

VOLUME 27

THE BIBLE SERIES

**A METAPHYSICAL
AND SYMBOLICAL
INTERPRETATION OF**

The Bible

by

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Author of

HOW TO FIND YOUR REAL SELF (textbook)

THIS I BELIEVE

LEARN TO LIVE

THE FAMILY OF ADAM and EVE

THE BIBLE – The Seven Days of Creation

BECOME WHAT YOU BELIEVE

WHAT IS PRAGMATIC MYSTICISM?

C O N T E N T S

The Gospel of John

Published By

The Society of Pragmatic Mysticism

116 Central Park South

New York, N.Y. 10019

JOHN

We have come to what I believe is the most beautiful and, in many ways, the most important of all the Gospels. John does not pay much attention to the actual events other than the Crucifixion and Resurrection. The most important thing to him was to try to convey exactly what it was that Jesus said. Age has little to do with wisdom, and it is fascinating to see that while John was the youngest of the disciples he was the only one who really understood to a great degree what Jesus taught.

John was the most developed mystic of all the disciples. It is a strange thing that mystics hear undertones of language which others do not, even though they hear the same words. There is an inner hearing, an accentuation of hearing, which enables the mystic to perceive a certain depth of meaning. The other disciples also lived with Jesus and they all adored him and were ready to die for him, but they did not understand – they did not know. They realized that Jesus had something great to give and that he was, in their minds a miracle worker, but John knew there was no miracle – there was the Law and Jesus was teaching it.

We might ask "How did he know?" But then, how does anyone know? This is a very strong indication of reincarnation. If you have lived enough and utilized your living enough, you arrive at a certain understanding that words cannot possibly convey, and this is the case with John.

CHAPTER 1:1-14. We know the Word is the reality behind all things, the perfect idea in the mind of God. Judge Thomas Troward speaks of God as contemplating Himself before creation began, which is what is meant in the first text. It really means that this Word was the beginning of all and, as Judge Troward also says, it reverberates throughout creation from the lowest to the highest. This is the true Immaculate Concept. Then verses 2-5 refer to the concept of the polarity of creation: the light and the darkness. On a personal level, the Word is the Presence within us, the light which shines in the darkness of the lack of understanding. That is certainly true, but as John has written his introduction we have not as yet arrived at the point of individualization. These five verses are, in one sense, a very brief,

terse recapitulation of the first chapter of Genesis before man appears on the scene.

John the Baptist is introduced in verse 6. We know he symbolizes the mentality and we should remember this symbolic scaffolding as we go on. When we begin to train the mentality to think properly, it often goes off on a bit of a tangent for a while. John is a perfect symbol for this, since he has driven himself fanatically and trained himself to have no feelings except those which he thinks are proper. He has stripped himself, and this is often the initial misconception of people who have started to train their minds. We are then told that he was a witness to the Light, but he himself did not possess it.

Then we come to verses 9-12 which have been so misconstrued as to alter the meaning and interpretation of this section and, as a result, of the entire Gospel. John is used as a symbol for the mentality which has a knowledge of the past and interprets the present in its light, as well as a prophet who foretells what is to come. Then the writer once more refers to the creation of Man and says, to paraphrase these verses, that God gave a part of Himself to His creation and that is the spiritual part of every human being. But people did not realize this and had no contact with it, and only those who did were able to receive the benefits of that contract. But these verses have been interpreted as referring to the person of Jesus alone, which is where the difficulty arose. There have been a number of editorial alterations, even in the Gospel of John, and the assumption behind them has been that this portrayed Jesus, in spite of what is said in verses 12 and 13. This misinterpretation is one of the major reasons for the deification of Jesus becoming incorporated as doctrine.

The parenthetical phrase in verse 14 is obviously inserted. In reality the "Word was made flesh" to the degree that we manifest it. Every time you or I make a demonstration the Word is made flesh, because at some time prior to that we have spoken the Word: we have re-created the perfect idea and then seen it manifest in the physical. It has been dwelling among us from the beginning of time, but few have understood It or made any effort to contact It.

Verses 15-28. Verse 21 is interesting because the very fact that they would ask this shows that they believed in reincarnation. It comes out quite clearly here because they would not expect him to be Elijah or Moses unless they believed in rebirth.

They asked him for their own edification – “could this man be the Messiah, and if not, was he the reincarnation of...?” Then John takes his own stand and says who he is, and certainly he was a “voice crying in the wilderness.” The next question is also very fascinating. The idea of baptism and washing away sins did not originate with John. It was practiced in many other religions, including the Essenes, and was an important part of a very old Hebraic ritual. But it is interesting that John speaks of the baptism that came through Christ. How did he know? We know that is an interior experience. It could have been taught by the Essenes, but their fanaticism almost precludes a very great spiritual awareness. Their teaching is on a very high level metaphysically, but it is a long way from being completely mystic, and the major initiations are the realm of the mystics. I personally do not feel that John the Baptist was an initiate, although he may have been close to it. First of all, he had a resentment of life: he lived a very narrow existence and denied life constantly, which is something no mystic ever does. He probably had great psychic ability, but I do not have the feeling that he was near enough to the experience to have much knowledge of it.

In verses 29-31 we see that, whether or not he knew about the experience, he certainly did have the idea that Jesus was the one to come, although we do not know if this was a spiritual or psychic knowledge. In verse 32 we find the very beautiful symbol of the descent of the dove. We previously have discussed whether it was an actual occurrence and whether it was seen by anyone else, and also that the dove is a symbol for peace. I believe that this was part of John's experience at the moment of mutual recognition.

We see in verses 35-51, in the way Jesus chose his disciples, that he was able to look at a person and know everything about him. Instantaneous perception is one of the faculties that a mystic develops. Jesus had developed it to such a degree that he could clearly and immediately see what went on within you and why you were what you were. The disciples thought they were following him, but we see that he chooses them by spiritually “putting his finger” on each one. In verse 49 Nathanael is overwhelmed by the fact that Jesus knew that he was under a fig tree and by the realization that this man knew him and felt that he was fit to be his disciple. There is an additional reason for his response which ceased to be a part of our modern atti-

tude after the second century, but is still found in the Orient. There, a great teacher chooses his students, and to be chosen by him is the highest honor that can befall a man.

"The king of Israel" is another term for the Messiah. Jesus did not refute this at this time because they were too spiritually young to understand. They were looking for a Messiah who would free them from Rome, and they were sure Jesus was he. We know that if someone who has never heard of metaphysics makes certain statements, we would not be able to explain everything to them in the first few minutes. Jesus merely said to them, "Follow me." He knew that if he had explained what he was actually going to do they would be running in the other direction. They would not have understood and, as we know, they did not understand after he repeatedly told them.

CHAPTER 2: 1-11. The episode of the marriage at Cana is fascinating on many levels: symbolically, personally and as part of an overall picture. Apparently Mary knew to a great extent what Jesus' abilities were and what was to come. Jesus may have made the statement in verse 4 either jokingly or in annoyance. He was very human and we have seen a number of instances where he became angry. When Mary replied, she used her influence as a mother to persuade him to comply, which is a very touching and human aspect of the story.

Mary knew that he was extremely kindhearted and realizing that they could not afford more wine, she was perfectly certain he would do it, so she had the servants prepare everything for him. But Jesus was not going to give her the satisfaction of his saying "All right, Mother, I'll obey you," so he made a rather prophetic remark. Mary did know that he was to begin a public ministry, and "my hour hath not yet come" meant that he was not yet ready. He was still unknown and apparently he either did not feel that he wanted to perform a public miracle at this time, or that this was not the way in which he wished to initiate his ministry.

There is also a symbolism behind it in that water represents the emotions; wine represents the changed emotions and the blood of the Lamb represents the uplifted emotions. Likewise Mary is the symbol of the subconscious and Jesus of the Super-conscious mind, and it signifies the transformation of the power of the subconscious, or the emotions, into the sacrificial aspect of wine. The answer is in verse 6 "and there were set there six water pots." The number 6 represents love and service, and the

wine was put into 6 pots – why not 3 or 2? You can interpret it from two points of view: Jesus decided that he would begin his ministry with a “miracle” demonstrating his knowledge of the Law, and that he symbolized the change that would come to humanity in time.

The symbolic interpretations do not detract from or alter the humanness of the situation, for they express different aspects of the same incident. There is always an outer correspondence for any inner happening. And, as we all know, the subconscious does rebel against a new idea.

One thing we should begin to realize is that although Jesus came to accomplish a purpose of overwhelming importance, and there were no surprises for him in its execution, he nevertheless lived a perfectly normal life. We will find when we reach that stage that we too will live normal everyday lives. He fused his life’s purpose with his physical life, which is what we all should do.

In verses 18-22 dealing with the rebuilding of the temple, we should notice the clarity of John’s version and also the difference as compared with the other Gospels. There is a very decided impression that John is trying to mention all the details which might be needed for reference and corroboration in one section so that he can get on with the teaching.

The statement in verses 24 and 25 “because he knew what was in man” means that he did not answer them because he was able to read their hearts. If you recall, the incident of the money changers occurred much later in the other accounts; here it is in the second chapter. This could indicate that there was some doubt about the order of the events, or it could be another indication that John is making a definite effort to get the physical events out of the way in order to give the teaching which he considered more important.

CHAPTER 3. In verses 1-21 we find one of the few instances where Jesus details a psychological experience of the soul, in this case, the First Major Initiation. Nicodemus was extremely sincere and deeply devout, even though he did not have the courage to come by day, and Jesus also saw that he was very close to this experience, and therefore gave a deeper explanation. He told him that he must be born of spirit and of water, which means that the emotions are transformed by the direct action of the Presence of God, or spirit. It is then that you have the experience known as the First Initiation, or New Birth, where you

consciously contact the Presence who lives within you.

One of the things that has made religious understanding so difficult throughout the centuries is that there have been so few people who have had this experience. When people have not experienced a thing for themselves it is very difficult to realize what it means. So this very magnificent, almost overpowering experience has been emasculated into a statement that if you "put your faith in Jesus Christ, your Saviour, you will be born again." I wish it were that easy – it is not. The person who reaches this particular state has evolved through many, many lifetimes and worked out many, many problems. For the first time in his thousands of incarnations he has come to the point where there is no longer an intellectual, or openminded reception to the existence of God, but there is a conscious contact, plus a physical and psychological reaction.

