

VOLUME 29

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?

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## THE BOOK OF ACTS

### (Part Two)

CHAPTER 18:1-11. It is interesting to see that Paul taught in the synagogue in Corinth. There were many Jews there, and it was still his dream that he could spread this to his people. But, he chose the one concept which would act like a red flag to a bull: that Jesus was the Messiah. No Jew, not even to this day, has been able to accept that, so they completely turned on him. It is also ironic that his insistence upon his misconception of Jesus as God continually gets him into difficulties.

There is an interesting phrase in the fifth verse: "Paul was pressed in the spirit." This is another way of saying that he went into trance and he spoke while in that condition. You know, there is a widespread belief that Paul was epileptic. There are certain epileptic states which closely resemble trance, but that would not be any positive indication that he suffered from it. I do not think Paul had epilepsy, I think he was psychically open and from time to time under emotional stress he slipped into trance. If you recall, Ezekiel went in and out of trance as easily as we open and shut a door. On the other hand, Ezekiel was not a mystic: he was a psychic who was very close to the mystic state. Ezekiel was "lifted up in spirit" and we are told that Paul was "pressed in the spirit," but the meaning of the terms is the same.

However, in this regard, we are told of Paul's vision in verse 9 and we might ask why it happened. What is said during trance is not, to any great degree, under the individual's conscious control. It could have been that Paul was upset by what he had said, or by the fact that he spoke to the Jews while he was in that state. Or, it could have been because the Jews would have no part of him. Or, it could have been that his own inner conflicts had reached the point where he wondered if he was really right in his concept. Any one or all of these possibilities could have contributed to the emotional stress which brought about the encounter with Jesus in his vision.

Now, do you think he had a vision or do you think he dreamed it? It was completely possible that he had contact with Jesus. No matter what the specific cause may have been, and regardless of his personal conviction, I am sure he must have been greatly disappointed and disheartened by his reception. He probably began to question himself about what he believed and what he was trying to do. It is most important for us to realize the humanness of the people and the situations which we find in the Bible, and Paul probably went through some soul searching. And, at this point I have no doubt that Jesus spoke with him. Why not? Jesus has been known to speak, from time to time, with those who have been very close to him, and whom he felt were essential in carrying out certain things. If they were failing in their spiritual servitude Jesus has come and strengthened them, which he probably did here. Do not forget that Paul was personally chosen by Jesus, even though the choice was not made on this plane.

There are only a few points in verses 12-28 which should be mentioned. At the end of the chapter we see, first of all, that Apollos was able to teach the Jews where Paul was unable to do so. And in verse 28 he too teaches that Jesus was God, a concept which he had gotten indirectly from Paul through Priscilla and Aquila, Paul's followers.

This brings up a point which is interesting as it bears upon an individual's development as well as upon Paul himself. We know that, regardless of what he heard from the other disciples about Jesus — and Peter speaks of him as the "son of Man" — Paul insisted that Jesus was God, primarily because he felt that what he had experienced inwardly could only come from God Himself. Moreover, one who could first, make him blind, and then instrument his healing by specifying the man who would produce it could only be God, according to Paul.

With the exception of a very limited field, the old Hebrew teaching did not deal with esotericism. As Jesus taught — and this even comes out clearly in the gospels — the meaning stemmed not only from the words themselves, but from the underlying esoteric concepts. It is the knowledge which has been taught in every ancient religion from the beginning of time: not only the knowledge of the physical or conscious levels of man, but what takes place in the psychological and emotional development of the inner man. Paul was familiar with certain phases of occultism, but his main train-

ing was in Judaism in which there is no mention of this development. He is suddenly bewildered by an experience which is beyond his ability to explain, other than to attribute it to the action of God.

We know — we have seen or heard of instances like this — that we do have these powers within us and as we develop we can strengthen them to the degree that we can perform what are termed miracles. Now Jesus was very careful in giving this teaching and, as he says, he gives milk to the multitudes and meat to his disciples. He makes the distinction time and again, even though they had little conception or understanding of what he told them because they had not yet had the experience themselves. However, when a person who has had no prior training or instruction has such an experience, they are inclined to believe that either God or the devil is at work. Paul's case is doubly fascinating when we see that he had sufficient background in occultism to cause blindness in the sorcerer, for example, and had experiences such as trance on the psychic level, but he knew so little of the esoteric structure of man that these phases of development threw him emotionally, until Jesus reassures him. John and Peter knew of these things as a result of Jesus' teaching; how well they were able to apply it is another story. But Paul was suddenly plunged into it overnight, so to speak, not knowing what was happening to him.

CHAPTER 19:1-12. We are told in verse 11 that Paul performed many healings. If he had been epileptic I doubt that he would not have healed himself if he had been that ill, especially at this early point of his experience when his enthusiasm was at its greatest pitch. It is true of many metaphysical students, that demonstrations are made more frequently in the beginning and less are made as they go on because their pitch of enthusiasm is not maintained. For when they become accustomed, shall we say, to the process, it tends to become routine, and this is not the attitude that produces demonstrations. Enthusiasm is the fuel for the energy behind demonstration. If you do not have enthusiasm you are not going to get anywhere, in or out of metaphysics. There is a beautiful text from Revelations 3:15: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou art lukewarm . . . I will spue thee out of my mouth." We hear these things and yet they go in one ear and out the other.

Returning to Paul, in addition to it being the early period of enthusiasm, his main desire at this point was to make converts, to

show them and teach them, and this certainly would have included healing himself. The other factor which indicates that there was nothing seriously wrong with his health is that he lived one of the most difficult and energetic lives imaginable.

If you notice, the Holy Ghost is given greater emphasis here than anywhere else. Apparently Paul's understanding of the term was quite immature at this point. Of course this attempt to duplicate Pentecost points out his lack of understanding quite clearly, for he is trying to stimulate a spiritual experience in his followers. While it is possible to arouse people to such an emotional peak that they simulate an experience which is not the real thing, its authenticity can be judged by the length of time it lasts, for the real is permanent.

Verse 11 speaks of laying on of hands to accomplish a healing. It is not necessary to do this. The main purpose is to strengthen the faith of the person being healed and, perhaps, the faith of the healer. If it were necessary to use your hands in order to heal, absent treatment would not be successful, which it most certainly is.

