



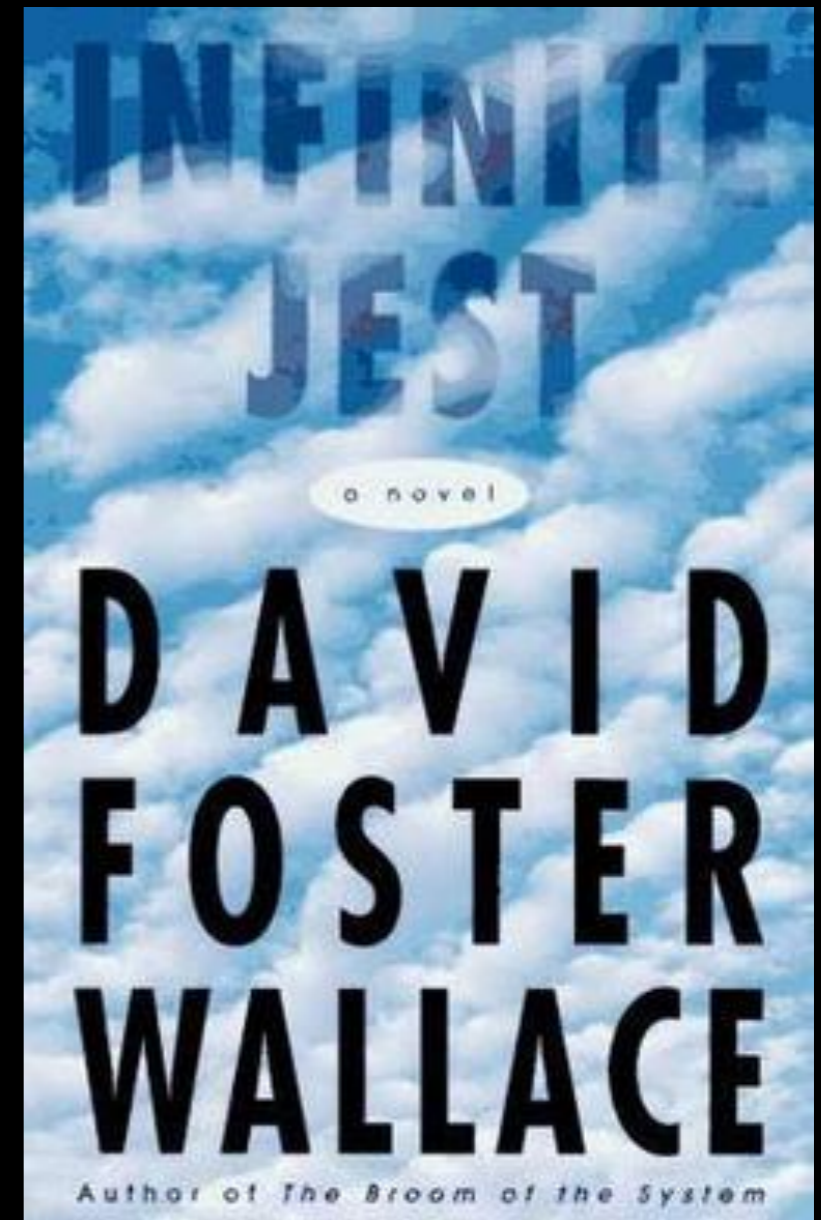
Lead Us Not Into Temptation

Almighty God, whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan: Come quickly to help us who are assaulted by many temptations, and, as you know the weaknesses of each of us, let each one find you mighty to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Everything is clearly going very well. I am specially glad to hear that the two new friends have now made him acquainted with their whole set. All these, as I find from the record office, are thoroughly reliable people; steady, consistent scoffers and worldlings who without any spectacular crimes are progressing quietly and comfortably towards our Father's house. You speak of their being great laughers. I trust this does not mean that you are under the impression that laughter as such is always in our favour.

