and recreation. The problem is that our appetites for these things often become vicious—that is, partaken of in a way that is counterproductive to human flourishing. That is why Paul writes that we must “offer our bodies as a living sacrifice (Rom: 12:2),” that “our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 6:18 – 20),” “that we should glorify God in our bodies” (I Cor 6: 18 – 20), and that “we must harden (or discipline) our bodies to bring them under complete control” (I Cor. 9: 26 – 27). The antidote to having appetites on overdrive is to put bit and bridle into them. As Paul writes to Timothy, we must train ourselves in all godliness, till our pursuit of sex is chaste, our indulgence in drink sober, our consumption of food moderate, and when every other appetite is enjoyed in accordance with God's design plan for us.

What emerges from the process of transformation is your true self, the self you were intended by God to be: robust, vital, healthy, and truly free. A free person is not enslaved to whatever passion or appetite happens to well up within him strongest at the moment, any more than a free person is enslaved by the tyranny of another person. Persons who fail to bridle their passions and appetites will inevitably do the bidding of those appetites, yanked and jerked about by internal tyrants that are the equal of any external tyrant. Imagine our appetites for sex, sleep, food, drink, recreation, etc. as a team of stallions hitched to a coach you hope will convey you to your destination. These stallions should be subject to fingertip control, responsive to the slightest tug of the reins, so that you, not they, determine where they take you. But a person ruled by

appetites is driven helter-skelter, careening here and there all over town, desperately hanging on for dear life. This is not freedom, this is anarchy, chaos.

Moral theorists have long distinguished between liberty and license. Liberty is the power to choose responsibly and wisely so as to bring about the highest good for oneself and those entrusted to one's care. License yields indiscriminately to whatever itch demands to be scratched at the moment; it cannot resist. Ooh! I'd like a 5th piece of pie; Ooh! I think I'll play video games all night; Ooh! I'd like to bed that hot member of the opposite sex. A person who yields indiscriminately to the strongest appetite is surely in bondage every bit as much as the addict or someone in chains. This power of our appetites and other passions to enslave us, to impede our true freedom was wonderfully visualized by Charles Dickens in *The Christmas Story*. If you haven't read the book, you've all seen either the cartoon or Muppet version. Jacob Marley, Ebenezer Scrooge's partner dies and comes back as a ghost to warn Scrooge of the judgment to come. Dickens portrays him as being wrapped in chains to which weights are attached, representing his bondage in life to money, stinginess, callousness, and cruelty. There is a sense in which Jacob Marley can say, "I followed my appetites unhindered; I did whatever I wanted to do." It is not true freedom that remains so shackled and bound down. Rather, true freedom is grounded in such virtues as temperance, practical wisdom, justice, self-control, and charity, which transform us into our true selves. When Jesus said "you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free," he spoke of the knowledge of transformation to the virtues of Christ-likeness and hence to true freedom.

Allaying Worries

Some of you hearing this call to virtuous transformation may be despairing at this point. Well Wood, what I hear you telling us is that now, in addition to being socially aware, environmentally sensitive, physically fit, intellectually engaged, relationally connected, you're telling us we need to be virtuously transformed into perfect people. Thanks a lot! I was worried about turning in my final papers on time and gearing up for final exams. Ha, that's nothing! Now, you say I've gotta be perfect! Well, here's what I think about your advice Wood: it's a recipe for resignation and defeatism.

I am very aware that this must sound like a project of impossible proportions. I am stunned myself when I think about the amazingly dramatic call of Christ on our lives. Yet, as Anne Lamont remarks, "God loves you just the way you are – and too much to let you stay that way." And it's our Lord who says to us "Be ye perfect even as your heavenly Father is perfect." Not in the sense that we are to be omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent, as is our Father. No, what Jesus is saying is that we are to fully actualized as God is, fully mature creatures who have grown into the full stature of all we can be as humans. God has nothing less in mind for us than a vital, flourishing, and truly free life: what Jesus calls, the abundant life.

Allow me to conclude by offering a couple of thoughts that might allay your worries about the impossibility of the task. Aristotle believed that virtuous

transformation was achievable solely by dint of human effort and training, such that once transformed to virtue, one would no longer struggle with unvirtuous moral inclinations. Christians agree with Aristotle that virtuous transformation is essential for maximal flourishing, for growing into the fullness of all that we can be. In fact, we go beyond Aristotle by claiming that humans should not just be fully actualized as humans, we should become virtuous so as to become partakers of the divine nature. Christians importantly part company with Aristotle as to the means of achieving virtue. Aquinas, as devoted a follower of Aristotle as a Christian can be, nevertheless disagreed with Aristotle's belief that we could accomplish virtuous transformation on our own. According to Aquinas, the deiform virtues of faith, hope, and charity must be infused in us by the Spirit, and they in turn perfect the virtues of mind, will, and body.

Christians deny that virtuous transformation occurs *solely* by dint of human effort. But this is consistent with saying that our transformation to virtue and away from vice requires our effort. The activist language of endeavor in the New Testament is inescapable: We should "**train** ourselves in all godliness (I Tim 4)," "**Make every effort** to add to our faith virtue" (II Pet 1:5)," that "**strive** for holiness (Heb 12; 14)," "**work out** our salvation in fear and trembling (Phil. 2)," "**fight** the good fight," "**press on**", "**put on (Christ, the whole armor of God) (Eph 6)**, **put off** (your old nature), "**throw off** everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us **run** with perseverance the race marked out for us. (Hebrews 12) **Crucify** the flesh (Gal 5), to mention some representative passages.

Here the longstanding wisdom of the ancients, the desert Fathers, the monastics, the scholastics, of Protestant divines, of Law, Baxter, de Salles, and the contemporary voices of Dallas Willard and Richard Foster tend to converge: We cultivate virtues by imitating the exemplars in our midst, by repeatedly imitating the behaviors they model for us, by practicing the traditional spiritual disciplines of prayer, meditation, study, silence, good deeds, by participating in worship and the sacraments.

But, thanks be to God, we have what Aristotle did not have: the Holy Spirit. Jesus told his disciples that it was actually better that he depart so that he could send the comforter, the Holy Spirit, for it is not by human power and might alone, but by the Spirit that these things will be accomplished. So, as to the transformation of the mind, Paul says in Romans 8:6 “the mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life. And in regard to body and will: “Live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of sinful nature” (Gal. 5:16). It is divine grace that raises humans above the level to which they are naturally inclined, and equips them and empowers them to share in the divine nature.

Finally, let us acknowledge that our virtuous transformation is the project of a lifetime, not to be completed this side of heaven. We can scarcely do better than to imitate the example of St. Paul who writes of the fullness of life in Christ saying: Philippians: “Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward

the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature think this way.”