

Growth and Development

One of the poems I like is “the Raven” by Edgar Allan Poe. I am also fond of this Author’s poem “Eldorado”. As a sixth grade student, I also developed an interest in a book called “Great tales of Terror and the Supernatural”. Black was then, my favorite color. I preferred then, long walks after dark, alone, to think and walk and concentrate on what then to me were things of “grave” concern. I always wanted to have as a vehicle an ultra custom 1959 Cadillac hearse.... Black, of course. Graveyards were then, and still are to some extent, a spot of interest. In college I would go in spring to a pioneer cemetery in the campus area to prop my head up against a particular tombstone to read.... I would then pick a handful of daisies and place it on top of this one particular stone just to say “thanks for the use of your spot”. I became ever more cognizant that death is the destiny of every man[1].

My interests have always hinged around the slightly macabre, especially where man’s intervention in the technologically unknown results in the opening of a can of worms which is unplanned and for which the person intervening is unprepared. In movies, Disney’s 20,000 Leagues under the sea comes to mind, where Captain Nemo’s nuclear powered submarine has been developed and is technologically ahead of its time. Captain Nemo discovers that vengeance is not as sweet as he first thought and that it does not replace persons lost... They are still dead and gone. Further, that some things are best to be left to God.

Frankenstein is another. In this quintessential “mad scientist movie” the main character has assembled a live man from the body parts of cadavers robbed from graveyards. His plan backfires, he is killed, and his “monster” is destroyed as is his castle and laboratory. He is a century ahead of his time. The world was not yet ready for organ transplants and the like.

In both those story lines, the can of worms the main character has opened is a technological tower of Babel, which, for what ever reason, has backfired on him, leaving him the victim of himself and his own greed of intellectual pursuit. He has proved correct that wisdom is meaningless[2].

There are many questions in life which defy an answer; particularly those of an eschatological nature. Such questions are not normally asked by a prepubescent male, and, consequently, when my personal pursuit of such questions led me into areas of focus which are considered bizarre by adult standards, I was perhaps thought of as weird by children’s standards of the late 1950’s. The paradoxical absurdity is that these are valid questions being asked by all of mankind as they approach the autumnal years of their lives. Children are supposed to be thinking of games, toys, and candy, not the end of things.... Kids are the beginning, not the end. Focusing on such things frightens most people because in order to give an answer to a kid who inquires about such things, the adult must first come to terms with these issues for themselves. They must first acknowledge that some day their own hearts will beat for one final time.... Then what?

Jesus came that man might be saved from sin[3], into which man seems to have the propensity to fall[4]. As humans, we place importance on the things of this world, placing money, wisdom and power in the first place position in our life. We find ourselves in a miserable state where we are in a continual state of despondency, depression, and despair. Like the rich fool we think that more money is what we need, not realizing that the erection of bigger barns, or if it comes down to it a larger bank account, does not satisfy the longings of our souls[5]. Rather than the pursuit of the things of this world which are empty, void, and meaningless[6] we, if we are people of God, should fear God and keep His commandments[7] and submit to Him resisting the erroneous and evil wiles of Satan[8].

Just as I went through, and am still going through periods of growth and development on a personal scale, so the people of God go through growth and development on both personal and group scales. We individually mature and as we are assimilated into Christian groups like churches and Bible study groups our personal growth will manifest itself in the form of the entire group maturing as a result....Each one uplifting the other.

While as a youth, my interests gravitated some what to what some people would call “the darker side” of life, I have matured enough not to confuse being intrigued with these things with placing my faith in these leanings. My faith

now is in that which is higher and nobler than any earthly thing. I have undergone a growth and development of my own. This was not of my own doing, however. This was the doing of He in Whom is my faith placed, and, like both Captain Nemo and Dr. Frankenstein, I am learning that some things are best left to God, Who in His time, will make all things beautiful[9].

[1] Ecclesiastes 7:2

[2] Ecclesiastes 1:12-18

[3] John 3:16, Romans 5:8, 8:32

[4] Romans 3:23, 6:23

[5] Luke 12: 13-21

[6] Ecclesiastes Chapters 1-7

[7] Ecclesiastes 12:13

[8] James 4:1-12

[9] Ecclesiastes 3: 11