In a similar way the aprons and handkerchiefs spoken of in verse 22, which were supposedly endowed with curative powers from contact with Paul, are also a question of faith. The difference in belief being that faith in the power of an object borders on superstition. That belief is prevalent today in the church in the supposed power of its various religious relics. Personally, relics have no interest for me other than an archaeological one.

Verses 13-20 is a rather curious section. The main point here is that it shows very clearly that a person who is not sincere in his heart cannot perform exorcism. Exorcism was known and practiced very successfully in other religions before the time of Jesus. The editors of the Bible held the mistaken view that none of these things occurred until Jesus appeared, and Jesus would have been the first to deny this. These abilities have always been known to people who have developed themselves. Anyone who has faith in the Presence of God who lives within him, no matter what name he uses, has the power of exorcism. Of course, Paul still held the belief that Jesus was God, and he converted the people, ironically enough, not to Christianity or the teaching of Jesus, but to Jesus.

This caused much concern on the part of the other disciples. They could not understand why, after his own experience, he still did not realize that Jesus had demonstrated the Truth, but that

the Infinite was still the Infinite and could not be limited by any human personality. It is quite beautifully true that there have been instances where people have called for the help of Jesus in sheer desperation over a crisis which they have been unable to overcome, and he has come to their aid. But this was not done because Jesus was God, but because his power was greater than theirs. And I do not think it is a wise, right or good thing to call on Jesus or anyone else, for help in every difficulty, unless it is an emergency which we cannot face. But Paul is taking the attitude that Jesus is God and therefore all you have to do is to use the name of Jesus almost like an amulet. His own belief in it was so strong, however, that his faith made it effective for him.

The term "Lord" as used here to apply to Jesus is also a designation found in other religions. It is both a form of deification and a term of honor applying to any human being who is supposed to have attained illumination. In this case it has a slightly different connotation than when, for example it is used in addressing Buddha. Buddha was also not a god: he was the greatest teacher who ever lived up to that time. He had achieved what the Hindus call the state of Bodhisattva, which is the illumined man who has become the son of God, and in this sense he was called lord. But here, the idea of lord is descended from the Old Testament reference to God. Yet they forget that when someone once said "Good Rabbi" to Jesus he replied, "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God."

In verses 21-30 we see that Ephesus was quite an up-to-date city, and commerce rears its head. The silver craftsmen became upset that their business was being taken away and they decided to do something about it. It is also fascinating to see the change that has come upon the Christian church since those days when they believed in the ascetic life. The pomp and pagentry in some of the orthodox Christian groups of today is quite fabulous. Here we find that the Greeks and Romans, in their pagan worship, worshipped luxury, and little by little this became a Christian habit as well.

It always amuses me to see that the churches, despite their financial accumulation, insist on portraying Jesus as a penniless ascetic. They completely forget that although he did not live in unbridled luxury, he was really the wealthiest man in the world. He had the power of the Word to demonstrate anything he needed. He

never scorned wealth, as so many think he did; he lived the life he liked to live. His raiment was the finest, he was extremely social and lived a very normal life. But the fact that he could acquire anything he needed by the power of the Word is always overlooked. This is mainly because the idea of what the Word is and the power of using it is a reality which Christianity and Judaism have long since forgotten. It is very amazing that, with our knowledge increasing in every field of life, and with our continual excavations and research into the past to discover what life has to tell us, we never seem to uncover the realization that there was, and is, a power far greater than the physical.

Verses 35-41. Evidently the town clerk held a position of respect and was able to quiet the mob to some degree. As he points out, these men had done nothing, and since they had been invited to come the most courteous thing to do was to listen: no one was forcing them to accept what was said. In verse 30 Paul is well advised not to appear, for he might have suffered bodily harm, or even death. This was the beginning of this mission and they had important things to accomplish. Of course, if Paul had believed it would have accomplished something he would have gone no matter what they told him, for he was extremely brave.

CHAPTER 20:1-13. As we know, Luke is the author of the book of Acts, and once again he is suddenly speaking in the first person. It is possible that Luke was not present at Pentecost nor when Paul first arrived on the scene, and that those chapters were written from hearsay, but he evidently joined Paul at some time thereafter. Luke is a fine reporter and is quite detailed in his description of what transpires.

Apropos of Luke's attention to details, if you notice in verse 9 it does not say the young man was dead, but that he was "taken up dead," which could have been, before translation, a phrase or word which meant "taken for dead." I do not mention this in a desire to quibble over words, nor do I have any doubt for a moment that it would be possible to revive a person who was dead, especially in as short a time as this. As we have seen, even though a person may appear to be dead, he may be revived unless the etheric body is completely detached, and if Paul had made the attempt as quickly as we are told he did, it was more than possible. I simply mention it because there is an element of vagueness here which permits some doubt. This is not as factually clear as the instance



of Jesus reviving Lazarus, where there was no doubt whatsoever.

I also mention this because most people treat the incident as a miracle and conceive of Paul as a supernatural being. The longer I teach and study metaphysics myself, the more convinced I become of one thing; the only thing that prevents us from accomplishing everything that we can imagine is our own doubt that it could happen. We all pay lip service in one way or another to these concepts, and feel that we have faith in them, but no one has complete faith. I do not have it either, and so I try to increase it in every department of which I am conscious, but I also know that there are areas of the subconscious where faith has not been fully established. There is an element called race doubt, and this, plus the fact that we have become so terribly sophisticated in our century that we feel a thing must be dreadfully complex in order to be powerful, keeps us from achievement to any great degree. We should learn to realize that the greatest power in the universe is utter simplicity. When we get to that stage we have the power of the Word.

This does not mean being stupid, uneducated or even unworldly; but it does mean keeping things in their right balance. For instance, I believe that if I jumped out of a window I would either be badly injured or killed upon reaching the ground. But I am completely convinced that if I accidentally fell out of that window and had enough faith to speak the Word as I fell I would be completely unhurt. How much faith I had and how much ability I had in keeping my mind direct at that moment is the question. This is always an unknown element. So we find that whether it is a situation like that or a situation where illness has reached the point of life and death; it is still a matter of faith. If we would cultivate the kind of faith which is powerful at any given moment, there is nothing in the world that could ever hold us back. But, it is much too simple.

