



'The Hocking Primer

Preamble

On my initial readings I found the *Preamble* to be a most compelling part of the book. In it Hocking outlines the general premises for his life and the book. Since I like his philosophy, both formal and personal, almost every paragraph has important points for me.

He begins with one of the major maxims (beliefs) of his life:

“No task must be avoided simply because it is impossible. The relevant questions are not ‘‘Can we?’’ but ‘‘Should we?’’ and ‘‘In what direction?’’

Now, he must hedge his bet on the meaning of the word “impossible”. If something is minimal potential for being addressed. And he views personal responsibility as a compelling reason for addressing it. One has to admire this. It is almost heroic. Some things we simply cannot walk past and leave for others. “If not us, who; if not now, when?”

He then deputizes us:

“But it is an odd feature of the present world predicament that the skilled technicians are as much puzzled as are we, the commoners. The traditions of statesmanship and no parallels”. (He means possible nuclear destruction.)

“... moral/ethical one, and that is within the purview of all of us. We have a badge, and the horses are saddled. We just need to get on one.”

Hocking continues:

“The problems of diplomacy become the problems of the common man, as court of last appeal. And the problems of the common man are ipso facto (“by that very

He criticizes the man of thought if he merely lives in an ivory tower, but also criticizes

the

this philosophy needs to come from lived experience, not intellectual models. We need to be grounded in the physical, following emotion to maintain proximity. While quadratic equations are not relevant to everyone, experience is. We build our philosophy from the ground up through contact with the natural world. We draw it from Friday night lights

He feels that to understand misery it helps to have experienced it. Hocking worries this might put Americans at a disadvantage in understanding those who have lived closer to the cannons. (I believe it is harder to understand # & -@±“ ¶-© «¶¶¥“± α3 -±-| “ ±“ need not seek misery to gain understanding but should at least learn humility and respect. Hocking also thinks that American education has been watered down by its hesi- .α±| 1/4² α| |“³. ° 2 μ^α-α±§ “.«-| α⁻. μ^α§ -±-± ž 2 μ^α-μ⁻ α⁻ - 1/4² § α1/4¶ @¶«-± α¥“ - § “² 2 a 1/4 “-α1“ ¶ 3 “²³ “ , ± a μ² , ± § “ § fl ¶ 3 μ² a μ^α ° 2 © α± 1/4 « ± a a2“ ¶ α± § ± 2.« ± a ° α “ μ¶ 2 “ μ¶ - - ¶ , ¶ “ ± α± |” fi “.« ± @¶ ° “ ¶ ± ¶ “ α± α¥¶² , “ § “³ ± § ± a 2 ± ° « “.« μ⁰ “ ¶ , ¥¶ | μ¥“ .² a higher power or not, i.e. whether we see the world driven by purpose or cause. If there ¶ 3 , μ³ 2 ¶ “.« ± ° “ « α1“ α± α¥¶² , “ @¶ ° ° « -| « .² § “ ± “ ¥“ « α1 -± μ ‘ « ¶ 3 2 ¶ -±-± α ¶ 2 © μ “ ¶ , ¶ .² α| . ° « ± . « “ ± a “ μ³² ± . ¶ ± 2 , μ § μ¹ | . -± ± * “ | α± ± 2 . 3 μ² 1 “ . « “ (± -| “ μ¶ “ has a purpose, but that is the way to bet. Hocking also feels we need to avoid intellectual ¶ 2 3 « -¶ μ 1/4 α ± § - 2 2 @ ° - « ± 2 , μ ¶ “ -| “ ¶ © μ ± , - - | “ . μ . « ¶ ‘ « ± @ ± a | α± ¶ 2 ° “ . - ° “ ¶ a “ . ± the way of knowledge. Some things we know just because we do.

Finally, perhaps his most important point in the *Preamble* states that none of us is an independent entity creating a personal world entirely unique. We all face Nature and live by the same natural laws. He believes that being alone with physical reality provides .« “ ° 2 μ @ ¶ “ 2 3 © μ . μ “ | μ^α α⁻ - 1/4! 2.« ± a | μ^α α⁻ “ - ¶ § 2 ± “ ¥ 1/4² ° ° - “ “ “ ± § 2 , . 2 © , μ

