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Concatenation (A "C" Concentrate)

by

Sylvia E. Bowen

This series of converging ideas comprises a compendium of reflections emerging from concentration. Concentration channels the complex combinations of concepts, convictions, contradictions and conjectures of the astute mind into a mental corral of succinct and concise orderliness which alone conserves coherence and consistency. So many factors form concentric circles controlling the consequences and continuity of existence.

The biggest factor of all is *Christ*, the Core, the Cohesive, the Catalyst. Where would we be without Him? Chaos would close in upon us. Cataclysmic results would descend upon us and submerge us to convulsive doom. Concentration upon Him elevates us and counterbalances the confusion which confronts us on every side. Cause and effect seem somehow to assume the right proportions the more we cleave to His conjugal companionship.

Then there is *Capitalism* at the helm steering us into canals whose waters are unpredictable. Conscientious contributors to this state of affairs find themselves constantly criticized for tenets which seem to be out of tune with the common good. Conversely, there is *communism*. Cancerous in concept, it influences the lives of too large a per cent of the global population. Can the co-existence of these two opposing states culminate in the correction of all bad or in the composite of all good? Is compromise consistent with convictions which stem from clear-cut thinking? Convictions which compel? Create, if you can, conditions which will compensate for these controversial components in our sociological configuration.

Yet, whether there be Christ, or Capitalism, or Communism which calibrates our conceptions, conceits, characteristics or consciences, there are numerous other factors common to the lives of all of us. There are *Character, Conduct, Companionship, Complacency and Cowardice, Courage, Courtship, Connubiality, Consanguinity, Conquest, Currency, Competency and Countless Constituents* congruently combining to chart our course categorically as catastrophic or consummating.

Character is the acceptance and rejection of cumulative teaching, learning, discernments, rationalizations and rehabilitations. It emphasizes introspection, evaluation, reconnoitering, retreats and advances. It is a collection of retrospections and gleanings. It stabilizes yearnings wants and wishes. It accentuates positive thinking. It assimilates the philosophies of such master teachers as Christ, Plato, and Confucius. It disseminates altruism, philanthropy, beatification. It has no graduation day, no culminating activity. It is perpetual growth, progressive awareness, constant response to the demands of the terrestrial classroom and the celestial workshop. Character is the impetus that drives to the achievement of apparently unattainable goals. It pushes and catapults

the mind into unheard of vistas and reverses itself as readily to lift up those whose hopes are gone, whose visions are stagnating, whose successes seem perpetually elusive and whose motivations are negative.

Character unburdens the soul and spearheads peace of mind where conflicts reign and disaster threatens. Character is simultaneously compromising and uncompromising. Character is the capacity to rise and fall and rise again; to win and lose and not give up, to fight the swirling currents and retain a sense of direction, to run the obstacle course with sustained endurance, to smile at intrigue without resentment, to catalog confidences without betrayal, to chide without condemning, to be neither crafty nor cunning nor cruel nor caustic nor culpable. Character is non-corrosive. No rust nor dust nor mold deposits. Dampness sometimes settles there, but the candent nature of character consumes the moisture and the full candescent glow is radiant as cadence is again restored compelling, commandeering, congealing, captivating *Character*.

Conduct defies description. It is the cogent combination of so many cooperative cogitations. It is the outward and apparent reaction to the concomitant forces of the environment. It is frequently non-analytical, unexplainable and unacceptable. It is conceivably and necessarily individualistic. It has the unfortunate complexion of being obvious, objective and vulnerable. Were it ostensibly subjective, perhaps its status would be more generally unquestioned and tolerated. Why do we conduct ourselves as we do? Why? Do we, ourselves really know? Do we accept ourselves? Do we face facts? . . . bold, bare, unequivocal facts? Or, do we twist and distort facts to shunt them into some other beliefs? Do we react according to convictions, conscience and selective thinking? Do we accept and adopt pseudo-patterns or stereotypic modes, mores, fads, and fashions?