Verses 13-38. Paul went to Jerusalem to contact Peter and John who were still there. I am sure he had many questions to discuss, for Paul's pattern in the past year had been slightly hectic and happening at such a fast rate that he had not really been able to catch his breath. We do not know why he was so sure that he would not return to Ephesus, for there is no record of it. It may have been that he had a vision concerning what would take place, or it may be that he was planning to stay in the desert for the remainder of his life — we do not know.

We now see that Paul, having gathered together his own group of converts, considering the last verses, is greatly loved by them. This is rather unusual for a man whom we know could be quite cutting at times, as he had a biting, sarcastic tongue second to none. It is possible that the humility he was trying to learn caused a response in those around him, but whatever the cause, it is quite a touching insight. Aside from this, it is a very beautiful section which is quite clear and needs no discussion other than to note, once again, that there is little if any esotericism in his teaching.

CHAPTER 21:1-14. One might think, from verses 4 and 11, that Paul had a cosmic signature telling him not to go to Jerusalem. This is extremely interesting from a number of points of view relating to ourselves as well as to Paul. Paul was not only thrust into this awareness and teaching, but he immediately began using everything he was given to know. He was speaking the Word right and left with great success, and this was his only real concern. *But*, he paid no attention, except in relation to the teaching, to any counsel that came to him about himself. This brings up the question, which also arises in verses 13 and 14, of martyrdom. Here we see one of the initial steps in the great misunderstanding of Jesus' life and teaching. Do you really think that Jesus thought that people should martyr themselves in order to prove Christianity? The disciples were doing everything they could to follow the teaching of Jesus, and certainly Paul was, and it is he whom we are dealing with at this moment. He was by far the most brilliant of the disciples: how do you think he could misunderstand this aspect? Peter tried to emulate the life of Jesus in its entirety, but how could a man like Paul, with his background and tremendous intelligence, misunderstand in this respect?

It could have been that he was unconsciously repaying himself for the death of the Christians which he had caused, for he does have a severe guilt complex. And, actually, this motivation of trying to make amends affected almost every area of his life. It could also be because the crucifixion was understood to be, literally, the final act in a life of self-sacrifice, for they still did not understand either the crucifixion or the resurrection. But there is a line which Paul writes in verse 26 of chapter 20: "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men," which strongly indicates that it was the feeling of guilt which drove him to martyrdom in Rome and prevented him from listen-

ing to the guidance given here.

There is another, quite obvious point which we have not mentioned before, which has a bearing on this. You remember when Jesus sent the disciples out on their first trip he said they were to accept whatever was given them. But Paul says in 20:34, "Ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, etc.," He even went against the actual instruction of Jesus and would not allow anyone to help him. This is the same fanatic drive which showed so strongly in the persecution of the Christians and is now redirected and striving to even outdo what Jesus himself had taught. So the fanaticism remains and is coupled with a guilt complex.

I said before that Paul was, with the exception of Moses, probably the most fascinating character study in the entire Bible, but there is a striking parallel between them which is perhaps even more fascinating. In both instances we find passionate zealots who would die without hesitation for their cause. Both of them were extremely brilliant and had the finest academic training of their particular Biblical period. Yet, each of them had a violence of nature which permitted Moses to kill a man, as well as Paul. In each instance, when these men were driven emotionally, all of their intellectual training goes "out of the window."

Equally striking is the great difference between them in other areas. As I said, Moses was an extremely sophisticated man: Moses liked the good of the earth: he liked to live well. You cannot picture Moses living on a bowl of rice — but you can imagine Paul doing this. Paul in that respect was much like John the Baptist: he shunned the niceties of life. Moses enjoyed them greatly whenever they were available to him, as they were in his princely youth. There they differ, and it is a revealing difference. It is one of the seemingly unimportant points which arise, whether it is in the Biblical days or in our own time, in relation to the value we place on various concepts and things.

Unfortunately, much of present-day fanaticism comes from Paul, whose approach has warped many student's lives and outlook, and has also given the metaphysical movement the title of the "lunatic fringe." If Paul, as great as he was, were in our midst today with the same attitude and opinions, I think we would find him a bit odd. There is nothing in Jesus' teaching or in the Bible itself that says we are not supposed to live a good life. We are here to enjoy

the good of the earth and to use it, not to abuse it. The concept of abstention and asceticism has hurt more students than we could ever imagine. Here Paul almost glories in the fact that he is abstemious and lives a life as close to poverty as possible. He certainly did not get this from Jesus.

After Paul's previous stand with regard to circumcision, it is strange to see, in verses 23 and 26, that he is so easily persuaded to purify himself because he had consorted with and ministered unto the Gentiles. Part of this was a feeling of guilt resulting from the habits of orthodox Judaism. Furthermore, he had been a very devout Jew and was very proud of it, so there is also a touch of spiritual snobbery in his reactions to the Gentiles. He also wanted to make peace with the disciples. In addition to these reasons, I am sure he felt better when he went to the temple, because this was his habitat, so to speak, and he had been reared in this manner from childhood.

CHAPTER 22:1-23. And again Paul is beaten because, to them, he was a renegade Jew. Apart from the unhappiness this represents in Paul's life, this incident carries an important point for us as metaphysicians. Paul tries to impress the Jews, and to make them realize what a tremendous experience he had, and it falls on completely deaf ears. I am sure we have all had the experience, at one time or another, where we speak of something of a metaphysical nature and the meaning is completely lost on those who are not interested in metaphysics, and so the full impact of what we said is not realized. The kindest reaction we usually get is a rather pitying smile. This is what Jesus meant when he said, "Do not cast your pearls before swine." Jesus did not have spiritual pride, nor did he mean it in that sense, he simply meant that it was wasted effort to give information to people who are not ready for it.