We are not given to know when Nicodemus had this particular experience, but he must have been very close to it. Otherwise Jesus would not have delineated it in this way. We can only assume that Jesus went into greater detail and explained more of the experiences to his disciples as we have no record of it in the Gospels. There is a certain corroboration in Paul's statement that "your body is the temple of the living God;" but we do not know on what level Paul understood this. We are, however, provided with the symbolism for these experiences in the story of the life of Jesus, as we know. In relation to what is described here, we know that he was born in a manger which was utterly simple and scrupulously clean. It had been cleansed to the extent where it was possible to transform it into something else, and in its final transformation the manger becomes the temple. Which, by the way, is why many of the old cathedrals are built in the rude form of the cross which related, not to the church, but to the house of God which is the human body. These experiences take place within the individual and they have no validity for us unless we acquire some understanding by beginning to walk the path of initiation. Jesus makes this very clear, and this is what makes this section so interesting and important.

We find that even Nicodemus had trouble in understanding him, and asks how could he, an old man, be born again. His first reaction was that he had to regress to the womb and come out as a child. Jesus explains that this has nothing to do with physical rebirth, but that it is something which occurs inwardly and in

complete consciousness. I am sure that at the end of the evening probably the most perplexed man in the world was Nicodemus because he was not sure what Jesus meant. But I am equally sure that he knew before he was much older, when he had the experience himself.

When Jesus asks "art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?" he is referring to the fact that the Essenes and the Gnostics, who were also part of Judaism, as well as the Pharisees, were supposed to at least know these things intellectually. Some of the occult schools of today give very detailed – and rarely correct – outlines of the initiations, but most of the people who have read them, and even those who write about them, have not had the experience and so have no direct knowledge. For instance, if you mentioned the kundalini to a Theosophist, he would immediately know that it refers to the great initiation, but that is as far as his understanding goes.

The use of "Christ" in verse 28 is misleading and may have been an error in translation. I am perfectly sure that John the Baptist knew that the Christ was also in him, but that it was more developed in Jesus. John says, in effect, that he realizes that he must use "props" in order to get his point across, whereas the effect of the contact within Jesus gave him the voice of authority. There is an analogy to this in the realm of dreams. Carl Jung says that people frequently dream of a voice of authority, particularly those with a frustrated religious desire. The compelling symbol may come through in the form of a parent, or general, or minister, but in the more developed person it is simply a voice. In other words, those people who had not yet developed the subconscious understanding to realize that this was an inner authority, had to clothe it in the outer form of the physical plane. The more sensitive they were, the less necessity there was for the trimming. John is speaking in terms of this gradation of development when he says "I am not the Christ...I am sent before him."

If you refer to chapter 1 and John's summation of the first chapter of Genesis, you will see that verses 34 and 35 are a brief recapitulation of this. John understands and constantly stresses the fact that there is God the Father who gave part of Himself to each human being. That part is known as the Son, and is not confined to the person of Jesus, but is in every human being. Verse 36 means that if I believe in God I have no fear of anything in the world, including death. "He that be-

lieveth not..." refers to most people and the reason why they have so many fears. "The wrath" refers to the activity of the law of karma and, as we have learned "Love is the lord of karma."

CHAPTER 4: verses 1-26. Two things fascinate me about this story. The feud between the Samaritans and Jews had extended through the centuries and was so intense that they would not speak to each other and had no hesitation in killing one another if the opportunity presented itself. Jesus deliberately goes into this alien, unfriendly country where he meets a woman and instead of being an enemy, as she expects, he converts her. Again we see the tremendous scope of his development in his ability to know everything about her simply by looking at her. When he said that she had had five husbands, the woman was certainly greatly impressed. We see not only his magnificent development but, at the same time, the simplicity of his teaching. It was so utterly simple that it went over the heads of most of the people who heard it. One of the great enigmas of life is that the more simple a thing is, the more difficult it is to understand, primarily because we have become so terribly complex.

What do you think it means in verse 24 to "worship God in spirit and in truth"? It means to worship Him with understanding, not outer ritual, and by living according to the Law to the best of your ability. This is the underlying current of his teaching, and it is a concept which is not very well understood even in our own time. In verse 21 we find a very clear and simple statement of the fact that there is no specific place required for the worship of God. "The ground on which you stand is holy ground" for the Presence of God is in you. Even though this was taught in the Old Testament, the Judaic concept was still that you must go to the temple in Jerusalem, a sanctified place of worship, in order for your prayers to be effective. Jesus tells the woman that there will come a time when men will know that wherever you are your prayers will be heard. Then in verses 24 and 25 are two rather blatant editorial insertions. The first is "God is a Spirit," which, of course, should be "God is Spirit." And the second is "which is called Christ." It is obvious that anyone speaking in Aramaic, particularly a Samaritan, would never use the word Christ since it was neither part of their concept nor their language. Jesus, in answering her, is saying that the Presence within him is the Messiah.

In verses 35-39 Jesus tells the disciples that there were

many people who were open to the teaching and all they had to do was go among them and teach. They would "reap" what he had "sown" by the authority of his inner contact.

In verse 41 we are told that the Samaritans "believed because of his own word" and in verse 48 Jesus expresses his annoyance at the fact that those of his own nation will not believe unless they see a "miraculous" sign. In a similar way it is true in our time that most people come into metaphysics because they have a problem. They remain for the most part because they have made a demonstration. There are very few who enter it because they have been consciously or unconsciously searching and remain because they find this is the answer to their quest.

Here Jesus, first of all, turns the water into wine, then he looks at a stranger and tells her everything about her life, and then he makes his first healing (as recorded in John). He knew he had to do this in order to pique their interest. Otherwise, they would say "He is just like the other rabbis. They all preach about God. He says there is no need for ritual; how do we know he is right?" The very fact that he could do these things convinced people that he had authority for what he said and did.

CHAPTER 5: 1-16. The pool at Bethesda was very similar to Lourdes in that the people's belief in its healing qualities enabled them to be cured. It is possible that Jesus was illustrating the fact that the pool only caused temporary cures by saying that this healing had made the man whole – was a complete healing – if he would "sin no more." However, there is an important point in the actual healing which relates to how we speak the Word. When the man asked him to heal his son, prior to this, Jesus simply said "Thy son liveth" and here he says "take up thy bed and walk." In treatment the thought and the motivation are important, the words are not. Other than the healing of Lazarus, where prayer was used to impress the onlookers with what was occurring, there is not one instance where Jesus prayed in order to accomplish a healing. Even "thy faith hath made thee whole" was a statement made after the healing had taken place. We are so concerned about saying the right words so that God will know what we are talking about that this is a lesson we can take very seriously to heart. Many people feel there are certain words with magical vibrations that will coax God which is, of course, completely absurd. When people ask "What should I say?" I ask, "What do you want?" If you want a healing, then claim perfect health. It is a great letdown to them, because it is too simple.

But there is no treatment more simple and undramatic than "take up thy bed" – or more effective.

In verse 17 Jesus says that the Father, the Infinite Mind, works on the sabbath and so Jesus, in manifesting the Son, follows His example. The Jews thought of the sabbath in terms of Genesis where it says that God rested on the seventh day, but they had forgotten that that referred to an aeon of time, not to a specific day. From another point of view it means that the spiritual idea already exists in the mind of God, and that Jesus is only manifesting that idea in healing. But Jesus is cutting across a line of Jewish thought – the holiness of the sabbath – which was extremely deep-seated. This, plus their attitude of "who was he to heal on the sabbath" made them think of him as a desecrator of the law. Jesus points out very simply that time as we have made it is nothing in the eyes of God. The main point of controversy throughout his life was that he discarded ritual for the sake of motivation.

The section from verse 17 to the end of the chapter provides us with one of the most beautiful and simple statements of what Jesus taught and believed. This is his teaching: that the Infinite Godhead created a part of Himself called the Son, and that Son is endowed with the powers of the Father, verse 19, and is incarnated in every human being. When we reach the stage where we realize this and make contact with the Son all power is given to us. The Jews honored the Father, but if anyone said "I am the son of God" they were ready to kill him for blasphemy in spite of the fact that they had been told in Psalm 82:6 "Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High." This is a strange paradox in human understanding; they would accept it from the Psalms and from David, but they would not accept the possibility that it could be applicable to people of their own time.

Verse 25 is a text which theology has interpreted as a literal statement of a future physical event, as do the Fundamentalists who believe that graves will yield the bodies of those who have gone on and they will walk the earth again. In real mysticism physical birth is metaphorically thought of as death and the second birth is when we leave this body and pass on through that process which we so unhappily call death. It is a complete reversal of conception. It is true that involvement in the physical life, body and environment can deaden consciousness of everything except the animal functions of the being, and this is also what is meant here. When we begin to realize who and what we

are and make that contact, then for the first time we begin to live. When you have even a small realization of this you suddenly feel that it is an expanding universe and you are living in a higher realm in a much wider world. We live in a very small area until we reach this point, and this is one of the great tragedies of humanity.

It is very clear, in verses 32-36, what Jesus thought about John the Baptist, and we have discussed what John may have thought about Jesus. John certainly realized, despite his own conflict with Jesus' way of life that, in verse 36, his works were the true witness to the truth of Jesus' teaching and relationship to God. There is an interesting analogy between John's expectation of "he who was to come" and the reality, and our own lives. We want to achieve certain things and we all have that delightful, foolish habit of sitting down and thinking about what is going to happen and how it is going to take place. Then we find, somehow or other, it does not happen that way. In John's instance and our own, it ironically goes back to that definition of a true demonstration: "It is always a little greater and better than you ever dreamed it could be."

There is a reference to the immateriality of God in verse 37 which bears comment. Certainly we never see or hear the Infinite God, but the strange thing is that at a certain point past the First Initiation you do, in your "mind's eye," see the Presence of God within you. There is a faculty of clariaudience which enables you to hear the voice of God speaking to and through you. A corroboration, strangely enough, is found in Carl Jung's writings where he speaks of the "animus and anima". While he is speaking in psychological terms, he is referring to a few people who do have contact with the divine prototype within themselves. The Presence of God in us does not have a physical shape other than our own, but we do have the experience of seeing the divine prototype. It is because of this that so much of mystical literature is in the form of love songs, which is the real meaning of "The Song of Songs." The reaction of the soul who has found contact with God and in their mind's eye sees Him is similar to that of having found the most loved one in your life.

