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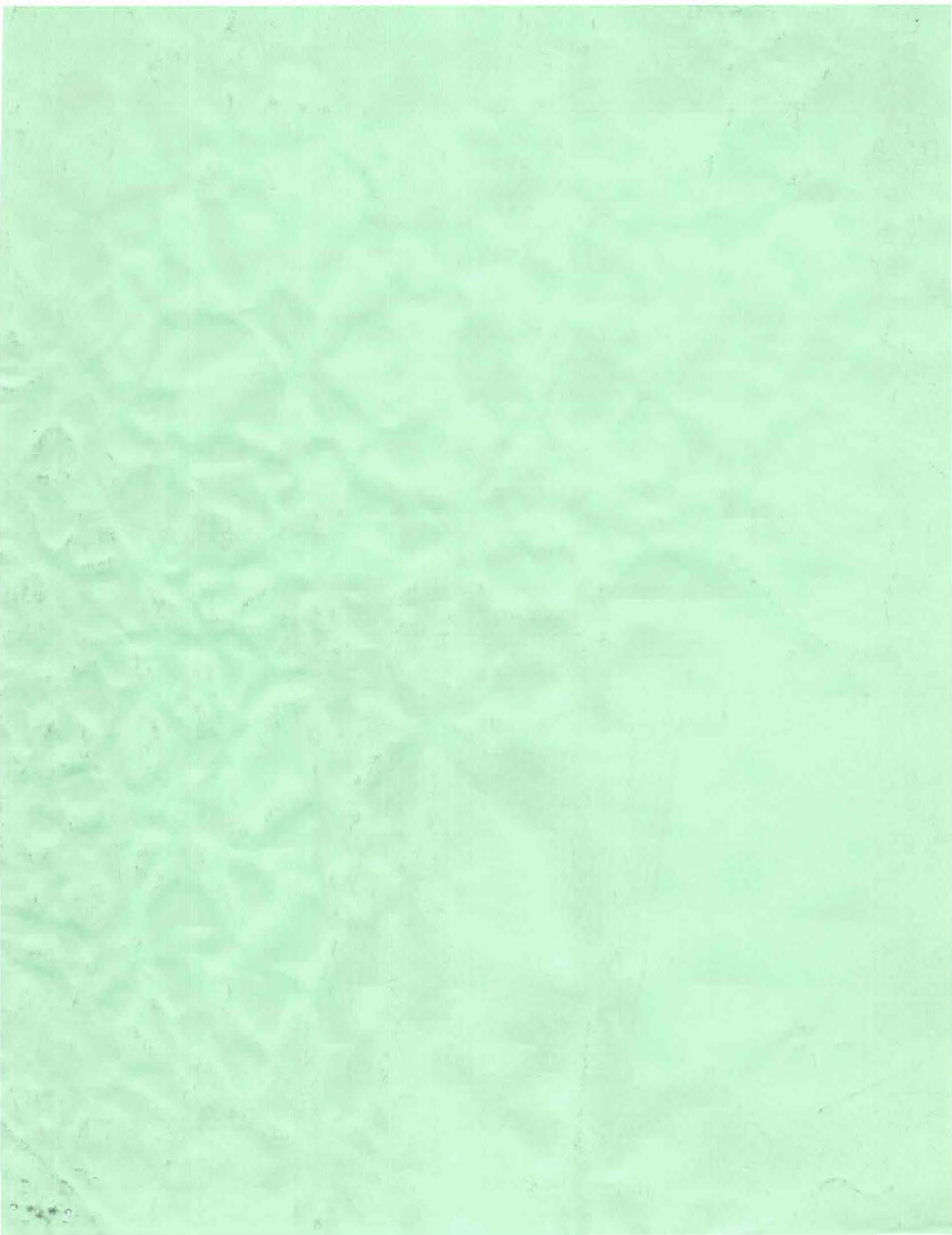
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Reaching for the Stars