This is also another instance of Paul's impetuosity. He was certain that he could win them over because, we must remember, he was one of the great orators of all time. He was certain that if he told them the marvelous story of what was to him the most overwhelming experience of his life, he would have them at his feet. Instead, as we see, he just escaped with his life. They were determined to get rid of him as they believed he had blasphemed and disregarded the laws of Moses. If Paul had given it any serious thought he probably would never have mentioned his experience. There are a million and one aspects which he could have spoken

about in order to get them to realize how powerful and how important the Presence of God was in the human being. He made no impact whatsoever. I have a suspicion that subconsciously he was glad he was being punished because, as we shall see as we go on, his guilt complex becomes increasingly predominant.

Verses 24-30. After his speech we are told that they examined him by scourging, which means that they beat him or, as we might say, gave him the third degree. Once again Paul "pulls rank" as a Roman. And, as before, they stopped immediately since it would have been extremely dangerous to antagonize Rome and they did not know what importance Paul may have had to Rome. But the fact that Paul resorts to worldly power rather than to spiritual power to change the situation indicates that it was a fairly severe beating.

CHAPTER 23:1-10. As we can see, Paul was nobody's fool. He realized he was in a very tight spot and, after having been severely beaten, he was not able to get high enough in consciousness to be able to control things spiritually. What is more, the high priest had someone smite him on the mouth even before he spoke. He started to say "Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day," when he was hit. He did not say anything that any man could object to. When the commotion began Paul called the high priest a "whited wall" which means whitewashed or, in other words, a hypocrite. But then Paul realized that he did not have a chance and suddenly became aware — how we are not given to know — that half of the people were Sadducees and half Pharisees — and so he promptly started to arouse the sense of division between them. He put it in motion so that instead of concerning themselves with Paul they began to fight among themselves. There is no doubt that Paul was more brilliant than those he came in contact with and that he could out think them quite quickly. He saved his own life, first, by saying that he was a Roman, and here, by saying that he was a Pharisee, which made them come to his defense against the Sadducees.

Verses 11-35. This is the first time we hear of Paul's family. His nephew heard of the plot to kill Paul and made sure the news reached him. I am sure that his family were not happy about his situation or his religious position, but they did not want to see him killed. Although the family bond is one of the very strongest traits of Jewish character, there is another aspect to this which shows us how times and understandings have changed. Paul was

raised to the letter of the law in a family of orthodox Jews, and he became a convert to the new religion. Now, up to that point and, in rare instances, even today, when a Jew turned to another religion he was considered to be dead by his family if they were orthodox. Yet here we find that the family stood by and protected him. It could be that they too may have become converts, but we are not told this. If they were, then this behaviour is perfectly normal, but if they were not it is quite extraordinary.

**CHAPTER 24:1-27.** Tertullus' argument seems rather unintelligent, but it is one which, in a reverse sense, has a dim echo in our own times. Here the Jews were determined for reasons they felt would be advantageous to them, to make religion part of the government of the state, even under Rome. And today we are having a tumult about the separation of church from state in issues such as prayer in schools. This discussion is going on while we are reading this section of the Bible. It is the same old story and humanity changes very slowly. Here, in the beginning of Christianity, the Jews who always had a horror of Rome interfering with their religious practices, suddenly beseech Rome to make it an offense on the part of any of the new Christians to take part in temple observances. They had to be defended by Rome in their religious beliefs, or what they felt was an insult to those beliefs.

Of course it is true that Rome had no intention of taking part in their religious issues at that time, and Tertullus does not get very far with his argument. Paul answers him very simply and directly and Felix declines to act upon the Jews' accusations other than to imprison Paul, where, by the way, Paul was allowed a great deal of freedom. As we see in verse 26, Felix was looking for money, and Paul, even if he had money, would not pay for his freedom because he was perfectly sure that he was going to be set free. He did not know how or when, but he was relying on his faith.

**CHAPTER 25:1-27.** As we have seen so often before, Paul was a brave and intelligent man: he knew that another judge would come and he also knew that the charges they had against him would not hold up. Everyone else knew this as well, but in order to please the Jews, Festus prolonged his imprisonment. He could not condemn Paul since he had not broken the law of the land. He asked if Paul wished to be judged in Jerusalem, for he thought that the Jews might have additional evidence which might satisfy their courts there. He had no feeling of consideration or concern

as Felix had. Paul, knowing this, reiterated that he was a Roman and would appeal to Caesar, a right every Roman had and which Festus did not dare deny him. Paul is then granted his right to appeal, and is then able to proceed with his plan to go to Rome and preach the gospel.

Suppose for the sake of argument, Peter had been born a Roman and Peter had experienced what Paul was now going through. How do you think he would have reacted in this situation? He would have been completely lost. I cannot think of any one of the other disciples who would have been able to parry with adversaries in order to preserve their life and still retain the dignity of Paul. Paul knew, not only his religious law, but the law of the land. He realized that he was safe as long as he kept insisting that he was a Roman citizen to be tried by no one but Caesar, for they did not dare violate Roman law. When we realize that this man was the champion of a cause which was highly unpopular with the Jews, who constituted the majority of the population of Caesarea, and that he had no place of affection with the Romans themselves, and was yet able to stand against them all and win his point of being sent to Rome, we see that he was a formidable character.

I think we can begin to see why and how he was responsible for the establishment of Christianity. None of the other disciples had his strength of character from the point of view of planning, outwitting and at the same time enduring all these hardships. They say that cats have nine lives, and we might say the same of Paul when we see what happens to him from the time of his conversion to his death. It is almost incredible: every episode is another adventure. Only a man of his temperament, talent, zeal and fanaticism could have carried it off. Yet he never loses his head and, when he has moments of fury he very quickly curbs them. He is determined to do one thing, and that is the task which has been allotted to him. This, despite the fact that his own people not only rejected him, which was his great sorrow, but they would have given anything to be able to put him to death. So he could bring this message which he had found to be so wonderful and so true only to the Gentiles. Yet, for this he fought and gave his life. It takes a man of tremendous character to bow to the will of deity, if you want to call it so — “Thy will not my will be done” — and do the job as magnificently as he did.