More than all this, who is the authoritative judge or authentic judicator of conduct? Who KNOWS that much? Who possesses the full body of knowledge of the inner workings of the mind? . . . enough to qualify him as an arbiter or one's conduct? To be sure there is the so-called accepted procedure of managing one's self which in generally thought of as proper or conformative. And it is also true that there is a marked difference between the law-breaker and the law-abider, between the saint and the sinner, between the bum and the gentleman, between the crude and the refined, between the uncouth and the well-bred, between the boor and the polished. But just WHERE did these differences begin? Say! then friend: "There but for the grace of God go I" and *conduct* yourself accordingly.

How does *Companionship* evolve? Do like things repel and unlike things attract when people are the poles? Does conduct set the stage? Do Crowds? Does Solitude? Contemplating, it seems that each competes for priority. There is no loneliness so intense as that experienced in a crowd. We cower beneath its crushing club. Loneliness IS a crowd. We cringe at the contemptuous contortions of emotional counterpoints. The epitome of screeching loneliness can be most concretely connoted in a boisterous, cunning, conniving, conspicuously conspiring crowd. Combustible outcomes may occur. On the contrary, solitude is

in itself a deserter of controlled behavior patterns. Solitude can be as destructive as the most calculating conspirator. Significantly, however, a steady virtual companionship can assert itself in solitude. No distractions mar the communion. Giant spiritual benefits are obtained in solitude. Crowds, too, are capable of furnishing their share of companionship. Some classified crowds confer cultural, emotional and spiritual coronas on our cloudy or clouded horizons. They are capable, too, of reinstating the living corpse into a living vitalizing force . . . Yes! Crowds and solitude do contest for honors in the adequate supply of companionship. Seek both then, at intervals, to balance the ledger satisfactorily.

Then again, Companionship has its own unique characterization. It is segmented. Creeds and credo dictate the extent of our companionship. Desires select. Love isolates. Just being in the company of another person is not necessarily companionship. Likes discriminate. Some common interests must color the acclimation of personalities. Tangible or abstract communication must be present. Pressurized compartments spend themselves easily, effortlessly, gratifyingly. Calm pervades the air surrounding genuine companionship. At times, silence speaks so many words, so many weighty, meaningful, significant words. Mere impulses can set up a chain of communication. Ambiguities dissipate like a fleeting comet. Understandings crystallize. Fear lurks in the shadows, menacingly, but only fear of the deprivation of such celestial contentment, such singular collaboration of all the complements and compositions of this harmonious concert of human sharps and flats and chords . . . Companionship.

Complacency and Cowardice are partners in crime. Both contribute to the deterioration of the human race, human morals and morales. No courageous citizen of any country should boast of either ingredient. Complacency is an inactive yeast which renders flat the bread of initiative, and cowardice is the false face of courage. Cowardice slips with slinking gait into the paths of the spineless and impenetrable braggodocia. Curtains fall and rise but the performance always flops, neatly fizzles; where cowardice or complacency stealthily stalks. Passiveness and complacency are not akin. Passiveness is an active opposition to the unaccepted patterns of mores and customs. Complacency looks on speechlessly, emotionlessly, and docilely. Cowardice assists by convincing the complacent that the line of the least resistance is the more effective. Complacency is a state of inertness which reflects the lack of a conscientious adjustment to a changing environment. Complacency is giving up. Giving up is death, death in a world where living is a commodity and where the essence of existence is the courage to be up and thinking and doing and studying and working and changing and constructing and living. Burn an effigy to *Complacency and Cowardice*.

Courage emerges when cowardice and complacency have been annihilated. Companionship helps courage to gain momentum and character gives it the forward thrust. Courage is not to be identified or confused with bravado. Bravado may be a form of fool-hardiness, but not so courage. Courage sparks the plugs of action—to do, to dare, to die. Courage conceals special equipment, forethought, deep thought,

instantaneous thought—always a degree of thought. Thought circumscribes, circumvents, conjectures, chooses critically, concludes wisely and logically. Wisdom is a blue print for concentrated thinking. Knowledge is a scale. Courage collaborates with wisdom and knowledge in prescribing a formula for the problem. Courage can be acquired or developed or synthetically compounded. Courage leads in all battles . . . mental, emotional, physical or spiritual. God reminded Joshua to be of *good* courage. This reminder indicates that there may be a kind of courage which is not good. How so? Is courage not in itself good? Or is the modifier here used to emphasize the degree of intensity of the courage which is suggested or commanded? So be of GOOD courage, STRONG courage, UNBEATABLE courage, UNYIELDING courage. Courage is a coat of armor, a strong impenetrable coat. Courage is not a blockade; it is an attack, a barge, a viaduct, a river, a bridge, a road, a link, a connection to something stronger, more lasting, more abiding. *Courage cries* "EXCELSIOR!"