The point is worth some attention. I divide the causes of human laughter into Joy, Fun, the Joke Proper, and Flippancy.

pp. 53

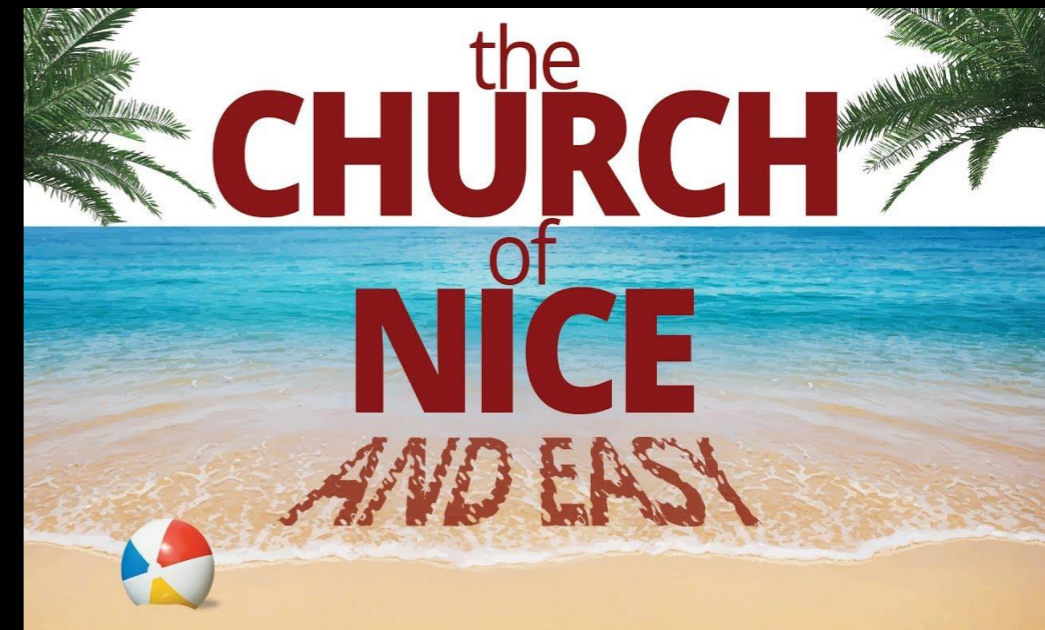


But flippancy is the best of all. In the first place it is very economical. Only a clever human can make a real Joke about virtue, or indeed about anything else; any of them can be trained to talk as if virtue were funny.

Among flippant people the Joke is always assumed to have been made. No one actually makes it; but every serious subject is discussed in a manner which implies that they have already found a ridiculous side to it. If prolonged, **the habit of Flippancy builds up around a man the finest armour-plating against the Enemy that I know**, and it is quite free from the dangers inherent in the other sources of laughter. It is a thousand miles away from joy: it deadens, instead of sharpening, the intellect; and it excites no affection between those who practice it, pp.56

Obviously you are making excellent progress. My only fear is lest in attempting to hurry the patient you awaken him to a sense of his real position. For you and I, who see that position as it really is, must never forget how totally different it ought to appear to him. We know that we have introduced a change of direction in his course which is already carrying him out of his orbit around the Enemy; but he must be made to imagine that all the choices which have effected this change of course are trivial and revocable. He must not be allowed to suspect that he is now, however slowly, heading right away from the sun on a line which will carry him into the cold and dark of utmost space.

pp.57



This dim uneasiness needs careful handling. If it gets too strong it may wake him up and spoil the whole game. On the other hand, if you suppress it entirely—which, by the by, the Enemy will probably not allow you to do—we lose an element in the situation which can be turned to good account. If such a feeling is allowed to live, but not allowed to become irresistible and flower into real repentance, it has one invaluable tendency. It increases the patient's reluctance to think about the Enemy.

pp.58

KILL YOUR TELEVISION

You no longer need a good book, which he really likes, to keep him from his prayers or his work or his sleep; a column of advertisements in yesterday's paper will do. You can make him waste his time not only in conversation he enjoys with people whom he likes, but in conversations with those he cares nothing about on subjects that bore him. You can make him do nothing at all for long periods.