In all fairness, whatever happened to Christianity since then

should not be laid completely on Paul's shoulders. The misunderstanding of theology is not solely his fault. Paul did not have the benefit of Jesus' companionship, and his entire religious experience from the time of his conversion was a series of emotional states of consciousness. Where the other disciples knew that the Presence of God was in everyone, not only in Jesus, Paul had not had the benefit of that teaching and this was one of his great stumbling blocks. Paul had already established his centers before he himself realized that Jesus was not God. And the theology of the church was based on a very limited understanding of Paul. But actually, in the final analysis, Paul's work was not so much Christian or metaphysical, as it was physical: in establishing these centers. Further than that, Paul did not go.

CHAPTER 26: 1-23. This is merely a reiteration of his experience and beneath it you can feel his great disappointment that the Jews would not accept him or his teaching and that he was relegated to teach the Gentiles. For him the teaching did not upset anything except the ritual of the temple. It strengthened his own realization, and gave him a broader vision of the tenets by which he had lived all of his life.

Verses 24-32. Paul had had a very definite purpose in insisting upon the appeal: he wanted to get to Rome. He felt that he had a job to do there and that if he could make converts wherever else he went, he certainly could make converts in Rome. His demonstration, however, was the fact that Agrippa was quite familiar with what had happened with the advent of Jesus and evidently quite interested too, so Paul had an unexpected ally.

CHAPTER 27: 1-26. Luke is once again with Paul and is reporting directly and it is an interesting description of the boat and the storm. One characteristic of Paul which he retained until the day he died was to say "I told you so." Any time that he was proven right he rubbed it in just a bit, which is another very human trait. It is also interesting to see the treatment he is now accorded, for he is no longer a prisoner in chains: he is almost a guest of honor.

In verse 9 we find the phrase "because the fast was already past." It may have been a particular day of fasting or Paul may have — in the midst of the storm which went on for days — retired and performed the orthodox ritual of fasting and praying as is the custom of devout Jews. I suspect he may have been just as con-



cerned for awhile as the others were, and he may have gone into a silence for a day or two to get guidance. Firstly, this is the old pattern of prayer for him. And, secondly, he was still new enough in his own conscious development, not to completely rely on what he sensed as guidance until he felt himself sufficiently clear in consciousness to be able to hear it. It is a well known fact that when you are filled with food and drink you tend to become a bit dull and drowsy, which certainly does momentarily prevent contact with the Presence of God in you. So Paul reverted to his old Jewish training.

Verses 27-44. That is quite a vivid description of a shipwreck. The concern of the centurion is an interesting sidelight. He had been commanded by Agrippa to provide safe passage for Paul and so he was anxious that nothing happened to him. We see another characteristic of Paul's here: whether he was a guest or a prisoner, he would take the center of the stage. He led everybody where he felt they should go whenever he felt he should.

CHAPTER 28: 1-10. Wherever Paul went, no matter what the circumstances may have been, he found people to teach and convert. It is quite fascinating to read this here, and even more so since a few years earlier he would have willingly killed anyone who said these words to him. So you see that when we do change, we change in the twinkling of an eye and "Old things are passed away, behold, I make all things new."

The survivors land on an island with people who are so primitive that they are convinced Paul is a murderer because a viper would not attack a good person. And then, when they see that he is able to throw it off without harm, he is immediately elevated to the status of a god. Paul knew the degree of their superstition so he paid no attention to it and, when the opportunity to heal presented itself, he promptly acted upon it, as we see in verse 8.

We might say that one element in his favor was their degree of ignorance. If he had performed this healing in a group of so-called educated people, their attitude might have been that there was nothing seriously wrong with the father in the first place. This frequently happens in metaphysical work today where, even when you have medically verified cases, people will remark after a healing that the doctors could have been wrong. So in this sense he was helped by the fact that these people found it a great wonder that all he did was pray and place his hands on the man in order to

heal him.

In another sense, he let the act speak for itself, and this is what we call a witness to the Truth. We knew that whenever we have made a demonstration it is a witness to the Truth of Being. And, while it is never a good policy to talk about a demonstration immediately after it is made, once it has become a firmly established condition we can and should talk about it. This is one of the most important ways we have to spread the knowledge of Truth, and there have been very few periods in which the need for this has been greater than it is right now.

Verses 11-31. Even in Rome the Jews would have nothing to do with Paul. Actually the great majority of his followers in Rome were Romans. The disciples by this time were traveling in various directions as were their followers and there was great commerce between Jerusalem and Rome. Yet the Jews tell him, in verse 21, "We neither received letters out of Judea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came showed or spake any harm of thee." In other words, the disciples did not make an attempt to help him in his appeal to Caesar, although they knew what had happened to him. It was not until Peter came to Rome a few years later that they once again joined forces. But even at this point, apparently, the rest of the disciples were still not quite sure of him. They did not like or trust him. They would never do anything against him, but they certainly did not try to help him as they helped each other. We see that even here at the end of his missions, they did not accept him despite what had happened on the road to Damascus, even though there could be no doubt about the experience since there were others who had witnessed it, and one of their own had been led to heal him.

With the book of Acts we leave most of the history of the New Testament, and go on to Paul's teachings in the various churches he had established. It is not at all an esoteric teaching but he is extremely sincere and very moving, and there are sections which are quite beautiful. He did not have the development of the other disciples. He had one great experience and he had a great faith, but his knowledge and understanding was slight. Yet, in spite of this, with his tremendous enthusiasm and fire he bludgeoned the way of Christianity into Europe, and the form of Christianity which we have today stems from only one man: Paul.

The Book of Acts is truly an adventure story - an adventure story of the Spirit. Each page is filled with the thrilling experiences and deeds of the Apostles. Starting with the advent of Pentecost, they are suddenly plunged headlong into the work of God, as Jesus had taught them.

They found that they too could teach, heal the sick and bring harmony into people's lives. They found that even though the way was far from easy, they had Divine Protection.

They also found, as Jesus had promised them, they were not alone. They had personally found the Comforter at Pentecost.

The same teaching is given to us, and always produces the same results when we apply it.

"Therefore, by their fruits shall ye know them." - Matt. 7: 20

W. M.

## ROMANS

In the book of Acts we traced Paul through his early days of discovering the Spirit and what followed that experience until he arrived in Rome. As we know, he never left Rome. He remained there for about two years before he was put to death. During this period, in addition to making converts and teaching, he kept in touch with all of the centers he had previously founded. This letter to Romans is, according to some authorities, one which was written while he was in prison as a legacy to his followers there. According to this theory we are dealing with the last part of his life and, since the Bible offers no details on this, nor is there a precise date given for the letters themselves, it is left to us to determine whether or not we agree with this theory. I, for one, do not.