Verse 43 gives one of the reasons why I have always felt that I have yet to see a psychologist, psychiatrist or analyst or anyone who is able to so clearly state the weakness of humanity as Jesus did. Here he says, in effect, "I have come to tell you the truth; that there is the Presence of God who lives within

each of us. In my case I come because I know a little bit more and I have gone a little bit further than you, and I tell you that I am here at the will of God but you do not receive me or my message. But, if I said 'I had a vision and Moses appeared to me,' then you would hear and honor me on the authority of Moses." A similar situation is found in our own time. Most people will accept the word of a minister of a recognized religion before that of a metaphysical teacher, simply because of the academic training and outer "authority" of the church. Jesus had no background according to these standards. Today if a person does not have a degree he cannot get a job. We are still young, and we worship this background and do not believe in or recognize the intrinsic value of the individual. Jesus also says in verse 44 that if the honor comes from God there would be very few people who would see and notice it, for this is an inner thing. It is true that human beings always like to have their honors recorded by others, which is a very human and childish trait.

CHAPTER 6 is either a very brief and altered account of the Sermon on the Mount as given in the other Gospels, or, it could be that this is the authentic version. We have discussed both the symbolism and the use of the law in feeding the multitudes before so let us look at it from another point of view. First of all, verse 6 says "he knew what he would do" which also implies that John himself knew what Jesus would do and why. John may have intuitively understood or it is possible that Jesus told him, we do not know. Jesus was going to teach them that they were not limited to physical substance, because God is substance. We can all take this very much to heart, for if you have faith in God and in the power of your Word, when you speak the Word you will have the supply you need.

Verse 12 provides an illustration of something we should always remember: "Don't waste God's substance." It does not mean we should be miserly, but we should not be extravagant. Like everything else, substance is meant to be used, not abused.

Verse 15 indicates that there was an open political movement to make Jesus king. We recall that Jesus met this question for himself in his inner experience at the time of the Temptation. There, in the Bible's terms, the devil tempted him to use his power physically and politically by allowing himself to be made king. We know that really means that he considered the idea, and we also know what the results were. And it is again clearly stated here that Jesus knew very well what he was going to do

and how, and nothing was going to deter him.

In verse 26 Jesus is really quite annoyed. He reproaches them by saying that they are not following him because of what he is or can do, but rather because they want food. It certainly is an extremely understandable irritation since Jesus is giving everything he has to try to help them and their first interest is in a free meal. There is another aspect to this which the Bible does not bring out very clearly, which is that there was a great belief in magic at that time. Jerusalem, as we know, was a very cosmopolitan center with travelers from all parts of the world and equally as many forms of magical practice and belief. Consequently the first reaction of many people to Jesus' healings was that he was just another magician, for they apparently could not tell the difference. On the other hand, the magicians went through various forms of preparation with incantations and rituals, and they were accustomed to this, so it was startling to see someone heal simply by saying "take up thy bed and walk" and "stretch forth thy hand." But for them it was another and new type of magic, and this too is one of the reasons for Jesus' annoyance.

His explanation that "I am the bread of life" in verse 35 went completely over their heads. They did not understand it and, furthermore, when they began to understand, they did not believe because their general attitude was "can anything good come out of Nazareth?" I do not think we can realize what an enormous undertaking it was for Jesus to try to get people to understand, but I think we begin to see a few of the tremendous obstacles he encountered in this Gospel. I have often felt that Jesus was the real "voice crying in the wilderness" because it was a wilderness of the lack of spiritual understanding. Yet he knew this was what he came to do and I am sure he realized that he was planting a seed which would take centuries to begin to develop.

We see the first sprout just beginning to appear above the ground now in the fact that there are more people turning towards an inner spiritual life than there have been in centuries. But when you look at the life in our times you realize how extremely slowly we evolve. I do not think the difficulty necessarily lies in the understanding itself as much as in the preconceived ideas from the race mind in which we live, which have so overpowered us that we do not think. But in the Gospel of John we get some picture of the struggle it must have been for Jesus. It was an

almost superhuman job, not only to find twelve people whom he could train, but to be able to hold the multitudes as he did with all the opposition he had; the outer opposition of the leaders of the temple and scribes, and the unwillingness of the people to believe.

The last day of which Jesus speaks in verse 40 is that day when humanity really comes of age. This chapter is one of the most important in the New Testament, not only because it gives the entire teaching of Jesus, but because it is given from a level of understanding that is not even approached in the other Gospels. For example, verse 43 is a very clear explanation of the familiar phrase "him that hath an ear." In another sense, it is the meaning of the Hindu statement "when the student is ready, the teacher appears": *when* the student is ready. We are dealing with a language which is archaic to our understanding, but Jesus is saying that those who are ready to understand will know. They are not influenced by what is said on the outside, because they are guided by the inner teaching.

Let us put this in modern terminology as it applies to those of us in the metaphysical field. Practically no one in our present time has been born into metaphysics. We were born in various religions which we may or may not have practiced. There is something within each of us, call it karma or past evolution, which brought us to the point where the religion in which we were born was no longer sufficient. Consciously or unconsciously we began to reach out for another concept until we found metaphysics. This is purely the action of the Presence of God in you. We reached the point where we were sensitive enough to that action to perceive a new direction. This is also what Jesus refers to in verse 65.

Moreover, when we reach the point of understanding where a new direction is taken, we may or may not be consciously aware of it. This is a factor which disturbs many people. We have made a deity of the intellect to the extent that we think everything we do is the result of our conscious choice, but this is not always the case. At the point of which we are speaking, we suddenly find ourselves involved in circumstances which will lead step by step to that for which we are ready: then we think "this is what I've been looking for." But when we reach the point of finding the thing for which we are ready it is because the Presence of God is sufficiently close at some level of our awareness for us to respond to the push in the direction of a

limitless belief.

We are in metaphysics because we are ready for a broader teaching, for the real teaching, and we have left the swaddling clothes of other religions. Probably the best definition of metaphysics I know is that it says to everybody who is in it: "You need no intermediary between you and your God." This is a startling and terrifying idea to people who are accustomed to the intercession of rabbis, priests, ministers and saints. We are told you need nothing and no one to contact your God – how can you since God is in you? The beautiful couplet from Tennyson we use at the end of meditation, "Closer is he than breathing; nearer than hands and feet" is the banner cry of spiritual freedom. It is a freedom that we ourselves struggle to attain, and it is the only real freedom. This is what Jesus is saying here, and we find that it had the effect of a bombshell for it says that some of the people who were following him immediately turned and left.

Return to the section beginning with verse 50 for a moment and ask yourself if you really believe there is no death. Most people think that death means a person has disappeared forever from view. In metaphysics we know, at least intellectually, that death is very similar to sleep. In sleep the body stays here but the conscious mind is elsewhere, and in death the body is removed but the emotions, the conscious and Superconscious minds continue to live in consciousness on another plane. When Jesus speaks of his flesh and blood, the Presence of God is speaking through him. The flesh of the spirit is the manifestation. The blood refers to the emotions. Water and blood both symbolize the emotions, but blood is the vehemence, the passionate quality of the emotions. He is saying that unless we change ourselves we do not manifest that spirit. The flesh, then, shows the demonstration which is caused by a change in consciousness. Unless we partake of the atmosphere and quality of God on every level of our being, spiritually mentally and emotionally, we do not make that change.

Of course throughout this section the Presence of God is speaking through Jesus and, as we see in verses 41 and 52 the Jews most certainly did not understand this. It is one of the great difficulties people encounter in Bible interpretation today, even theologians. Jesus constantly uses the Old Testament as a point of reference, as he does here. We recall the story of the burning bush when Moses felt that he had to get the Jews out of Egypt. It is one of the most beautiful symbols in the Bible.

Moses meditates on whether or not he should do this, and then he and the Presence discuss it. Moses unhappily realizes that he must do it, But he argues with Him and finally pleads, "They will never believe me. Who shall I say has sent me?" And the answer comes: "I am that I am; thou shalt say I am hath sent me." This is the one phrase that only you can say for yourself; it is the spiritual name of every human being. And when Jesus says "I am this" "I am that" it is the Presence of God speaking through him. This happens time and again. When he uses the phrase "the son of God;" this is I Am speaking through him, but no one can say I am for you but yourself. This is the word of power. It is tragic that of all the Bible scholars throughout history who have written countless dissertations on every conceivable aspect, none have understood this. Perhaps it is too simple to be clear.

CHAPTER 7. In verse 4 his brothers are saying "Prove it" because they did not believe in Jesus, which gives a heightened significance to his saying that a "prophet is without honor in his own country." I think, too, they were a bit embarrassed as "good, law-abiding Jews" to find that they had, what seemed to be, a rebel and renegade Jew living in the midst of the family. Moreover, he was overturning the teaching of the Scribes, the Pharisees and the prophets as far as they could see. So, in verse 6, Jesus tells them he will go up to the feast when he is ready to go and not before. He was waiting for the time of the Passover, and he tells them "but your time is always ready." In other words, they could reach a different point of understanding now by raising their consciousness, for we can raise our consciousness at any time.

Jesus went up to the feast by himself since he had evidently chosen this as the most propitious time to speak, and if he had been with his brothers it would have been difficult, considering the general antagonism of the Jews. In verse 19 he once again refers them to Moses and to the law of circumcision. Let me call your attention to verses 22 and 23 because this is so typical of worldly thinking. People believe that because a ritual or concept is traditional it is automatically right. Circumcision was supposed to be ordained by God, and they performed it on the sabbath at times. If a man used the same law of God to heal on the sabbath it was considered sinful. Now, in Judaism a man was not considered to be Jew unless he was circumcised. The real concept behind it was that the rite would

enable a man to be pure enough to receive the Presence of God. Jesus is contrasting that ritual with the healing which also made a man whole and in doing this he also refers to the esoteric meaning behind the rite.

Esoterically the rite of circumcision is the symbol for the experience called the Transformed Heart, where the heart which has been clothed in hatred and fear is finally cleansed. The physical forms of the creative organs are the male genital, the tongue and the pineal gland, which is dormant in everyone until the Third Major Initiation. Circumcision is a very ancient symbol which has come down from the most primitive of religious with various reasons given for its practice, until the time of Moses, when it became a part of the Jewish tradition. Although he knew the symbolism behind it, Moses originally introduced it because of sanitary seasons. He also knew the Jews would not incorporate this into their lives unless it was given to them as a decree of God. But then, because it was religion no allowances were made for the fact that times could change and people grow in understanding, so the lines of religion and ritual remained as taut as when they began. This is one reason why, when Jesus brought a completely new concept – what we call metaphysics – it was blasphemous. If he did things no one else had done and broke their laws, then he was a devil using black magic, with which they were quite conversant.

In verse 39 the Holy Ghost is the manifestation of I Am, and John is referring us to the occurrence of Pentecost. Later on in the Gospel, Jesus tells them he is going to leave them and they will receive a Comforter in his place. He is referring to the Presence of God of whom they suddenly become aware at Pentecost. Jesus also knew that his own presence among them had quickened their awareness to the point that the shock of his going would cause them to respond and make this contact. So John, who understood to some degree what Jesus meant, explains in retrospect that they did not know and understand what Jesus is saying here because they had not yet had that experience.