Mayan Lesson Number 162

REACH FOR A STAR

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THE CONSTANT STARS

MAN, THE UPLOOKING ONE

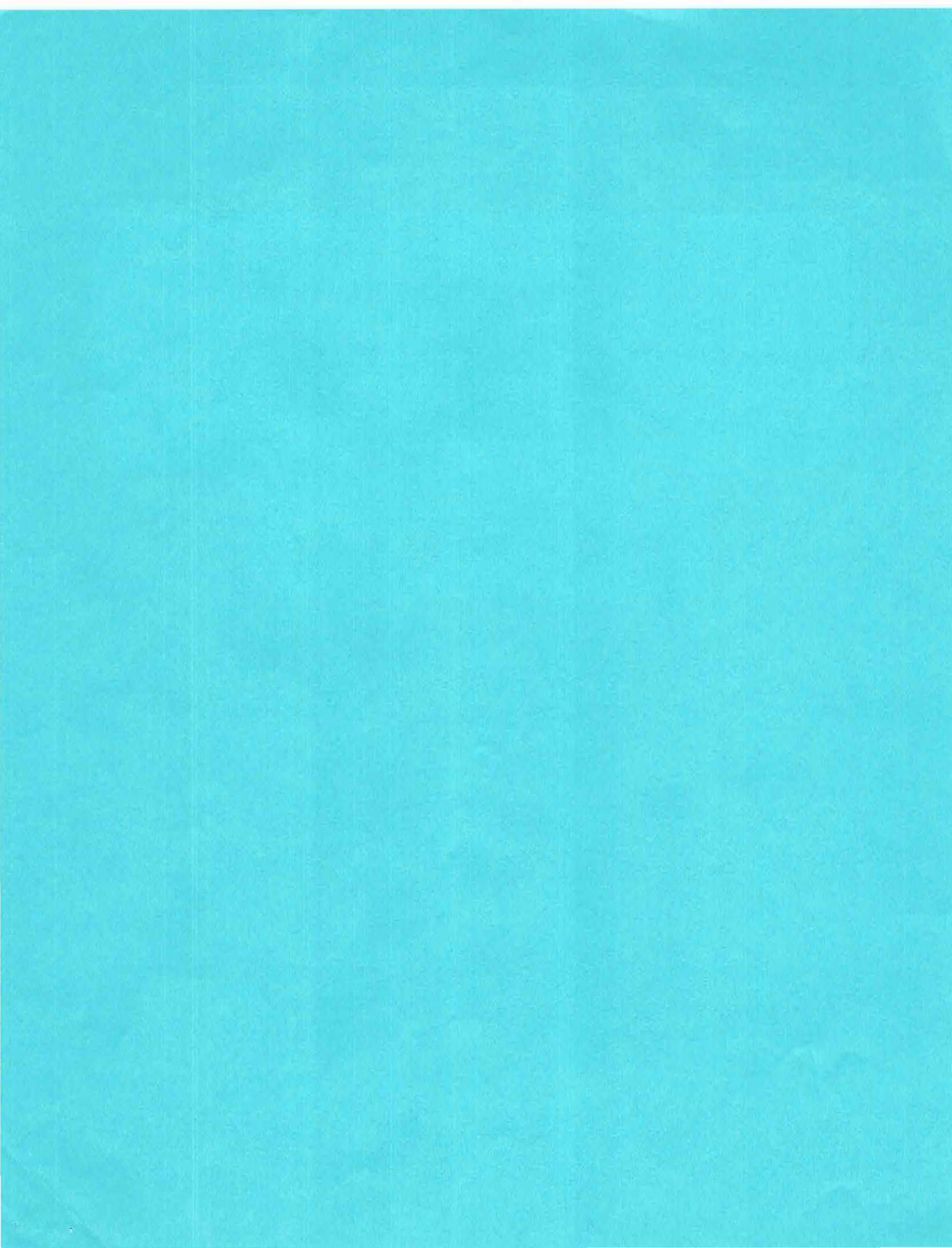
KINDS OF STARS

THE STAR PERFORMER

THE SPIRITUAL FIRMAMENT

STARS AND MEN

MEDITATION





REACHING FOR THE STARS

★ Beloved Centurion:

Nearly everyone would like to be a "star", but not many ever reach that state of being. Many have the ability to become stars, but they do not know how to develop their talents. Many already are stars, but they do not realize it.

Most people, when they think of a star, think of those who become famous, perhaps in the theater, perhaps in the opera, or perhaps on the motion picture screen. But there is another kind of stardom which many of us achieve, if, in our lives, we have become successful in helping other people, or if we have established a home which is healthy and happy, or have become successful in other walks of life. Then we have achieved stardom. There are so many ways in which one may become a "star".