No one seems to know why the epistles are given in the particular order found in the King James version, but it appears to be a most arbitrary sequence. For instance, Timothy was not with Paul when he first arrived in Rome, yet the letters to Timothy are close to the last in this order, which would imply that they were written last. This could not have been true since Paul had sent Timothy to oversee various centers which he had previously founded and he was guiding him through correspondence. So certainly the letters in answer to Timothy's questions were of an earlier date. Perhaps one day archaeology will uncover something which will provide us with an accurate framework, and until then we must discuss them in terms of a sequence of ideas and the growth of a man which they reveal.

Before discussing the first chapter, there is one particularly pertinent reason why this chapter is amazing. We think we suffer from homosexuality in our time, but this condition has existed for many centuries. I have known a number of homosexuals who were very sincerely interested in metaphysics, and when the question has come up about its relation to their own lives they have an answer which is rather startling. After they had realized that I was not condemning them and had no antagonism about the subject, they in-

formed me that homosexuals were more advanced metaphysically than the rest of us because they no longer needed the opposite sex. This was based on the concept of the Divine Androgyne, which is a term for the Presence of God within us. The Presence within us is thought to be both male and female in complete balance, as the Infinite Godhead is both the great originating Thought and Nature, or the subconscious mind of God, in complete unity. Macrocosmically thought works through the subconscious nature of God and produces everything in the universe. And the microcosm, the Divine Androgyne, I Am, or whatever you wish to call it, is in this sense also androgynous. This is true. But from the point of view of the homosexuals, the physical human being who no longer had any interest in the opposite sex was therefore a step nearer to the Presence of God.

This, of course, is completely wrong. God has never given us anything that we were not supposed to use. Sex is part of life, and without it there would be no procreation, and that would be the end of the human race. Sex is meant to be used — not abused — and there certainly is nothing of God in any homosexual relationship. If God intended that homosexuality was a step beyond heterosexuality, we would have been homosexuals first rather than heterosexuals. If anyone ever tells you that a homosexual is more developed than a heterosexual, have him read chapter 1 of Romans.

CHAPTER 1. One of the reasons for Paul being one of the most fascinating figures, psychologically, that we meet in the Bible is because he had such complexities in his nature. We have discussed many of them and we have seen ample evidence of his intense fanaticism, and here it emerges in another direction. We do not know which came first, whether it was because he was a fanatic that he felt sex was wrong, or his sex frustration caused his fanaticism. On the other hand, celibacy or asceticism is a part of many religions. The Buddhists, Hindus, and Taoists have followers who are sincere ascetics, and as we know the Catholic church professes it. But this was not part of the Judaic teaching, nor was it part of the teaching of Jesus. We have no definite way of knowing what caused Paul to take such a strongly negative attitude towards sex so once again we must form our ideas on the basis of the character of the man as it emerges in these letters.

I have already said that I do not believe Paul had another spiritual experience aside from his first awakening, nor did he

achieve the understanding of the other disciples. Even without the knowledge, he was able by means of his own enthusiasm and powerful oratory, to generate such desire in the people who heard him that they were swept into Christianity. But this was not the result of a great spiritual nature. His development could not even touch that of a First Isaiah, for instance, nor was it even near a Second Isaiah. Most people do not realize this for, here again, we are so conditioned that we only see the outer picture. Paul accomplished a tremendous physical task, but there is no further change in Paul other than that which resulted from his one spiritual experience on the road to Damascus.

It is possible that his attitudes and ideas may have changed and developed as he went along and that we only have the remnants of his writings. But I will tell you why I do not think this is the case. If Paul had really grown beyond what we see in his writings there would have been some alleviation of the difficulties and the scourgings in his life. Yet, until the day he was beheaded, he was continuously being beaten within an inch of his life and he was in constant danger. There was no change in the outer picture as there always must be when there is a change in consciousness. The only change we find in Paul is the softening of his tremendous ego, and that was the result of his first spiritual experience. In metaphysics we know that the outer life is in the subconscious. So, for that reason, I have long had the idea that Paul, whose love, enthusiasm and desire were tremendous, did not have the degree of spiritual evolution, or the evolutionary growth of the other disciples. Once again, I am stressing this because there is such a mixture in his writings between the occasional highly inspired texts which come through him, and the confusion of his own ideas, that we should keep this in mind as we read.

To return to the chapter, it is directed very generally to everyone, but primarily to the Romans because homosexuality was almost as prevalent in Rome as it was in Athens. The Hebrews have never been greatly involved in homosexuality, perhaps because the Jews are by nature a lustier race. But Paul makes no bones about what he thinks of it and that it is wrong.

Abstinence is one of the ideas of Christianity which originates with Paul. I have always felt that this concept was basically a rationalization on the part of the individual which could stem from a number of reasons. As we have so often found, these ideas are

clouded with misunderstandings and misconceptions of what we are and the way we are made. For instance, I have often said that the energy within us ascends and descends much in the same way as an elevator in a four-story powerhouse. When energy is used on the ground floor, the physical plane, it manifests as sex or strength. When it is used on the second floor, or the emotions, it manifests as enthusiasm, or depression when used negatively. When it is on the third floor, which is the mental, it manifests as inspiration. And when it is used on the fourth floor, the spiritual plane, it manifests as illumination. It is still the same creative energy which courses through the four levels of the human being. This is completely true, and the real teaching about this is that we should be in a position to control that energy and to use it on any level of our being at will. With that in mind, if you are doing a great inspirational work, and you are using energy on the mental level, you are not interested in sex nor are you interested in emotional tizzies. You are concentrated in the field of idea, so that there is a temporary withdrawal from the other planes. However, we rarely function for prolonged periods on the inspirational plane, and certainly very few people have been able to reach the plane of illumination at all.