We can imagine from the picture John gives, the amount of havoc Jesus caused by his talks. We can also see the confusion which arose when he tells them he will only be with them for a little while. Their logical minds say, "He is going to leave us to teach the gentiles." As unacceptable as that idea may have been to them, it was more conceivable than that he was

going to allow himself to be killed. We can almost hear the arguments: "Is he Moses or Isaiah? How does he know these things? How can he do these things? By what authority?" etc. This is the sort of upset which occurred wherever he went.

The Jews have been a minority group in every period of history, and it is from this group that Christianity sprung. Many rituals of the Catholic church are adapted from the rituals of Judaism. So when Jesus says that "salvation is of the Jews" historically it is rather ironically true, but it is also true in a deeper and more lasting sense. The Jews never had a hierarchal concept and they were unique in their belief in the one God. They chose God and expressed their concept in "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God, the Lord is One." They are the ones who turned humanity to the idea of the one God, or what is often called salvation.

Verses 45-53 show us how upset these men of the temple became as they heard the truth spoken. They tried to counter its effect and hide their own discomfiture by asking "What good can come out of Galilee?"— which is like our asking "what good can come out of Brooklyn?" But, first of all, they could not deny the things he said, and second, there was an aura of authority about him that also could not be denied, even though they did not understand its origin.

CHAPTER 8: 1-20. The attitude of Jesus towards the woman taken in adultery violated one of the most rigid ideas of Mosaic law. Actually women have had a rather strange role in Judaism, for although their moral and ethical actions were supposed to be controlled by the men, actually it was almost a matriarchal concept. The mother has always been highly respected and the real head of the family. Jesus completely disregards the moral aspect and tosses it right back into the laps of the men who are accusing the adulteress.

Now adultery is a very touchy subject among people of all races. The double standards by which we now live are very unfair because, if a woman does break the law, there always has to be a man who broke it with her. I, for one, could never see why the man was excused and the women had to bear the blame. For the first time in religious history Jesus throws light on this question by asking, "All right, so she has sinned, but which of you has not? Who of you can say they have never committed adultery?" This must have been a rather shattering moment for them. Actually, this was one of the great turning

points in history when for the first time a woman was not held more responsible than the man himself. While it took a long time to influence society at large, this one incident has made an indelible impression.

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus emphasizes the fact that not only is the act itself wrong, but if you *think* these things you are doing the same thing as the physical act, which is something most people still do not realize. We are still at the stage where we attach great importance to the physical, and even those of us in metaphysics have not fully realized the importance of what we think. We begin to be aware of this when we know that we have brought an illness or problem into our lives purely by not keeping our thought on a certain level. Then we realize how necessary it is to keep our thought pure, and if we only *begin* to realize this, we have made great progress. We also have the idea that if we think a thing no one knows it but ourselves, and we must realize that this is not quite true. The subconscious grasps and then reproduces everything we think with feeling. When you lose control of yourself rightly or wrongly over a situation, and wake up the next morning with a headache or virus, or what-have-you, it is because you have contaminated your thought and feeling. And this contamination immediately works out in the body or life.

Jesus answers the Pharisees in verses 15 and 16. When he says "yet if I judge. . ." he does not mean that he is personally criticizing, any more than he criticized the woman taken in adultery, or any more than he judged Mary Magdalene for being a prostitute. After her conversion she was immediately accepted without censure. There was one thing Jesus certainly believed and taught and it was "Don't look back. Forget the past. It is only from this particular moment we go forward." He never personally criticized a human being, and if he did criticize an individual it was not because Jesus thought he was superior to any other human being, but he did so in the name of the Presence of God wherever he saw a complete distortion of the truth.

Criticism is a word. We know things through the power of thought, and whether we are aware of it or not, the Presence of God is active in us. If we feel there is something wrong which should be made public, we would be very wrong to evade it. In the episode with the money changers it was not just the activity of the Presence of God in Jesus, but Jesus himself knew and acted upon this knowledge. They had no right to take all they

could from those who could not afford to pay and they were making a business out of the worship of God. On a personal level, if you are certain that someone you know is being taken advantage of and you are not emotionally involved, you should do whatever you can to stop it. If you are emotionally involved, you get yourself quiet before you act. This is what Jesus means in verse 16.

Verses 21-59 are quite a powerful and important section. Since we do have the key to understand what Jesus is really referring to here, we might ask why is so much of it clothed in rather vague and symbolic language? Let us take the text in verse 28: ask yourself what this means to you. Jesus phrases this in such a way that it seems only those who have an ear can hear. When he says "lifted up the son of man" we know, because most of us have experienced this to some degree, that he is speaking of the inner work that is done to achieve a union between the conscious and the Superconscious minds. In its deepest meaning it is a reference to the Third Major Initiation when the kundalini is raised and the union becomes complete and permanent. And at this time each of us becomes not only a child of God, but a son of God. This is all included in the one text. Now, if Jesus had tried to explain it to the people who were around him at that time, most of them would not have understood because they had not had even the beginning of the experience.

Our language does not permit us to express these differences in degrees of spiritual experience. When we try to do so there are few people who can understand it. Even if you are able to some degree to intellectually comprehend what is said, until you have the experience there is little if any real understanding and even less knowledge. Until we have had at least a small contact, we look at these words, believe them because Jesus said it or because it strikes a chord in us, but they have no personal meaning. Even in metaphysics most of us have the tendency to still picture some form of an anthropomorphic God who is "out there." We find it difficult to understand that THE PRESENCE OF GOD IS IN YOU, as well as in every human being, and that "the son of man" must be "lifted up" in consciousness to make contact with that Presence.

In one sense it could not be said more simply and plainly than it is said here, but the meaning has been misconstrued due to differences in understanding. For example, when we first

went to school to learn to read and write, we saw some strange looking shapes on a blackboard and we had to accept on faith that this was "A" or "B". Eventually we learned to put these funny looking things together and we learned to spell and then read, but we did it completely on faith. In the same way on a spiritual level there are certain things we have to accept on faith. This is why I constantly stress the need of meditation, because this is the only way understanding is achieved. You can intellectualize, read, have marvelous discussions with yourself and friends about it, but until something within you opens up, you do not know.

Another point which is clearly seen in this section, and we also find in our own lives, is that the difference between "I" and "me" is confusing until you learn to distinguish between them. It is amazing when you begin to realize that there are two different voices within you and we must learn to know the difference between them. "Me" is the voice of the subconscious, or logic, or rationalization, and it is always sympathetically able to give reasons why you did or did not do what you should have done. But "I" is not logical. If you or I have not lived up to what we think we should, we are not pacified or mollified, and "I" speaks in a very stern voice. The difference can be summed up in a few words: "I" speaks with authority. The Gospels tell us time and again that the people could not understand how Jesus spoke with such authority; but it was the voice of the Presence within him. Once again, we may comprehend this difference between "I" and "Me" as no doubt some of the people around Jesus did, but it only becomes a reality for us through meditation. I am perfectly sure Jesus must have stressed the need for meditation more than we find in the Gospels. It may have been deleted because the editors felt that meditation and prayer as they performed it were the same thing. But there is a great difference, and it is not a question of semantics, but of experience, for meditation is communion.

Jesus emphasizes and approaches this difference between our inner and the outer worlds, or to phrase it in other words, between the son of God and the son of Man in innumerable ways. In verse 29, what does it mean to do the things that please God? Jesus certainly did not fast or adhere to rituals. In fact, he disregarded the Mosaic law by healing on the sabbath, eating meat, drinking wine and mingling with "sinners." Yet he says "I please the Father because I do what he wants me to do."

They could not understand what he said because he was a sinner in their eyes. Jesus gives the answer in verse 35. Who is the servant? The body. And who is the Son? The Presence of God who is eternal. What does the next verse mean when it states that the son shall make you free? You will free yourself.

In contrast to this, beginning with verse 37, the Jews are very proud that they are Abraham's seed and they say "Abraham is our Father." Jesus asks them why, if that is so, do they not obey the words of Abraham, and they are unable to answer him. Jesus tells them in verse 40 that his is the knowledge of direct contact whereas Abraham acted on faith. And the Jews certainly knew that Abraham's significance and legacy to them was his faith in the One God. In verse 56 Jesus is speaking esoterically when he says "Abraham rejoiced to see my day." You will recall the story of Abraham in Genesis in which his name was changed. The letter H in the Cabala is spelled Heh, and it means "the light shining through the window" or the light from God coming into the soul of man. The letter H, or Heh, signified that Abraham had gone through the First Initiation, and so he had some knowledge of what Jesus was demonstrating. Jesus is saying that it was possible for a person to contact God because he had done so, and it is certainly true that anyone who has had the experience is eager for everyone else to have it.

Let us refer again to verse 44: it has added significance at this point. This text and the text from Exodus "and the sins of the father shall be visited on the children unto the third and fourth generations" are probably the two most misunderstood texts in the entire Bible. The text from Exodus means "as you sow, so shall you reap" until you change the pattern in the subconscious. Even today many people think that this literally means that their children are going to be punished because they have sinned. And yet, although Jesus said this almost 2000 years ago, it is true for us today and will continue to be true, that as long as we are involved and give power to the unreality of the outer world and our own negation we will bear those fruits. But Jesus sums up for them and for us the essence of his teaching in verse 58: "Before Abraham was, I am" which is true for each of us, and in verse 32 "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

CHAPTER 9: verses 1-41. The healing of the blind man which is described here is one of the main incidents in the ministry of Jesus. However, as verse 3 states, do you think the man was

actually born blind in order to manifest the works of God? Basically it is true that nothing happens to any of us that we do not bring on ourselves. There were many blind people in Jerusalem, and we might ask why this particular man was chosen. Apparently Jesus was aware of something about the man which would enable him to be one of the foremost examples of what he came to demonstrate. He also knew that the man had the gratitude and the courage to speak about his healing. However there are other aspects of this happening which we can discuss, but for which we have no certain answers.

Do you think it is conceivable that, in a plan involving a destiny such as the human race faced at the time Jesus voluntarily chose to return, there could be a "special incident" such as this verse implies? I think we can at least intellectually realize that there is not a divinity within us or the universe who is going to single out "A" or "B" in order for that person to be the goad to precipitate a situation. In other words, God did not reach down from heaven and cause this man to be born blind so that Jesus could heal him, because he had enough courage to speak out. The man was blind because of his own karma, and Jesus chose him because he saw the qualities of courage and honesty which would make him speak out in front of everyone clearly and freely. Then in verse 4, "the darkness in which no man can work" is the doubt and fear in our own minds.