[64] You can keep him up late at night, not roistering, but staring at a dead fire in a cold room.

You will say that these are very small sins; and doubtless, like all young tempters, you are anxious to be able to report spectacular wickedness.

But do remember, the only thing that matters is the extent to which you separate the man from the Enemy. It does not matter how [65] small the sins are provided that their cumulative

effect is to edge the man away from the Light and out into the Nothing. Murder is no better than cards if cards can do the trick.

Indeed the safest road to Hell is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts. . . .pp60-61

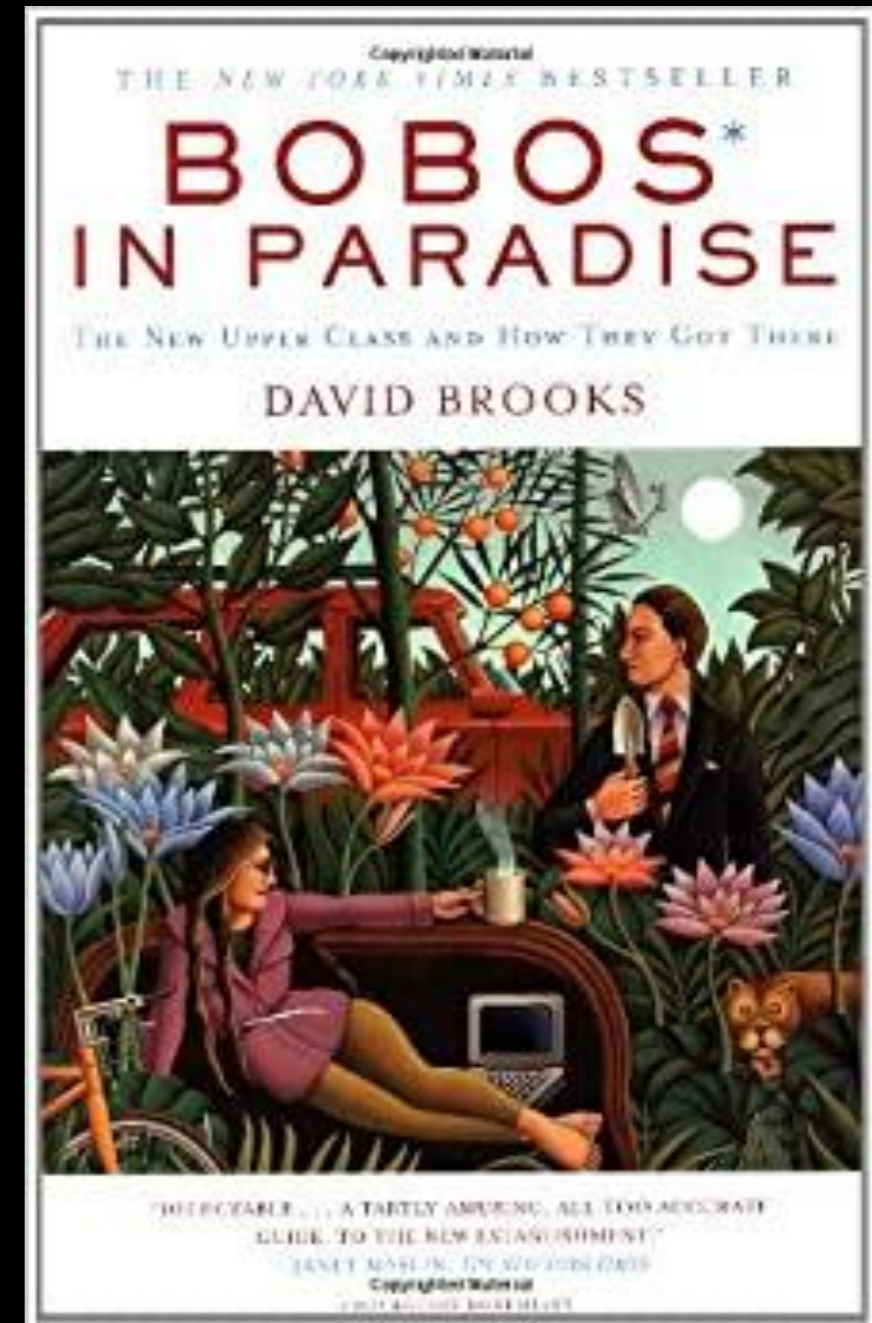


And now for your blunders. On your own showing you first of all allowed the patient to read a book he really enjoyed, because he [67] enjoyed it and not in order to make clever remarks about it to his new friends. In the second place, you allowed him to walk down to the old mill and have tea there—a walk through country he really likes, and taken alone.

In other words you allowed him two real positive Pleasures. Were you so ignorant as not to see the danger of this? The characteristic of Pains and Pleasures is that they are unmistakably real, and therefore, as