The title of this series of lessons which have been prepared for you is REACHING FOR THE STARS. It is our aim in this series to help those of you who have made great progress to learn even more about attaining stardom in many of the pursuits of life, whether it is in the business world, or in the home life, or in ministering to other people - whatever pursuit may be closest to your heart, to help you reach the height.

Another thing which you should remember in traveling along the path which leads to success is that success in life is a matter not so much of talent or opportunity, as it is of concentration and perseverance. I would like to point out that, as most of us know and as we all find out eventually, any success which is worth having is founded on our Christian life. We cannot accomplish any lasting success or stardom without God playing an important role in our pursuits. Character is the real foundation of all worthwhile success, and it is the belief of your instructor that you and those in your class know the value of a strong character, and you have built your life since you became a Mayan with this thought in mind.

I point with great pride to you and other members of your class, from the standpoint of wonderful traits you have built into your character; but we are continuously in need of more growth and more strength in order to reach perfection. We are human and it is not always easy to do the things which, in our own hearts, we know are right.

Let us never give up our goal. Let us always continue to reach for the

stars, let nothing short of reaching the heights satisfy our worthwhile aims and desires.


Keep this thought in mind as you send the following prayer toward the stars:



Heavenly Father, I am looking on life and the universe
Through the telescope of the soul.
I can see that they are unutterably vast,
and I know they are even vaster than I can see.
Help me to do my best to enlarge my thinking and my
conduct to fit them.


Amen.

R E A C H F O R A S T A R

 ONE of our greatest violinists has said that when he is to play he fixes his mind's eye on a star, and thinks of that star as he plays. The thought of it lifts him beyond the ordinary and helps him to do his best. Anyone who does his best finds himself moving upward in an ascending scale. One's best is never the same two successive times. Undone, it sinks lower in the scale. Done, it rises higher with each successive doing.

Each time you do your best at anything it ceases to be your best, because you can do better the next time. The exercise of doing one's best makes him forever afterward capable of doing a better best.

We often say we have done or will do our best at something, but we are likely to deceive ourselves when we say it. All too seldom do we really do our best. Doing one's actual best at anything is a large order.

When we have put all our powers of understanding, all our skill of execution, all our patience and persistence, into doing something; and when we have carefully and honestly explored the project for overlooked possibilities and faithfully searched ourselves for unrealized abilities; and when we have put all this into effect, we perhaps have a right to say with reasonable assurance of truth, that we have done our best. In some such way are all masterpieces produced. 

We have then watched our star and let its inspiration draw us upward, outward, and onward. It calls us to put everything we have into doing our best for now. Tomorrow is another matter, for life is a progressive experience.

Though it is incomprehensibly far away, a star always seems a friend. It is always there to remind us of the constancy of real friendship. The fact that it is so high and so far is a challenge to us not to be afraid to know that life-building is a very long road.

Yes, the road to our best is long. That is all the better, for it seems that nothing can stop us except our own surrender. The sweep of life, like the

sweep of space, is very large. We have never run out of room to grow in.

* A star never boasts. Its vastness speaks for itself. It does not need to pretend. Its greatness is beyond all doubt. Its message is simple enough that we can follow it. It is constant and friendly. It keeps going on, and it shines. We never know how many tired eyes are looking up at it and finding rest.

You can't reach a star with your hand, but you can do it with your eye and your mind. Let it challenge you, for it represents your best, which, like the end of the rainbow, keeps moving on and beckoning you to follow.

MAN, THE UPLOOKING ONE



* It took man a long time to become man, and it probably took him a long time to discover what he had become. The first names he applied to himself, as they drifted across the generations to us, indicate that he thought of himself as a being who had learned to look up, who had turned his attention from the mire and clay to discover the sky.

In other words, a human being came to his own the day he stopped riveting his attention on the ground and looked heavenward. The vastness of space hinted to him that it was not mere emptiness. The brightness of the stars seemed to whisper that it was pervaded by a Light Giver in whom man lived, and moved, and had his being. To paraphrase Addison, they proclaimed their Great Original and sang that the Hand that made them was divine.

It was a great moment in history when man began looking toward the stars, for where he looks is where he aspires, and where he aspires is where he will go. His thoughts climb, and his feet follow them. That is the way the individual and the race move on. It is your road onward, as it has been that of mankind. As John Oxenham has said,



"Some souls take the highroad,
And some souls take the low,
And in between on the misty flats
The rest drift to and fro."