The purpose of the method of healing described in verse 6 was to show, to witness what occurred. Jesus was evidently aware that without some preparation the people would have attributed it to "chance" or some other explanation. This was the way he emphasized the healing. He could have used anything. For example, in the Old Testament when Nahum came to Elisha to be healed of leprosy, he was told to bathe seven times in the River Jordan. Nahum was furious, but he was persuaded to do it and he was healed. Do you think the water affected the healing? — No more than the clay did in this instance. Jesus did not hesitate to use physical means to illustrate his points. Through his healings he demonstrated the difference between principles and our understanding of them, and so he met the particular situations with the means best suited for the understanding of the people. He had no need for these methods for he only had to speak of the Word to accomplish his purpose. Most of us are still at the stage where we want to have physical evidence, as they were here, and so Jesus showed them that

he had done a physical as well as a spiritual act, by showing that his touch could penetrate a bit of mud and make it potent enough to heal.

Of course, this healing created quite a disturbance among the people and their leaders, and it was all the more disturbing because they could not determine if he was the Messiah or a devil. In verse 35, once again Jesus is not speaking for himself, but of the Presence of God within who heals you. The man "worshipped him" or, had the feeling of reverence which everyone has upon being healed, particularly over what we call a great difficulty. I remember an incident that took place during an appointment I had with Dr. Fox one Sunday. A woman in her late sixties attended his lectures, and she was terribly crippled by one of the worst cases of arthritis I have ever seen. I was utterly astonished this day to see her walking down the hall with both canes in one hand and tears running down her face. One of the most beautiful healings had just taken place. She had been crippled for years and suddenly she was walking perfectly normally and her feeling was very much one of worship, not for Emmet Fox, but for that which came through him.

CHAPTER 10. In verses 1-18 we have another gem, which is not difficult to understand. The thief refers to the fact that there had been many teachers before Jesus, as there are many today, who teach very strange things and get others into great difficulties as a result. There have always been various cults which profess to teach "short cuts", but there is no short cut, which is what Jesus says here. There is only one way and that is "straight is the way. . .". The sheep symbolize our thoughts and the good shepherd is the Presence who guides our thoughts, if we allow Him to do so. In other words, the door is open, but no one is pushing you. If you go through the door you have the protection of the shepherd as long as you need it. This is another way of describing the Father-Son relationship between God and man. Jesus makes it very clear that this is the only way to find the kingdom of God. Short cuts just do not work.

Also in verses 4 and 5 Jesus is speaking of the path as well as the individual. He tells us that our thoughts (sheep) will go wherever we want them to go. And also, which is certainly true, that once you have opened that door, if you meet the other "teachers" though you may know nothing about them, you will instinctively recoil. I think it is almost impossible for anyone who has even a dim idea of the truth to be in the

least influenced by those "voices."

He says that the good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep, and he tells them in verse 15 that this is what he is going to do. Pay particular attention to verses 17 and 18. This is in every Bible, including the Douay version of the Catholic church, and yet they still believe that Judas, the Sanhedrin, the Pharisees and Pilate caused his death. This is so explicit I do not see how it could possibly be interpreted in that way.

Verses 19-40. We see here the hostility which surrounded Jesus at this time, no matter what he did or said. In verse 34 he quotes from the 82nd Psalm which was part of their own scripture, and they paid no more attention to it than most people do today. He admits that he is a son of God, for of course he is, as we all will be some day. We are children of God now, and as we grow and begin to understand we become the sons of God in the flesh.

CHAPTER 11: 1-18. One of the most famous of Jesus' healings is the raising of Lazarus, and we have discussed the healing itself in the other accounts. However, John presents a personal and highly interesting version as it relates to Jesus. First of all, the words of Jesus in verse 4 recall the healing of the blind man. However, in the case of the blind man Jesus had foreknowledge of the man and the role he could play, whereas we get the impression here that Jesus did not know beforehand that Lazarus was ill, or else he would have healed him. Jesus had the power to find out exactly what had happened, and evidently knew that the silver cord was not yet broken and so he could be revived. He evidently decided that this could be the greatest witness to the truth which he could make other than by his own experience.

We also have seen that this life was not easy at that time and it was extremely dangerous for him to be seen in public. When his disciples express their concern about this he gives the rather cryptic answer in verse 9 that there are twelve hours in a day. Actually he makes a symbol of their concern and tells them that if you walk in the light knowing that God is with you nothing but good can touch you.

Verses 18-46 are certainly one of the most, if not the most, dramatic sections of the Bible. I think it is almost on a par with the Crucifixion and Resurrection. First of all, we should realize that embalming was not a practice of Judaism in those days. The orthodox Jews of today still have, what is to me, a most horrible

custom. When a person dies he must be buried before sundown of the next day unembalmed – and there is always the possibility that it may be a very deep coma. This was the custom they observed in those days and Lazarus had already been in the grave four days when Jesus returned.

The section beginning with verse 22 is very interesting. There were two types of belief in resurrection which were prevalent in Israel at that time: the majority of people believed that immortality was obtained through the children who lived on after you, and the minority believed in the physical resurrection to which Martha refers. Now, when Jesus said "I am the resurrection and the life" they interpreted it to mean that he would emerge from the grave and bring all the dead with him. Yet he makes it very clear that this is not what he meant in verses 25 and 26. Once again the phrase I Am is used by the Presence of God speaking through him. And we know very well that if we accept this – and I believe everyone in metaphysics does to some degree – even though we are not at the point of evolution where we are able to transcend when that moment of death comes, we will still leave the body in a fairly good degree of consciousness very quickly after the experience. In the same way as when we awake in the morning we know who and where we are.

A corroboration of the fact that Jesus did not know beforehand that Lazarus had been ill is in verse 35. Jesus wept because humanly he was deeply touched, although there was no doubt what the Presence within him could and would do. The question has been raised that perhaps Jesus wept because he saw that Mary and Martha and the others were so filled with the fear of death, but I doubt that. I do not think that he wept over the lack of understanding, of which he certainly was aware, but because he was terribly moved that his friend whom he loved dearly had gone through this experience alone. Also he would never expect them to believe that he could do this – it was far beyond the ken of most people.

There is a marvelous instruction for all of us in verses 41 and 42. Why do you think Jesus said "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me." I have often said that the greatest statement of truth we can make is when we say from our hearts, "Thank you, God." It is the greatest prayer in the world, and all Jesus said before the greatest healing he made was, "Thank you, God." Do you realize what this means? He did not go into a long series of meditations to raise his consciousness: he did

not have to. He did not go into an involved form of treatment; he did not have to. He merely said "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me . . . and I knew that thou hearest me always." And then he adds, "but because of the people which stand by I said it." He did not have to say even that. This is the most important point we could ever realize; more important than the fact that he had the power to raise Lazarus.

You notice too, he summons Lazarus very simply: "come forth." He did not sit down and pray or meditate and make all sorts of mantrums or affirmations. It was merely the supreme knowledge and faith in what he knew and what he had: as before in "stretch forth thy hand" it is now, "Lazarus, come forth." We should realize this for ourselves. We should bring ourselves to the childlike simplicity and faith where we really believe this; where we believe so completely that when we speak the Word it demonstrates immediately. This is part of our goal.

This is the greatest of all the "miracles." It is even greater than feeding the multitude, for that was not a matter of life and death. But Jesus did this very simply. Incidentally when he spoke in a loud voice it was also to impress the people. I mention this because people very often ask me if they should meditate aloud. They seem to think that they must speak loudly in order to be heard from here to heaven. Actually, the most effective treatments and meditations are silent, which is why we train ourselves to go into the silence. Here Jesus was impressing the crowds and so he made sure that they heard him.

In verses 46-47 we see that Jesus represented danger to the priests and Pharisees because he was upsetting everything over which they had power. Furthermore Jesus was demonstrating and teaching a truth that was anathema to all temples and churches: "you need no intermediary between you and your God." For if that really is practiced and believed there is no reason to do anything more than: "Go into your closet and pray to your Father in secret." His ministry made him a very dangerous thorn in their flesh, and they felt they must do something about it. What they did not realize was that they were unconsciously fulfilling the plan. His own timing was such that they had no choice but to follow. As the time drew near Jesus did more and more things to aggravate them because he knew what had to be done and that it would be done exactly as he outlined it. We should not forget verse 18 in chapter 10, especially as we go on.

Caiaphas referred to the custom at Passover of releasing a man

from prison when the crowds would decide if he were to be crucified or freed. They knew Barrabas was a favorite with the poor people and the idea began to form itself in Caiaphas' mind that if Jesus were captured and a choice was offered between the two, the priests could have enough of their own people in the crowd to direct the choice in favor of Barrabas. Caiaphas says that Jesus would be a fitting sacrifice to preserve their political power and, in verse 51, John or the editors refer this to the prophecy in Isaiah 53 and the fact that the divine plan is being carried out despite the human motivation.

CHAPTER 12. We have already discussed the incident of the anointing in the other Gospels, but what do you think verse 8 means? Many people have thought that it meant there would never be a time when there were no poor people, but Jesus was speaking of his own period of time. Granted we have not reached the point where everyone has enough of this world's goods but it is a changing thing, and certainly we can envision the day when this will not be true.

Also in this account, verse 4, we are told that Judas was the disciple who complained about the use of the ointment. It is possible that, as stated in verse 6, Judas was not concerned about the poor although I greatly doubt it. He was not a thief, in fact, he was quite a well-to-do young man. This is an attempt to blacken his character in retrospect because of the role he played. As we know, Judas was the most important character in the plan of Jesus because it could not have happened without him. There had to be someone who had the courage, even blind courage, to propel the activity which would fulfill the plan.

We should not forget the Jesus chose the disciples, and he knew their strong points and their weak points. Judas was not a thief; he was an ardent patriot and zealot who adored Jesus. He felt that time was getting out of hand and something must be done to force Jesus to reveal himself. He believed through his power from God Jesus would reunite Israel and free the nation from the Romans, and so he began to formulate his plan. He had seen Jesus suddenly vanish from the midst of hostile or overly enthusiastic crowds, so he was perfectly sure this would happen again. He had no reason to believe that this would lead to a crucifixion. He believed that it would enable Jesus to lead Israel to glory. You might ask, then why did Judas take money for it? If he had not taken money his purpose would have been suspect. The Pharisees and the priests were very shrewd and

if they had suspected that he was doing this so that Jesus would be revealed in his full glory as the Messiah, that would have defeated his plan and probably have been the end of Judas. So he went to them as an informer who no longer had any use for Jesus and whose only interest was in being paid. From the accounts of Judas' background the thirty pieces of silver meant nothing to him because he was a wealthy man.