Courtship is like a tonic or a vitamin or a hormone. It invigorates or revitalizes or rejuvenates. It gives new zest to birds and bees and beasts. It comes sometimes unexpectedly and sometimes unannounced but always with anticipation and welcome. Like a fresh spring breeze it dilates the eyes and cushions the delicate underpinnings of the heart. It charms the unsuspecting and the suspecting with equal ease. It punctuates the story of life and love. Courtship is not jet-propelled but changing from gear to gear, it sets the locomotive of emotion gliding gracefully, smoothly, gently into a world beyond these banal terrestrial environs—into a sphere of its own peculiar ionization. Elegantly it drapes its enveloping garb of royalty and loyalty about the shoulders of the responsive and prudent. Caressingly it embraces the non-resisting, exuberant captive be it neophyte or veteran.

Courtship inhabits where halls of invitation beckon without treachery, deceit or guile. Courtship elicits many qualities of mind and imagination which here-to-fore remained locked up or concealed for want of the proper stimuli or motivations. Courtship springs up from many reservoirs, from varied streams, from turbulent or tranquil waters. It lurks not threateningly, but advances cautiously at first and gradually gains temerity to express itself confidently and decisively. It challenges the capricious, the reticent, the reserved, the apathetic, the pessimist and the optimist. It always blooms; sometimes into flowers, sometimes just buds, but there is always evident change for the better. Courtship may lead into lasting gardens of love and persist to advanced stages of perennial love. Spread the welcome mat for *Courtship*.

Connubiality is the architectural design after which the very structure of our society is patterned. It is the foundation of civilization. It is the reservoir of love and life and lasting good. Like Alpha and Omega, it is the beginning and the end. Like architecture it may be Ancient or Egyptian or Greek or Roman or Gothic or Colonial or Modern. It has a universal period or identification. It survives, with unparalled and undiminishing majestic beauty, through the cultures of all periods or ages. It is the paradise which is known to many and sought by all. It goes on and on and on. It is not man-made. It is of divine origin and perpetuation. Man's twisted and covetous mind has

injected many lascivious patterns and concupiscent interpretations. Yet the sanctum of the connubial relationship remains unscathed. Connubiality is not an isthmus, nor an island, nor a bay, nor a river, nor a sea, nor an ocean. It is the totality of all waters of all sizes or natures which supply the waters of satisfactory living and quench the thirsts of Red or Black or Yellow or White. Connubiality is the seed sown on good ground which brings forth a hundred fold and takes new roots and reproduces and replenishes the earth in order to fulfill man's need for himself. *Covet Connubiality!*

Consanguinity is the offspring of connubiality. It is the culmination or realization of connubiality. These two string along hand in hand cognizant of their interdependence. One is the experiment and the other is the laboratory in which the experiment is performed. One is a hypothesis and the other a conclusion. One is the collection of data and the other is the source of the sampling. Measure for measure each attests to the validity of each. The wheel of fortune spins for each and the wealth is mutually shared. Consanguinity resembles both a bibliography and an encyclopedia. Connubiality is more like a cataloging system. Consanguinity has the powerful function of providing the links for the chain of connubiality. The relationship is a circular one with its special laws of permutation. *Consanguinity* is a fixture.

Conquest is a desire or drive or need or the comingling of all three. It has prompted nations and individuals. It motivates the young and the old. It may be aimed at very tangible and materialistic targets—the people or land or possessions of varied types, or it may be directed toward intangible or elusive objectives—like power or popularity or liberation of the libido. Conquest may be subjective when the extirpation of bad habits or objectionable behavior is mandatory. Conquest may be two-faced when it is substituted for obvious deficiencies or shortcomings. It serves as a sedative to calm a turbulent sense of guilt or weakness. It sublimates the conflicting, confusing, convicting impulses of the libertine. Conquest may result in a paralyzing dilemma. Conquest has its virtues when the betterment of the majority is an end product. It always stipulates measures of conformity which may anesthetize the conquered or freeze his potential. Conquest occasionally has antitodal qualities.