That hour of uplooking was the one when the spirit of man began to travel the high road. Look at what he has done and where he has arrived since that time. He has often faltered, and slipped, and temporarily missed the way; some of his backslidings have been grievous, and he should have done much better than he has; but the fact remains that he has done amazingly well. It is because one day long ago the stars put an upward tug in his heart, and his dragging feet were charged with new energy as he took the high road.

We idealists are sometimes laughed at for talking so much about crests and climbing to them, but that is exactly what we try to do. Higher ground is our symbol of progress, improvement, and achievement. There is an inertia that weakens us and a gravitation that pulls us earthward if we let it. It causes us to drift downstream if we do not pull at the oars. To climb a hill or sail



upstream takes more effort, but it brings us to an ever-rising stage of life that is more satisfying and worthwhile.

The clay is always saying to us, "I am your brother. We are alike. Stay here with me. We belong together. It is easier here, and I will satisfy your every desire." But the stars keep whispering, "Higher, higher. Come this way. Lift yourself on the wings of aspiration. We will give you wisdom in place of desire, peace instead of turmoil, life instead of death."

Be deaf to the foolish ones who say it is only human to live at the level of the clay. It is not true. It is sub-human. A real human being is one who has found how unsatisfying all that is, and has turned his gaze from the depths to the heights. To this your stars challenge you.

T H E S T A R P E R F O R M E R



In reality a star is a sphere; but the conventional star, suggested by beams of light reaching out from all sides, is a figure with five points. We have fallen into the habit of calling the chief performer, or anyone who displays top skill or achieves top distinction in anything, a star.

Let us here use this symbolism and apply it to living. The stars suggest that one can be a top performer not only in work but in any phase of his playing of his part on the stage of life on which Shakespeare said that all the men and women are merely players. Taking the conventional form of a star, let us consider that the star performer on the stage of life has five chief points that make him so.

The first point is that he has rightly evaluated himself. He knows that he has great possibilities, but he also knows that they cannot be realized if he tries to stand alone. In his life he sees a plan, and he knows there cannot be a plan without a Planner. Having discovered his Maker, he depends upon and works with Him.

The second point is that he recognizes responsibility in the living of his life. He understands that it is not his to waste or misuse, but to dedicate to duty. To him all that hurts and destroys is wrong, while all that helps and heals is right, and all that does neither is waste. His life is a planting and tending which bears fruit, and his reward is the privilege of living in the good conditions he has helped to create.

The third point is that he exercises well his sovereignty over his own life with its interests and affairs. He remembers not only that it is a realm and he is its king, but he bears in mind that the reign of a monarch is not for long unless he rules well. He marshals his powers to do their work creditably. He keeps his hand on the throttle as any good engineer controls and uses the forces at his command. He manages well the conditions he creates. He examines his motives for whatever he does.



The fourth point is that, having seen himself as part of a greater plan,


he realizes the necessity of a program for living that will harmonize with the supreme will of God. His life is not a scrapheap but a store of values. It is not blind groping in a wilderness, but following, perhaps even building, a road. He lays aside every weight and presses forward, his Guide being the great Star Performer who said, "I am the Way."

The fifth point is that he applies all this not only to his own life, but also to life in general. He feels the bond between him and all other human beings. Recognizing God as his father, he realizes that all people are his brothers and sisters, and that the earth is the lovely home the Father has given to all.

Remember that in the firmament of human stars you are one, and that in your particular part of it you are the central one. Hold your place, keep your course, move on, and shine. To this way of life you are challenged by the stars.

S T A R S A N D M E N




 ONE of the things we invariably discover about a star is that it is inferior to a human being. Like a teacher who helps a student finally to surpass him, a contemplated star will sooner or later help us to see that the really greatest thing in the universe, next to God, is not a star, but a human being.

Said the Psalmist, "When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him?"

Then follows the answer. Ponder it well: "Thou hast created him a little lower than the angels, and crowned him with glory and honor."

The star Betelgeuse, in the Constellation of Orion is of such a size that if it were in the position of our sun its circumference would extend far out beyond the orbit of the Earth, in fact well toward that of the Planet Mars.