These things have been known in ancient religions, and are secretly taught in some of the church orders of today, but because they were generally misunderstood, the idea that celibacy was a crucial factor in spiritual development became prevalent. One of the quotations which has been used to corroborate the idea of celibacy is in the first epistle of John where we are told that man must keep his seed within himself. That has nothing to do with sex. The seed, as we have seen, is within each of us. It is the Idea of the Presence of God, which is just a seed because we have not done any more to develop it. Yet because of the ignorance of its real meaning, this statement is used to advocate celibacy and a tremendous amount of subconscious trauma has been created as a result of this misunderstanding.

The wonderful thing about metaphysics is that if you know even a little bit about the reasons behind these statements you see that God never violates logic. God gave man sex, and man decided that God did not want him to use it. Why? Because God said so. Where? Someone misunderstood what was originally said and this was compounded by the increasing spiritual ignorance of later

generations. There is a short period of time where sex is taboo because of spiritual growth. This occurs in the Third Major Initiation, which we will take up in detail in the book of Revelation. However, since that period is lifetimes away from almost everyone, we need not be concerned with it.

CHAPTER 2: 1-22. Do you recognize the basis of this discussion? It is essentially a prolonged commentary on the Sermon on the Mount. Paul begins with the single sentence "Judge not, lest ye be judged" and he delves into it explaining what he thinks it means and elaborating on the Law. He also lists many of the subjects which were spoken of in the Sermon, such as criticism and adultery. But he is dealing primarily with the knowledge of the Law and is saying, in effect, what makes you think you are better than anyone else by judging another person, when you do the same thing yourself, even if it is in another way.

Verses 23-29. The discussion here represents a big step for Paul. Jesus did not care whether or not a person was circumcised, but to Paul this was an essential part of being a Jew. Now he is saying that if you are circumcised and you do not keep the Law you are not a Jew, and that man who keeps the Law, even though he is uncircumcised, is the better Jew. Of course he is right, in verse 28, circumcision is not an outward sign of anything except perhaps health, but it is very much an inward sign. As we have seen it is actually the symbol for the transformed heart. So he is completely correct when he says that the real Jew is the one who does the work, not the one who is circumcised and does nothing more.

In verses 9 and 10 we see that despite the fact that Paul never reconciled himself to it, his entire ministry was centered upon the Gentiles. He says a Jew first and then a Gentile, and he never really overcame this sense of preference, although he is primarily addressing the Jews in this section. Of course the terms Jew, Gentile, Christian, etc., are merely creedal designations, for actually we are basically Israelites. Anyone who puts God first in his life is an Israelite. It does not matter whether the particular sect into which you were born was Catholic, Mohammedan or Buddhist: if you put God first in your life you are an Israelite. It is possible that he used the term Israelite in the original transcript rather than Jew, but we have no way of knowing this.

While Paul was not an esotericist, there is an indication of some knowledge in verse 29, when he speaks about the meaning of



circumcision, because he is not referring to the meaning found in orthodox Judaism. The Jews believe that circumcision will make a person a Jew, which disagrees with Paul's statement. His claim is that, in the true sense of the word, circumcision does not make the Jew, nor does it make an Israelite. It is the desire and the action which is much more important than the physical act, which makes the Israelite.

CHAPTER 3: 1-20. Paul speaks of sin here in the sense of wrong doing. We might paraphrase verse 10 and, very generally, the entire section by asking, "Is anyone perfect?" The answer, of course, is no. I do not know if that day will ever come when we will know perfection, but it is an ideal. I have always had an inner suspicion that if we ever reach the place which we believe to be perfection, we will suddenly see that we are not quite as perfect as we think and there is room for more to be done, and we will go on. Perfection in this sense is something like the carrot held before the nose of the donkey. We go from everlasting to everlasting, at least from the point of view of improvement, because we never come to the end of it.

But here Paul is speaking about the knowledge of the Law. Paul, as you know, was tremendously impressed with the Law. First of all, he had studied the Torah for many years. He believed very definitely, from the Old Testament teachings, that the Law was brought into motion by God and exacted a toll from everyone who sinned. Now he is caught in a religious cross current, because Jesus taught that God never punishes anyone. He taught that the only thing we ever have to do is stop the wrong action, ask forgiveness of the people we have wronged and forgive ourselves and ask God to forgive us, and then to go on, because we cannot wipe out the past. Paul is caught in the midst of these ideas and we see these conflicting elements quite clearly in this section. By now he has learned Jesus' concept and he is trying to get over his past beliefs, with some success. But he has a very great respect for the Law and, at this point, he still believes that the Law is the most powerful aspect of God with which we deal or come in contact. He knew that the Presence was within, and he was trying very hard to make contact with that Presence, but he has not yet done so. Actually, we are never given the exact point at which that contact was made, but we see its effects in the gradual softening of the tone of his writing.

Specifically the conflict emerges in verse 5, which is part of his old teaching. The Old Testament says "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord." Paul is trying to make clear for himself as well as those to whom he is writing that God does not judge the world, but that judgment is the result of the Law which we invoke. "By the Law is knowledge of sin," verse 20, is his own peculiar way of referring to what we call karma, or how the Law works. We do not believe in sin, but we do know that very often we can break the Law, consciously or unconsciously, and then we get into difficulty. But it is because we have invoked the Law wrongly that this comes about, which is the point he is trying to make.

As you read verses 21-31, do not forget that Paul is speaking to Romans. Here is another instance of his marvelous salesmanship. I am perfectly sure that when the Romans first heard the idea that in order to become a follower of Jesus you had to be circumcised, it dampened any desire to become a convert, for that would not appeal to any Roman. Paul is again pointing out that the act of circumcision is not important. The thing that is important is the act of faith and belief, and the sincere attempt to live the life in accordance with the highest you know. He also states that this God is not only the God of the Jews but is the God of everybody including the Gentiles. He removes one of the greatest fears of potential converts. Physical pain is not something that appeals to anyone, and certainly not voluntary physical pain. There are those fanatics who feel that they are following Jesus by enduring pain and, of course, nothing could be more wrong. So Paul assures them that it is your faith which matters above all.