In verses 12-19 we again have the story of the entry into Jerusalem which is introduced by a quotation from Zechariah 9:9 and an indirect reference to Isaiah in verse 15. Then in verse 16 we are told the disciples did not connect the events with the temple scriptures until after the resurrection. There is a bit of symbolism here with which we are familiar, which also illustrates the misunderstanding we encounter in our own time about these events. Jesus chose an ass' colt because it represented the physical body and to signify that he had complete control. He could have chosen a camel, for example, but an ass, or horse, signifies a tremendous amount of power and strength. This is certainly a contrast to the orthodox assumption that he chose this as a sign of humility. Jesus rode the colt and was crowned to symbolize that he was in full control of everything that happened.

Verse 25 is one of the most important texts in all of the Gospels. It is found in the other Gospels as well, but this version is slightly different and the phrase "in this world" is added. What it actually means is that if I am satisfied with my life as it is, or if I am perfectly content to "eat, drink and be merry" then I am sooner or later going to get into difficulties. But if I turn to the concept of what we call the metaphysical life, then I am ending the old life. I am changing and losing the old and finding my new life in the new pattern of thinking I have adopted for myself.

Verse 32 is equally important. Actually, the manifestation of the Presence of God which has finally come forth visibly through the human being is the most potent force in the world. The person who has this could be the greatest charmer of all time if he wanted to use it in that way. It is a tremendous magnet for people — a magnet for good. But it is editorially qualified to refer to the Crucifixion, in verse 33, which is not what it means. This is also what Jesus meant earlier in verse 23. We know that Jesus spoke of himself as the son of Man, and we have seen that at the Third Initiation we become the sons of God.

For the first time he says "the son of man shall be glorified" and this means that the union is complete and it will manifest completely. It not only refers to the Presence of God, the Indwelling Christ, in Jesus, but to Jesus himself in that he is now one with the Presence. And the word "glorified" means to be made whole.

Verse 27 refers to the episode in the garden of Gethsemane, but I think it may be an insertion, partly because it is only found in this Gospel. And, while John is far more authentic in reporting the teaching than the others we still find a few instances of poetic license here and there. I also think verses 28 and 29 are the result of a little editorial freedom. We all know that in moments of extreme tension many things can occur to people as a result of imagination. I rather doubt that the voice was physically audible, but I think the tension and emotional power of the moment certainly created an effect upon the people who witnessed it. I think these words were inserted to dramatize the moment.

Verses 34-50. If you do not recall Isaiah 53, I would suggest that you re-read it as it is very beautiful and significant and it is quoted in verse 38. There is an interesting statement in verse 41. When did Isaiah "see his glory?" At the time of the transfiguration. It also could be that when Isaiah was impressed with the content of chapter 53 he may have seen these events as a prophetic vision, although we do not know if he consciously knew the identity of the person who would manifest the Christ.

CHAPTER 13. In verses 1-17 we know the feet symbolize understanding. The act of washing the feet is to cleanse the understanding, and it also represents humility. The great danger in growth and, as we have said, the only sin we ever commit, is the conscious sin of spiritual pride. Jesus was the great leader who was worshipped and revered and yet he did this. When we remember that Jesus says "the first shall be last." we see that this was a sign of complete humility signifying the service we each give to the other. It also means that the understanding of this is not clouded by anything extraneous to the symbol itself.

We have discussed the material in the following section quite thoroughly and I think we have a clear picture both of the possible motivation of Judas and the humanness of Peter. I would only like to comment on the fact that, despite the great beauty of John's version, there is a slight feeling of Jesus unhappily and helplessly approaching the coming events. This

is rather incongruous in view of the number of statements which Jesus makes here, as well as John's comments such as verse 11, expressing a definite and complete knowledge both of what is going to happen and of how the disciples would react. Moreover, John's own understanding was such that he conveys, other than here, a tone of decisiveness and triumph surrounding these events in Jesus' life.

CHAPTER 14. It is very evident here that, after all the time they had spent with Jesus and had been taught the "meat" which he did not give the multitudes, the disciples still were unable to understand when he spoke of the Father in him. It is very difficult for most people to grasp the fact that in every human being there is Life and that as we open ourselves to this, it becomes our realization of the Presence of God who gives us life and from whom all things come. Thomas asks in verse 5, "Where is the Father?" And Philip, in verse 8 asks, "Where are you going?" Yet how many times Jesus must have said "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also" — you would have known the Presence of God in me. What do we mean, for example, when we salute the Indwelling Christ in another person? We are seeing the Presence of God in him. We are not trying to see an overshadowing angelic figure. We see the Presence that gives them Life and, in time, will become all Life itself to that individual. At the end of meditation we say "In God I live and move and have my being, and never let me forget that in me God lives and moves and has His being too: so in Truth and reality I and my Father are one." Jesus is saying exactly the same thing here. In accordance with the degree to which we open ourselves to the Presence and live the life to that degree do we manifest it, and to that degree it is apparent.

I am sure we have all wondered at times at the conceptions of Jesus in some of the otherwise very magnificent paintings we have seen. Regardless of the fact that they may be artistically beautiful, very few of them represent a man who has made conscious contact with the Presence of God. Most of them portray a miserably tortured face and **THAT IS NOT GOD IN YOU**. When you see this you must ask yourself "Is this the son of God?" I know that if I did not know what I know, and believed that this was the example I was to try to emulate, my reaction would be "No, thank you. This is not for me." Our whole conception of God and ourselves as the children of God must change and, little by little, through metaphysics we are beginning to do so.

To return to the chapter, one of the few references to reincarnation is found in verse 2. I am sure there must have been many other references far more pointed than this which were deleted by later scholars because they did not understand. But we do have this one symbolic reference; Jesus' own statement "before Abraham was, I am" and his discussion about his own and John the Baptist's incarnations to show that he himself definitely believed in reincarnation. These are the skeleton remains of an assuredly more detailed discussion.

In verse 6, remember that the "I" is the Presence of God in Jesus. But did it ever occur to you that Jesus very often spoke in a series of trinities as in "Ask, seek, knock" and here we find "I am the way, the truth and the life." It would have been sufficient for him to say that he was the way, or the truth, or that he was the life. And, as we know, he used words very sparingly: he was extremely concise and said exactly what he meant. Our difficulty lies in our inability to extend our understanding and spiritual imagination beyond the actual words. The way is the path: the path of life we choose to live, and it is the path which leads to union. When Jesus says "I am the way" it means the precepts he has given are the landmarks of the path we can follow by right thinking, right action and meditation.

Then he says "I am the truth." What is the truth? When we say we know the truth about something, we mean we know its essential nature. And in metaphysics we say "that which is true in spirit must manifest here and now." So Jesus not only showed us the way, but he manifested in himself the essence of perfection, and the life. What do you mean by life? We say that Life is unceasing fulfillment. Where? Here. "I have come that ye might have life more abundantly" not on the next plane, but here. Actually, this one text is a synthesis of the entire teaching of Jesus. Jesus gives us the way to go, he tells what happens when we follow it, and says that we benefit by it right here in this life. And when he adds, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me" it is not by Jesus personally, but by what he has taught us.

While verses 11 and 12 are very familiar to us, I think we should all think about them more than we do. I do not think they need any explanation, since it is quite a literal statement, but I wonder how much we believe what is said. What do you think the phrase "because I go unto my Father" means in

relation to our ability to heal? I do not believe any of us have raised people from the dead or fed multitudes, or walked on the water, but I do believe we all could do it if we needed to. I also think as we develop further this can become a completely normal procedure. We have the ability to do even greater things than Jesus did here on earth because he is not going to reincarnate again. What he is saying is that he reached a certain peak of development here, but that there are even greater things which can be done and greater peaks to be achieved on earth, which he could demonstrate, but since he is not going to return, they are ours to conquer.

Verse 13 is often confusing to people. The word "name" means the nature of a thing, and again, Jesus is not speaking of the person of Jesus but of the Presence of God. It is the son of God who is saying that we can do anything in accordance with the will of God. If we speak the Word for a thing we know very well we have a certain concept about it and must keep our mind in a certain way in order to demonstrate it. In other words, we carry forth the same idea of performance that was in the mind of God when He created the universe. "As above, so below; as within, so without." Then verses 16 and 17 refer to the fact that they will soon know and have conscious contact with the Presence within them who is the Comforter, the Paraclete. Verse 18 refers to the Resurrection, But the 19th verse is actually part of this and it also refers to the fellowship of spirit which is an indirect reference to the awareness they achieve at Pentecost.

When Jesus says in verse 26 "the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost" he refers to the fact that they did not have this conscious contact yet, or the experience of being the son of God. Verse 27 means that Jesus is at peace and is speaking the Word for peace for them. Of course this is one of the very greatest benedictions we have. Verse 30 means that Jesus must keep himself on one level of complete concentration at this point. The prince of this world symbolizes temptation, as in that hour in Gethsemane when Jesus was tempted to change his plan. Even though he knew he could control it, he also knew he had the power not to continue if he chose not to, and this was a great temptation. Jesus knew that unless he kept himself extremely one-pointed he might be tempted again, and this could defeat his great purpose. This is one of the powerful proofs of his humanness.

CHAPTER 15 is a very beautiful chapter. Although the allegory of the vine differs from the parable of the vineyard in the other Gospels, I think we are all sufficiently familiar with the symbolism for its meaning to be clear. It is stressing the Indwelling Presence by which all of these things are accomplished. What about verse 16? We know that Jesus chose his disciples, but we know as well that we have free will and the ability to choose our path, so why does this imply that the choice was his and not theirs? Jesus chose the disciples because they were ready for the experience, but he did not force them to follow him. When he asked them to join him they had the privilege of saying no. "When the student is ready the teacher appears." There is no implication of a lack of free will here. Nothing in the world could have made him attempt to hold them. The same concept is behind Jesus' choice of Judas. Jesus knew what Judas would do, but if Judas had chosen to do otherwise, no one could have stopped him. BUT Judas chose to do what he wanted to do.