far as they go, give the man who feels them a touchstone of reality. Thus if you had been trying to damn your man by the Romantic method—by making him a kind of Childe Harold or Werther submerged in self-pity for imaginary distresses—you would try to protect him at all costs from any real pain; because, of course, five minutes' genuine toothache would reveal the romantic sorrows for the nonsense they were and unmask your whole strategem. Pp.63-64



The man who truly and disinterestedly enjoys any one thing in the world, for its own sake, and without caring twopence what other people say about it, is by that very fact fore-armed against some of our subtlest modes of attack. You should always try to make the patient abandon the people or food or books he really likes in favour of the “best” people, the “right” food, the “important” books. I have known a human defended from strong temptations to social ambition by a still stronger taste for tripe and onions. Pp. 66



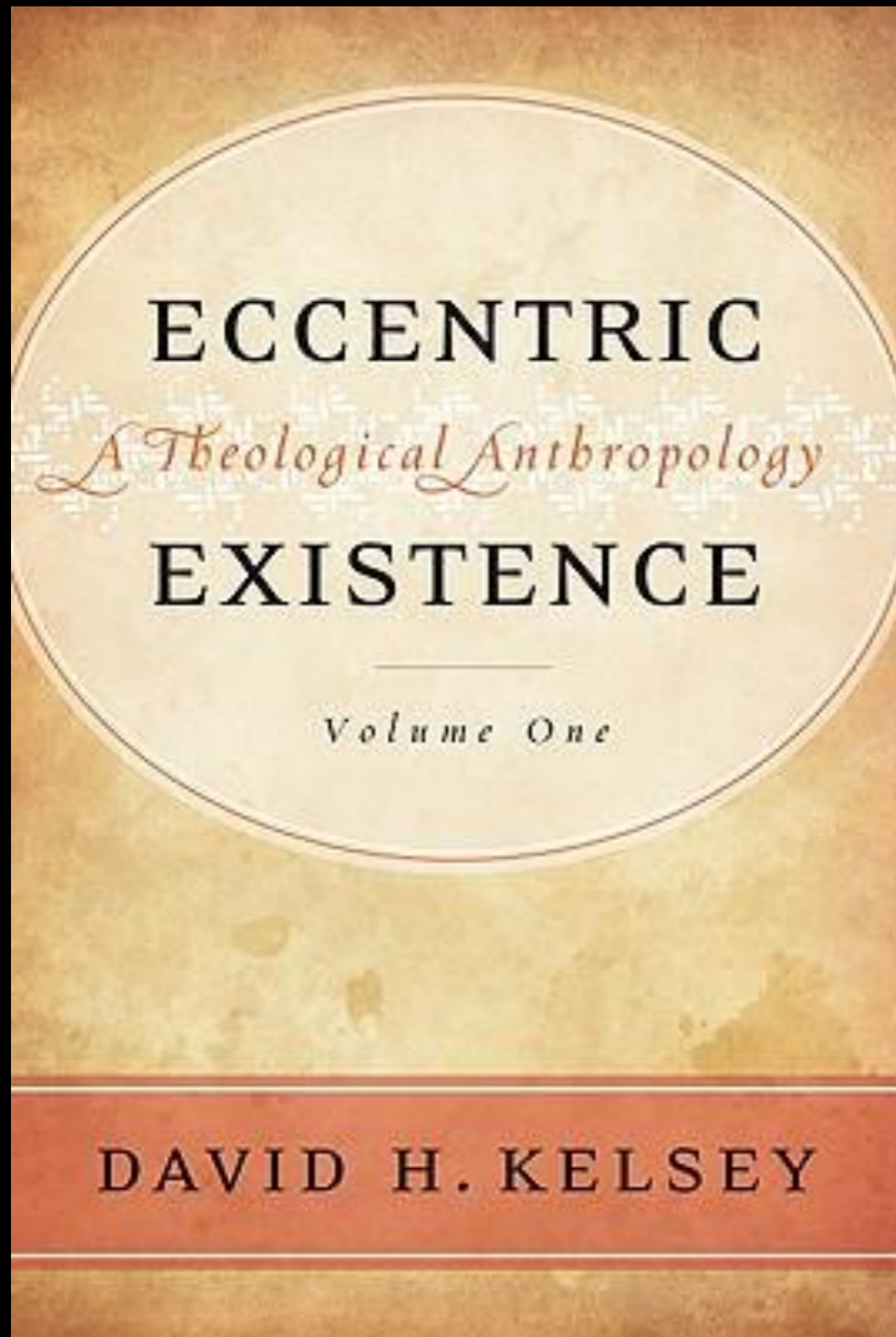
**As one of the
humans has said, active habits are strengthened
by repetition but passive ones are weakened.
The more often he feels without acting, the
less he will be able ever to act, and, in the
long run, the less he will be able to feel. Pp. 67**