Near one of the three stars composing the belt of Orion is a nebula in which divine power is transforming energy into matter - an atom factory - apparently building up what will eventually be a sun and solar system. This nebula is so vast that it takes a beam of light twenty-five years to cross it.

 Betelgeuse and other stars, both nearer and more distant, are parts of a universe of which we can see what is probably only a very small part, a reach of a few billions of light years, an empty sphere with a diameter several billion times about five hundred ninety-two trillions of miles long. No one knows how much vaster it really is beyond that. A sizeable neighborhood, to say the least.

Yet you who ponder this lesson now are vastly superior to any star in the sky. Of what star can it be said that it is created only a little lower than the angels and crowned with glory and honor? Let us state some reasons for this comparison.

In a word the reason is that you are created in the image of God, and a

star is not. You actually have divine characteristics, and it does not. Here are some of the things the possession of that image means:

★ You have the power to create things, and conditions, to change them, and to recreate them when they have been destroyed. You can build a city, a garden, a joy, a deed, a thought, a life. A star can only follow its blind course through the sky

You have the power to think, know, reason and understand. You can build roads and bridges into the farther reaches of truth and, finding truth, discover that it sets you free. A star knows nothing of such things.

You have the power to decide, to choose - in other words, to rule the life you live and the world you build around yourself. You can carry responsibility. A star wears no such crown.

You can exercise faith, hope, and love; the wings that lift you above the level of things, space, and time, and make you immortal. The brightest star in the sky cannot attain this. ★

To be greater than a star is quite a responsibility. Do you accept it?

T H E C O N S T A N T S T A R S



SONGFELLOW has two beautiful lines in which he describes understandingly the evening loveliness we have all seen so often:

★ "Silently, one by one, in the infinite meadows of heaven
Blossom the lovely stars, the forget-me-nots of the angels."

This is a very apt comparison. Surely if the stars were flowers at all they would be forget-me-nots. How could they but remember, how could they but be remembered, - how could they but remind, and how much they have to remember!

The world was a long time building. Man was a long time emerging. He has been a long time playing his part on the stage of human action, and the drama is far from done. Empires have risen and fallen. The tides of history have ebbed and flowed on the shores of time. The stars have been silent but constant witnesses of the pageantry of the ages. They have seen it all.

Somewhere in the world is something taking place in which you are interested. You cannot see it, but you can do the next best thing. You can look up at the quiet stars and know they are seeing it.

Is there a friend or dear one in some far place whom you would like to see? You cannot see that person, but you can do the next best thing. You can look at the stars and know they are seeing the one you have in mind. You and that



one may be looking at the same star at the same time. The two of you may have arranged it so, and you both feel not so far apart because you both know you are looking at the same thing.

Thus the stars bind together both the past and the present and the there and the here. They are connecting links that transcend time and space. They are indeed forget-me-nots, and their blossoming season is always. No wonder they seem so friendly. They have seen so much of us, and have been seen so much by us.


The star you see tonight has helped to guide mariners across uncharted seas on historic missions. Stars have been pathfinders for Lief the Lucky, the Cabots, Columbus, Magellan, and the rest. They have always had a way of whispering directions to seeking minds, and they always tell the truth.

The stars have guided the pioneers of America and all the countries as they pushed frontiers farther and farther on. Wherever one of them found a place to make a home, start a community, and lay the foundations for a new state or country, the stars have watched above him as though in blessing.

It was a star that led the seeking wise men to the humble stall in which the Infant Saviour found a manger bed, and the wise men did not miss the way. That star was timed perfectly with the anthem of the angel choir above the sleeping flocks and the watching shepherds on the Judaeen hills. It was a star that announced the coming of the One who Himself was the brightest Star in the firmament of life.

Stars do not forget, and they do not let us forget. They have always suggested good will to man's turbulent spirit, and they always will do so until at last he catches the idea and learns their ways of confidence and peace.

K I N D S O F S T A R S

 T. Paul spoke truly when he observed that one star differs from another star in glory. It does, and it also differs from another star in nature and behavior. We would have to choose among the stars to find the kind we most admire and wish most to be like.

When we speak of a star, or see one, it is usually one of the great fixed stars, those dependable sentinels of the sky. They keep their places from age to age as though they had a trust committed to them and are keeping that trust. They always suggest constancy, and we are always reminded of them by some of the lofty-minded, faithful, steady, dependable people we know. They tell the truth and live it. They try to find the right position and hold it. Thus we always know where to find them.