Persecution, in verse 20, is a strange word, and it certainly is found in a variety of forms. Today we would not physically torture a man for his religious beliefs, but we might ridicule him, which can be another form of persecution. We do not, nor did the disciples, actually have to go through physical hardships, or die the way they did. This was their idea of following Jesus. Jesus has said before, and once again in verse 26 he says that he will send them a Comforter. You might ask, if the Comforter refers to the Presence of God who is already within the individual, then why is the verb "send" used here. I personally think this has been mistranslated or inserted by the editors. We should remember that in the basic orthodox teaching, Jesus is the unique son of God. According to this concept then, we are what we are by the grace of what Jesus did and would do. He did not teach that. He told the disciples the Comforter would come to them when they became consciously aware of the Presence within them.

Then although it is worded for dramatic emphasis, verse 22 does mean that the people were shown their sin because Jesus spoke openly of the Law and made them aware of it. The law taught by the religions of the time was almost solely concerned with physical observance. They adhered to the rituals and thought that this allowed them to do anything else they wanted to do. Jesus showed them that the ritual meant nothing whatsoever and that the only thing that mattered was what we thought,

said and did. He revealed the fact that the outer actions were unimportant, but the inner reactions were vitally so and, whether they accepted this or not, they nevertheless had been made aware of it.

CHAPTER 16. Once again, in verse 7, Jesus speaks of sending the Comforter. He knew that they were so dependent upon him that they would not make the effort for themselves while he was with them. He knew them and human nature well enough to realize that they would make no effort other than to literally follow him. He also knew after the event of the Crucifixion and Resurrection, their shock would be so great that it would impel them to make that effort. It is also possible for a person with a great deal of spiritual power to stimulate a person he sees is ready for a major experience of the soul so that it happens immediately. This, incidentally, may be one of the reasons why the experience at Pentecost occurred as a group experience. No one could do this for a person who was unprepared or not ready within himself. But if that experience is going to take place, let us say, within the next few years, it is possible to bring it to pass immediately by treatment.

In verse 11 the prince of the world is the mentality, which gets us into trouble. We follow the subconscious desires and then rationalize our position. There is a lovely saying which expresses this in modern terms. "Logic is an organized way of going wrong." Logic is not necessarily truth, and very often leads to compromise. We know very well that compromise is just a step in rationalizing those things we know are not quite in line with the truth. Then, of course, one thing that terrifies most of us is criticism. We do many things that are wrong to avoid being criticised. "Order is heaven's first law" and yet we get ourselves needlessly confused by negation because, let us say, we are afraid of being rude, or of hurting someone. Well, you are not going to hurt anyone if you are trying to do the things that are right, for then everything else most follow in perfect order. But we all want to be appreciated and loved, and rather than risk criticism, we rationalize, compromise and act other than we should, and this all comes under the category of "the prince of this world." In verse 16 Jesus first says "ye shall see me no more" and then he says "ye shall see me." In other words, they will not see the figure of Jesus after the Resurrection, but they will see the Presence of God at Pentecost, and then they will know for themselves.

And in verse 22, when he speaks of the "joy that no man taketh from you" he refers to the fact that once we have that contact and understanding we can never lose it. It can be clouded, or we can be temporarily upset ourselves, but actually we can never be thrown off that foundation. Jesus is also saying that they have the power to contact the Presence of God in themselves with no intermediary whatsoever. These verses have been edited a bit which makes them rather vague and puzzling, for to "come forth" from God means that God sent him, which he specified in verse 28. In the same way, verse 26 makes it very clear that when he says "ask in my name" he means in the nature of the Christ, the Presence within.

Then in verse 33, Jesus says very openly that he has overcome the world. He has already told them that "I, of myself can do nothing, but the Father within doeth the works." He has made himself a vehicle, so to speak, for the Presence to work through him. And he tells them that his work is completed and he is going to leave.

CHAPTER 17 is, for me, the most beautiful chapter in the whole Bible. It is known as the Great Prayer. I think by now we are sufficiently familiar with the terms and the nature of the ideas expressed here for there to be no need to discuss it in detail. It is a farewell prayer in recognition of the nature of God and the Presence which Jesus manifested and demonstrated in accomplishing the work he came to do. It is a prayer from which we can gain greater understanding through individual study than by analysis. So I will make only two points before continuing with the next chapter. Verse 5 is similar in meaning to the statement "Before Abraham was, I am." And verse 16 means that they were not shrewd in the ways of the world. The expression "in the world" in those days meant very much the same as our phrase "a man of the world" describing someone who is very sophisticated and materially minded.

CHAPTER 18. In verses 1-11 we find a very interesting account of the period during which the events in the garden of Gethsemane were supposed to have taken place. But this is the account of the only eye witness of the Gospel writers, John. It is extremely fascinating to see the difference in approach and in the report itself. There is no question of suffering here: there is no prayer that "this cup" be removed. We are given a totally different set of circumstances. The only reference to "the cup" is in verse 11, which is a positive assertion of

conviction, and hardly a plea for release. This is the only account where there is no misery, suffering and, not even momentarily, fear. Here we are told that Jesus went to the garden, Judas followed with the soldiers and Jesus had to practically coax them to arrest him. Also, as we see in verse 6, the soldiers themselves were frightened evidently because they knew of his power and had heard or seen him perform miracles.

Now it is very possible, because the Transfiguration did actually take place, that John thought it should not be revealed because of the esoteric nature of the experience. Too, as I have mentioned before, this is an experience which occurs privately and without an audience. Furthermore, although it was not true for Jesus, it can occupy a period of time, from beginning to end, ranging anywhere from a couple of months to almost a year. It may be that John did not record its climax, because he could not record it in entirety. But we know the Transfiguration took place about six months before the Crucifixion, which is the Fourth Initiation.

Verse 15-38. This is one of the most familiar stories in all the Gospels, and I do not think there is much more we can say about it other than what has already been said. However, there is one very important point which it emphasizes. I think that as soon as we get into metaphysics we are all prone to expect that we are to be completely made over overnight, but somehow or other, it does not happen that way. We have discussed the fact that Peter completely and sincerely adored Jesus, but such is the power of a subconscious fear that he denied knowing him three times in self-protection. In metaphysics we sometimes have the idea that we can just speak the Word and, one-two-three, the problem is wafted away. I really wish it were so. We see very clearly here that Peter, who had been with Jesus for over three years and believed everything he said and did, when he was suddenly projected into a test of this belief, he failed. The other point we learn from this, since we do know about Peter's life from this point on, is that he never again failed in his belief. In other words, it was both his point of undoing and his healing, because from that point on he worked on himself to overcome this fear. After the crucifixion, the persecution of the disciples became greatly intensified, and for a number of weeks they went into hiding because the Pharisees and Saducees, partly inspired by Paul, were hunting them down. But Peter was the rock – upon this rock I shall build my faith –

and it was the same Peter who reacted in this way here.

Now John also stood by, and he made it evident that he belonged with Jesus. Peter was a very enthusiastic and violent person who always spoke and acted before he thought, and the contrast between the figures of Peter and John is fascinating. Actually there are tremendous differences between Peter, John and Paul. Here are three people who have the same idea and the same love, two of whom shared the same experiences, and yet look at the difference between them, and in that light look at the difference between their lives.

In verse 36 Jesus refers to the kingdom of God, and he makes a most important statement in verse 37, beginning with "to this end was I born. . .". It means "I reincarnated to show you how to live." He demonstrated the way himself, and the final demonstration is that there is no death. When we speak of the kingdom of God, if we believe in truth, we know that there is no death. We know very well that we have, or should have, the power to change any physical condition, because any negative situation is not truth and so is a passing thing which can be made to change through faith in directing our thought to the truth. Then we demonstrate the Truth. Every time we make a demonstration we demonstrate the truth of Being. Now Jesus' final demonstration was that there was no death and this of course belongs not to the kingdom of earth, but the kingdom of God.

And so Barabbas was chosen to be released rather than Jesus. The part Pilate plays, of course, is not admirable, though he actually seems to have had little to do with the events. But Pilate was an extremely important secondary figure in fulfilling the plan of the crucifixion. If, for instance, the Jews had taken Jesus, they would probably have stoned him to death, which would not have been according to the scripture, and furthermore, it might not have been as complete a proof in the minds of the people as the crucifixion was. Also, because of his popularity with the people, the Jews might not have been able to do this, since it could have created an open rebellion. Certainly this was one thing neither the high priests nor any other Jews wanted and furthermore they could wash their own hands of the responsibility if the Romans did it, and not many people would fight against the Romans.

CHAPTER 19. Verse 11 brings up a number of points in relation to the roles of Pilate and Judas. Firstly, Jesus knew that

Pilate had to perform his part and secondly, he had a certain sympathy for him evidently. So Jesus tries to comfort him by saying, in effect, "All right, you are in a mess, and what you are doing is certainly wrong, but the one who put me in this spot bears the real responsibility." When Jesus says "Thou couldst have no power at all against me except it were given thee from above" he is saying the same thing as "no man can take my life from me except I lay it down myself." I think Jesus realized Pilate's position so he tried to reassure him and tell him that Judas had the greater responsibility.

You might ask, if a man is in this position of having to carry out an action because of a plan and against his own desires, what relation does this have to karma and free will? Only a man of Pilate's character would be in that position. Look at what we know of Pilate for a moment. We know that he was the governor of Judea. We know that he was a man who vacillated constantly and was very unsure of himself. Only a person who was torn between what he wanted to do and what he was afraid not to do would be in that role. For instance, he might have released Jesus had the Jews not said that he would be no friend of Caesar if he admitted that Jesus was a king. This meant to him that they were going to report him to Caesar, and so he was caught between "the devil and the deep blue sea." If he had had courage he would have said "I will handle the situation with Caesar, — this man must go free." But he did not have the courage, and his own great karmic test was — courage.

There is a Divine Plan as we all know, and there can be a point — please God, not many of us reach it — where a person unknowingly becomes a participant in what you might call a cosmic chess game. We saw this happen on the international scene during the Second World War. Do you think it was by accident that there was a Winston Churchill in Britain and a Franklin Roosevelt in America to fight the evil of a Hitler? Do you think it happened by chance? What if we had a Warren Harding in America at that time? These things do not happen by chance. There are people, and I think it is about time we were at least aware of this, who have — if you want to use these terms — cosmic destinies at certain times. People who, for various reasons from past lives fit into a particular pattern. They may have been in similar situations at prior times in history and once more they are called upon to incarnate at a given time, because their particular character and their particular karma allow them to be

guided to some degree. It is fortunate for all of us, that we are not tagged by karmic destiny, but there are certain people who are, and when it happens they seem to have very little to say about it. There is a very clear example of this in the figure of Franklin Roosevelt. He was a man who was crippled and who seemingly had no more political life ahead of him, and yet he had a tremendous strength, which would not allow him to be beaten, and it was this quality that we needed at that time in our history.