The adage—"as long as there is life there is hope" may well be modified to read—"as long as there is life there will be conquest." Conquest has made history—ancient, medieval and current. It shall continue to make history. All conquest is not historically recorded, but all conquest does make history. The annals of the mind and heart record, indelibly, events too voluminous for publication, too confidential for revelation, too precious for dissemination. Breathes there a man with soul so abbreviated and unimaginative that never has he conceived of conquest. If so, let him wilt away for he never should

have bloomed at all. Conquest is as inevitable as oxygen in the air. The conquerer and the conquered change places many times. Breathing freely and suffocation are respectively interchanged. This convolutive picture dominates the procession of *Conquest*.

Currency fits into this panorama because it is the mold in which the distinctive features of so many factors of life are molded or cast or shaped, or developed, or strengthened, or weakened, or augmented or consumed. It wields a mighty hand. It suggests or commands, forbids or engenders, extenuates or extorts, depresses or exults, condones or condemns, conduces or corrupts, rehabilitates or destroys, supports or usurps, helps or deters. *Currency* sings a unique song. Its chants permeate the materialistic atmosphere of all with whom it has to deal, and it has to deal with every one of us in some degree. *Currency* has many friends and no enemies. This is itself unique—the unprecedented position of having no enemies. *Currency* has so many attributes that it can be wisely and unashamedly coveted as a friend in need and in deed. Christ, Himself, described only the 'love' of it as evil but not the commodity itself. This love is a form of lust and any lusting after is evil and must stem from evil roots. Remember 'the LOVE of money is the ROOT of all evil'—not the money. *Currency* attained or earned or saved or invested or contributed or however unrepvingly acquired has value and virtue and wears valiant spurs. The wheels of the gigantic machinery of civilization chug confidently to the steady rhythm and cadency of *Currency*.

Competency is the capacity to accrue the maximum efficiency from the mechanism of knowledge. It is the conveyer belt which assembles and coordinates information, education and mother wit. It functions not in a vacuum but needs the media of challenge, motivation, inspiration, curiosity and compensation. It is the conversion factor in otherwise meaningless, disconnected and incongruent data. *Competency* is not relegated to any particular class but distributes itself among the poor, the rich, the meek, the haughty, the menial, the lordly, the apprentice and the experienced. It is the high frequency tones of arduous endeavor and the sonorous sonatas of ultimate accomplishment. *Competency* is a transformer for all mental energies and reduces the coefficient of friction to the optimum minimum. It is not an abstraction but realistic, tangible and probable. It is the "hole in one," the "touchdown," the "home run" the "grand slam," the "checkmate," the "boston," the "summa cum laude." It is dominant—not recessive. acquired—not inherited. *Competency* is the base of any success system. *Competency* underestimates no elements but integrates them all critically from the infinitesimal of the infinite. Every one can attain *Competency*.

The *Countless Constituents* of concurrently complex conditioning circumstances congruently combining to chart our course categorically as catastrophic or consummating have many variegated patterns. It is impossible to enumerate them all. They transcend the scope of the physical or the cosmic. They are all in the batter of the bread of life alternately culminating in happiness or gloom. A few may be: a rainbow, a cloud, cheer, beauty, hope, despondency, ugliness, despair, ancestry, riches, poverty, genius, idiocy, stature, strength, weakness, imagination, acumen, muteness, articulation, deformity, perfection, talent, confidence, mistrust, hate, love, kindness, cruelty, consideration, disdain, comfort, misery, generosity, miserliness, frugality, wasteful-

ness, pleasure, suffering, health, disease, tolerance, intolerance, wisdom, ignorance, initiative, docility, ambition, indulgence, specialization, ineptitude, diligence, indolence, indifference, ardor, or any component complementary to the concentric circles controlling the consequences and continuity of existence.