Another type of star is the Nova, or variable star. It successively swells and shrinks, so it sometimes appears very large and at others comparatively small. This means that it is about to explode, and eventually will.

It too has its imitators among people. They have a way of acting very

big about some things and very small about others. They differ with situations and companions. They swell up in pretentiousness and shrink down with actual worth. Their boasts are large and their achievements small. In the firmament of the world's life it is no great credit to be a variable star.

★ There is also the shooting star, or meteor. It is only a bit of celestial debris, but it is there. It may be part of what was once an impressive and important heavenly body, but now it is only a reminder, a relic, a fragment of a vanished past. It flies now without aim or direction, scorching through a portion of the earth's atmosphere with one brilliant flash of dying glory.


It is a sad fact that we see human lives being burned out like that, so misguided that they are content to live and die for one wild day of splendor. When that is done all is over, adding up to only one grand torchlight parade. These deceived and disordered minds may consider the game worth the candle, but it isn't.

Then there is the comet, the wanderer of the sky, frightening people with a fierce display, when it probably isn't even composed of solid matter, with a tail so thinly composed that we have actually passed through them without noticing any difference. We meet the human comet too, showy and threatening, but of little consequence after all. He is a far cry from the dependable man, the fixed star of the world life.

Lastly let us mention the binary, or double star, sharing its existence with another, moving with it through space, revolving around it, and sometimes concealing it or concealed by it. Even the sky has its friendships, and even the earth has its double stars. ★

There is quite an assortment of stellar characters and personalities. Look at the list. Among them you will probably see your real or possible self. You can choose among them the one you prefer for your inspiration and pattern, and more and more you will become like it.


THE SPIRITUAL FIRMAMENT

URELY you have long ago learned to look by faith at what the eyes of unfaithful cannot see - those spiritual facts and principles which, not being seen, are eternal. There is a spiritual firmament in which glow some of the brightest and most precious stars. They are stars which, unlike the swinging suns of the sky, we can reach and, reaching them, be blessed.

One is the star of truth. It is perhaps the most expansive one in the sky of the soul. Who can measure it, or even conceive its vastness? It is very bright too, for it is a source of the light God sheds on our way. It can be reached in exactly the measure in which we are willing to use it.

One is the star of courage. That is what men mean by morale, only it is greater and stronger. It is the star whose light empowers us to meet challenging influences, difficult conditions, baffling problems, and opposing forces, and



to overcome.  As our sun sends out life-giving rays for the body, the star of courage gives off life and strength for the spirit.

One is the star of wisdom. We reach it by the ladder rungs of knowledge, reason, and experience, because it is at the summit of the scale of mental powers of which these are the lesser degrees. It is more than learning; it is knowing what to do with learning. It is more than reason; it is understanding how to use reason. It includes insight, understanding, and judgment, but it is more than any of them, or all of them together.

One is the star of conscience. It may sometimes include an inward sense of rightness and wrongness, but it must be more than that because this inner feeling may follow the line of training, experience, and environmental custom. The word "conscience" means knowing together. It is, then, the process of laying all the facts on the table and deciding what course of action they justify or indicate. It is much like solving an algebraic equation by using the known values to find x.

There is a group made of three bright stars we see shining together in the firmament of the spirit, all of which are very necessary to each of us. They are called faith, hope, and love.



Faith lights the way for us through shadows and over hard places, where even the light of wisdom may be too dim. It enables us to find our way and arrive at destinations that seemed impossible. It even throws light on the world of the soul and up the steeps to God, so we know we can journey there.

Hope sends out rays that empower us to keep trying. Under their influence we may keep on when all seems lost, and win when nothing but defeat seemed possible.

Love sends us motive power by which we will attempt anything for its sake. We will undertake the hardest tasks, suffer the greatest losses, keep struggling when we seem defeated, and try again when we seemingly have failed - and win. Faith sees the good, and hope clings to it, but only love fulfills it.

These are a few of the chief stars in your heart's wide sky, and not one of them is out of your reach.

M E D I T A T I O N



My soul looks out upon an infinite sky. In it shine the stars of the spirit whose gleaming rays give me inward health and strength. By them I attain blessing, peace, and victory.

YOUR CLASS INSTRUCTOR.