» Joseph Butler (1692-1752), *The Analogy of Religion* (1736), Part I, “Natural Religion”, chapter
“Of a State of Probation, as Intended for Moral Discipline and Improvement”, section II.

Thoughts, by often passing through the mind, are felt less sensibly: being accustomed to danger, begets intrepidity, *i. e.* lessens fear; to distress, lessens the passion of pity; to instances of others’ mortality, lessens the sensible apprehension of our own. And from these two observations together; that practical habits are formed and strengthened by repeated acts, and that passive impressions grow weaker by being repeated upon us; it must follow, that active habits may be gradually forming and strengthening, by a course of acting upon such and such motives and excitements, whilst these motives and excitements themselves are, by proportionable degrees, growing less sensible; *i. e.* are continually less and less sensibly felt, even as the active habits strengthen.



You must therefore conceal from the patient the true end of Humility. Let him think of it not as self-forgetfulness but as a certain kind of opinion (namely, a low opinion) of his own talents and character. Some talents, I gather, he really has. Fix in his mind the idea that humility consists in trying to believe those talents to be less valuable than he believes them to be. No doubt they are in fact less valuable than he believes, but that is not the point. The great thing is to make him value an opinion for some quality other than truth, thus introducing an element of dishonesty and make-believe into the heart of what otherwise [73] threatens to become a virtue. By this method thousands of humans have been brought to think that humility means pretty women trying to believe they are ugly and clever men trying to believe they are fools. And since what they are trying to believe may, in some cases, be manifest nonsense, they cannot succeed in believing it and we have the chance of keeping their minds endlessly revolving on themselves in an effort to achieve the impossible. Pp.70-71



**The
Enemy will also try to render real in the patient's
mind a doctrine which they all profess but find
it difficult to bring home to their feelings—the
doctrine that they did not create themselves,
[75] that their talents were given them, and that
they might as well be proud of the colour of
their hair. But always and by all methods the
Enemy's aim will be to get the patient's mind
off such questions, and yours will be to fix it
on them. Even of his sins the Enemy does not
want him to think too much: once they are
repented, the sooner the man turns his attention
outward, the better the Enemy is pleased,**

Almighty God, whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan: Come quickly to help us who are assaulted by many temptations, and, as you know the weaknesses of each of us, let each one find you mighty to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.