In verses 17-27 we have the description of the crucifixion, which I do not think requires explanation. It is interesting that John's version of the way to the cross is almost starkly simple as compared to the other Gospels, although no doubt the events recorded there took place. I have always thought that what Pilate had marked on the cross, and the fact that he refused to change it, was a perfectly beautiful insight and indication of his own personal belief. What the word king actually meant to him or how much understanding he had of Jesus is something we can only surmise. It is true that he had very little liking for the high priests who had caused him much aggravation from time to time, and so he refused to change it.

Also we should notice that Pilate does not wash his hands, signifying that his part in this was over and he was blameless, as he is said to have done in the other Gospels. Of course the point is, in either version, that he had his own conscience to deal with.

Verses 28-42 give the physical aspects of the crucifixion and, with the exception of the sepulchre which had never been used, it is a completely exoteric description of what happened. The only other symbolic reference is when they pierced Jesus' side which issued blood and water. In this instance water signified spirit, and the blood vitality. It is fascinating to note that most pictures portray this puncture on the right side under the rib cage. I have always wondered whether the artists actually knew the significance or whether it was a subconscious impulse. For the left side would not have any symbolic meaning whatsoever. The right side in this area of the body represents the subconscious. This is where we first feel our emotional reactions and this is the location of the spleen, which is the glandular gateway between the outer physical body and the etheric body.

Actually, in a materialization a medium will emit what looks

like a thick smoke from this area technically known as ectoplasm, and which is the vitality of the inner body. Once in a while it will come from the mouth, but very rarely. There is no opening in this area of the body other than the navel, and so the reason for mentioning this is to signify that the vitality of the etheric body was released. And, when the etheric loses its vitality through the physical it is freed, completely free.

Then, in the next chapter, Jesus appears in an etheric duplication of the physical body. We have modern evidences of this experience from the records of psychical research where we find that discarnate entities have returned and were not recognizable because of a slight difference between their past appearance in the flesh and their ability to duplicate this. As a rule this is because the entity either does not have a clear conception of himself or he had not had time, because of the suddenness of return, to completely reproduce his former state. The difficulty lies in the fact that this is done through thought projection and I may not have the time, if I have an urgent reason for returning, to completely form the etheric replica. However in Jesus' case, it was a very short period of time between the change from the physical form to the etheric counterpart.

CHAPTER 20. In verse 6, the physical clothes were discarded because Jesus no longer needed them. He projected these by his thought in the same way that he projected his body. The robe Jesus wore in the etheric had a tangible physical quality. He transmuted the substance of the air into the denser matter required for recognition. He used the same principle by which we heal a cut finger. Jesus, on a much broader scale, discarded the old and projected a new body that seemed as solid as the old form which had decomposed. Again it is a matter of time. As we know, in time everything of physical origin disappears, but we can speed up that process as we do when we make a physical healing.

In verse 22 we are told that "he breathed on them." Breath has the same meaning as the Greek word *Pneuma*, which refers to spirit. It means that he blessed them, probably by putting his hands on them. No greater occultist has lived than Jesus, and there are means of stimulating the individual to greater awakening by the use of the teacher's hands in relation to the endocrine chain of glands. It is possible, as we mentioned before, that this happened. For one thing, Jesus certainly wanted them to have awareness of the Presence since he would no longer be with

them. The state of consciousness described by the phrase "receiving the Holy Ghost" did not become a reality for them until Pentecost some four or five weeks later.

In verse 23 Jesus speaks of the power to remit sins, and I think the use of the word sin is questionable. But, as you know, Jesus upset the scribes and Pharisees very much when he said he had the power of forgiveness, and he is conferring both this and the power to heal upon his disciples. When he speaks of retaining sins, it seems obvious that this is an editorial use of the word for it is diametrically opposed to what Jesus taught. There is another version of this in Matthew 16:19 and 18:18: "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven," which seems a more accurate version, and it does not refer to sin. In this context it means that whatever powers we believe we have, we have, and whatever we deny ourselves we in turn deny to those who come to us for help.

Verses 24-31. "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet believed" of course refers to faith. Jesus knew there would be millions of people who would only hear his story and would believe. Yet here is a man who had spent three years with him, seen what he had done and still did not quite believe. According to history, Thomas became one of the most devout disciples after this, but this incident remains the basis for our phrase "doubting Thomas." There are millions of people who accept the truth of the life and teaching of Jesus completely simply on faith. And there are also members of Christianity who do not accept the Resurrection because they do not think it could happen. They are even more dubious than Thomas because it does not satisfy their reason.

The fishing episode is both symbolic and actual. First of all we find that the disciples had the same difficulty in recognizing Jesus as Mary Magdalene had a day or two earlier. You might ask, since the etheric was tangible enough for Thomas to touch him, why was there difficulty in recognizing him at a later date? I can tell you one thing which we know happens occultly, but what actually happened we can only conjecture. If a person materializes immediately after death, that body will not be too substantial and consequently it will be rather difficult to retain a recognizable form. However this becomes progressively easier the longer the person had been on the other plane and the more frequently he projects himself. Jesus' appearance occurred within such a short period of time that even Jesus, with all of

his power, told Mary not to touch him when she first saw him.

A materialization in the seance room is one of the easiest things to fake, but I have seen two definitely authentic materializations which were sufficiently substantial so that as the materialization passed around the room it was touched by each person. There was no doubt that it felt like human flesh. However, a genuine medium is not able to sustain this much longer than 45 minutes. Those that are not genuine can continue for hours and this is one of the ways in which you tell the difference. Actually the materialization is composed of the life substance, the life force of the medium which emerges from certain regions of the body and it is such a tremendous physical drain that it cannot be sustained for long.

Now to return to Jesus, there was undoubtedly some stress during this period and because of this and the shortage of time, he probably was unable to completely solidify and mold the etheric, in order to be recognized upon each occasion. We are not told that Thomas did not recognize him. I have the impression that Thomas believed, as almost everyone did at that time, in discarnate entities, but that he felt it may have been a figment of his imagination, or possibly an impersonation. Consequently, the wounds were proof to him that it was actually Jesus. It is also unusual that he was able to eat and remain with them for such a long period.

The 200 cubits mentioned in verse 8 signify dependency, cabalistically, and tell us that the disciples are now dependent on each other. And then in verse 11 we are told they caught 153 fishes which reduces to a 9 symbolizing that this was the end of this cycle for the disciples and in the new cycle which is now beginning they are their own.

It is interesting that in his admonition to Peter, Jesus makes a distinction between the lambs and the sheep. The lambs are those who do not know and who have to be taught, and the sheep are those who are more mature. The point is that Peter would find people who were open to the teaching but perhaps did not have the conscious understanding. This is a very wise admonition, for in the book of Acts we will find that Peter wanted to confine the teaching to those who had followed Jesus, and he still believed in the idea of cleanliness as found in the old Mosaic law. Peter had to outgrow these ideas and teach whenever the student appeared, no matter who the student was. So, in one sense, this is the beginning of the outline of what Peter

is going to experience.

It is also interesting to note that while Jesus tells Peter that he is going to be crucified, he does not specify what John's end would be. He simply tells Peter that what happens to John is not his concern. According to history John was the only disciple who did not die a martyr's death. But at that time the disciples all believed that they were following the teachings of Jesus by choosing to die in this way. The question that arises in my mind is if they believed this, as they undoubtedly did, why then is John referred to as the beloved disciple, or why was it that the disciples did not feel that he was wrong or erring in not believing as they did. I bring this up because there is one line in verse 19 that seems to be obviously inserted by later editors. Certainly John, knowing what he knew, would not say that death by crucifixion would "glorify God". It is because John understood what Jesus had come to do, that his Gospel is almost completely confined to the teaching. There are very few historical events described here, and those events which are mentioned have secondary importance to the meaning behind them.

In verses 22-23 Peter is firmly admonished to mind his own business and not to be concerned with what happens to anyone else. Peter exhibits a tendency we all have to some degree which is very typical of humanity as a whole, and Jesus' response is a paraphrase of much of his teaching. Firstly, we are prone to feel that the other person is in some way less worthy than we, and should be given a harder road than ours. And we all have a tendency to judge a person, particularly those close to us, by the outer picture, and we always feel certain that we know the whole story. This, of course, is exactly why Jesus said "Judge not lest ye be judged." Until you and I have the ability to read the other fellow's heart and know the truth, we have no means of evaluating, and never any right to criticize the path he chooses to take. This is a very hard truth which we all find difficult to apply at times. We should always remember "there are never two sides to every problem, but three sides: your side, my side and the truth." With more experience, we discover that the truth has nothing whatsoever to do with whether "your side or my side" is right or wrong, but springs from a completely different motivation which works through the emotions and thus creates an outer physical reaction.

The Gospel of John seems to be the universal favorite with the followers of the various branches of Christendom. It has that wonderful faculty of saying something personal to each reader. And this is not by accident. Nor is it by accident that John is called 'the beloved disciple' - for his Gospel is written and filled with Love.

It is John who gives us the real teaching of Jesus, not only the exoteric, but the esoteric meaning. While it is true not everyone has the understanding of the inner teaching, the earmark of Truth is that in some way it penetrates the student, - in some way we each understand and respond at our levels.

So John gives us not only the Gospel of Love, but the Gospel of Truth - exactly as Jesus taught it.

"Ye shall know the Truth,
and the Truth shall make
ye free". - John 8:32.

M. M.

*FORMULA FOR DEMONSTRATION

(A demonstration is answered prayer..
the manifestation of the Presence,
Power and Love of God.)

" **A**sk And Ye Shall Receive,

Seek And Ye Shall Find,

Knock And It Shall Be

Opened unto you"

- *JESUS*

(*The formula is ASK Mildred Mann)

Seven Steps in Demonstration

Desire: Get a strong enthusiasm for that which you want in your life, a real longing for something which is not there now.

Decision: Know definitely what it is that you want, what it is that you want to do, or have, and be willing to pay in spiritual values.

Ask: [When sure and enthusiastic] ask for it in simple, concise language...

Believe: in the accomplishment with strong faith, consciously and subconsciously].

Work at it ... a few minutes daily in seeing yourself in the finished picture. Never outline details, but rather see yourself enjoying the particular thing ...

Feel gratitude. Always remember to say, "Thank you God," and begin to feel the gratitude in your heart. The most powerful prayer we can ever make are those three words, provided we really feel it.

Feel expectancy. Train yourself to live in a state of happy expectancy ... Act it until it becomes part of you, as it must and will.

These are the seven steps. Follow them and they will bring you whatever it is that you need.

Thank you, and God bless
you.

Mildred Mann

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