**CHAPTER 4:1-12.** We gather from this there was quite an argument going on about circumcision. It is very possible that Paul saw a tremendous number of possible converts being lost because of this concept and he makes every effort to alter it. He puts forth his ideas very brilliantly and quite rightly. It is completely true that it is not the outer act or the outer symbol which is important, it is what happens within the body. Of course we know that Abraham's faith is given as an example for all time. Paul is quite right in saying that by faith Abraham decided to move and find a place where he could worship the one God, and that Abraham was not circumcised, because he, too, came from a pagan society. Although Abraham is circumcised at a later time, his real dedication came from the faith he acted upon prior to this.

Verses 13-25. In verse 16 Paul uses the phrase "father of us all" derived from the concept applied to Abraham in the Old Testament as being a "father of many nations," but he now applies this with a new meaning. Abraham really means a "friend with God" and he is the man whose story exemplified unwavering faith in God. So, consequently he is considered to be the father of all those who believe, of all those who seek the companionship of God. But, even more significant than that, Paul is getting away from the working of the Law here, to that which makes the Law work rightly, which is faith. Even though he is still at the point of believing that Jesus is God, he does know that faith is the force that moves mountains and that it must be an active, positive faith. He continually repeats that with a faith like that none of the other things are necessary. This too is a very big step forward for Paul. He could not have possibly made these statements before his conversion, for until that time he understood everything according to the Torah. All things were understood as they related to the Law. Now he suddenly has seen a widening of the horizons, and he is teaching and talking about it.

CHAPTER 5:1-15. We see, both by the idea that Jesus died for our sins, and the use of the term Christ as meaning that Jesus was God, that Paul still has not come to a full understanding. It was still very limited even though he is beginning to realize, as we see in verse 15, that Jesus was a human being, which is a step forward. Also in verse 15 he speaks of grace, a word which has many and varying meanings for people. Actually, it is the action of God in us. When the Presence decides that we are ready for the next step, or that we need something, it will come suddenly and apparently from "out of the blue:" that is the meaning of "by grace." It refers to something which always comes with the element of great surprise and usually is something which we have not sought after. When we think about grace, we tend to think of it in very general terms, but grace only comes because of the element of faith: it could never come without it. It is always earned. It happens when you have reached your next level of growth, but only the Presence within you can tell you when you have reached that stage.

The churches have misconstrued this to mean that invocations must be made and so many penances performed in order to obtain God's favor. Grace in these terms is something which you may buy by certain actions, and of course grace is completely an inner action

that simply comes of itself. This is the meaning of the parable of the bridegroom and the wise and foolish virgins. The wise virgins watched and tended their lamps and were ready when he came. The real grace of God, which Paul is now beginning to comprehend, comes when you least expect it and comes, not so much from what we have done, but from the faith we have in God and the effort we make to live the life. The 19th Psalm says practically the same thing very beautifully. It begins: "The Law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul" and it goes on to make a series of statements of those things which come by grace.

Again we see that as much as Paul has learned, he still has not understood that Jesus was not God. He speaks of himself as Paul, the man. In the gospels Jesus differentiated between himself as the son of Man and as the son of God when the Presence — I Am — spoke through him. But Paul always refers to himself as a man, and it is little asides such as this which indicate the degree of his understanding.

We might take a moment to discuss this question of understanding, for it arises in increasingly numerous instances as we go on. First let us realize that Paul has a very highly evolved theology on a point where he is in complete disagreement with the other disciples. He is imposing upon his followers as well as upon his own concepts, a combination of his new emotions and the old Jewish theology. It is very fascinating to watch this process because in Paul we have the rare opportunity to watch the evolution of understanding in a man. It covers a very short span of time, which makes it an even more startling process. He was catapulted into his new viewpoint while firmly indoctrinated with the old concept of Judaism. The experience of his conversion produced a tremendous emotional upheaval as well as a spiritual awakening which had not had time to clarify itself before he began to teach.

Now, he taught what he thought was right and true. He was the type of man who, if he believed he was right — and he did not have a very open mind — would stand up to anyone else and tell them they were wrong. The only person who could talk him down was Jesus and Jesus was not in the habit of appearing to him to tell him that he was going a little bit afield. Jesus would not do this to anyone. He had brought Paul forth as a disciple knowing that he would be a convincing salesman, to use the vernacular, and certainly he was. That he was teaching something which Jesus had

not taught and which the disciples did not believe, apparently did not disturb him. Why was it not so important? Why was there no attempt made to interfere with him? When we come to the epistles of Peter and John we will find that they follow the teachings of Jesus very closely. Why is it that even Jesus did not attempt to interfere with Paul?

It is the law of growth. He needed the time to grow into understanding. Another reason is that the other disciples, for the most part, were speaking to people who had some idea of what Jesus had taught, for they were still teaching in Palestine. But Paul was going into completely foreign territory. For instance, when he went to the Greeks with their idol worship, there was not even a background of Judaism. He was dealing with people who, at their stage of understanding and evolution, could not have comprehended what the other disciples were able to give, and actually Paul does a wonderful job in giving them what they could understand. Plus the fact that many of the people would have had little use for the other disciples who lacked the academic background which they considered to be important, in addition to Paul's fire and oratory.

For the most part Paul is dealing with people who would ordinarily be called pagans. Little by little he is leading them from pagan worship to the concept of one God. Now, that he is presenting this God in the form of one man who came down to earth and let himself be sacrificed for our sins, is Paul's misconception. He does grow, little by little, but, as I have said, he does not have a spiritual experience other than this awakening. This becomes increasingly evident as we go on. But there is another point we should bring in here. As we have seen, Paul was given to trance. And, as we also know, authentic truths rarely, if ever, result from trance states, and much of the material which we find here is a result of trance.

The question arises as to where the information came from: when was it from his own subconscious and when was it from the Presence of God. There are certain sections which definitely came from God, such as the chapters on love and faith, and many others. But, for instance, the first chapter of Romans had nothing especially spiritual about it: it was extremely moral. There was nothing which made you feel that this was a revelation from God. Anyone who believes in God and tries to live the life will not indulge in gluttony or sexual aberrations. There is nothing spiritual

in that chapter, but he was quite right in what he said. In a similar way, people will come to me every so often and ask what I think of certain subjects. They might ask what I think about pre-marital affairs. I think it is wrong. Or, what I think about homosexuality. I am completely against it. But, on the other hand, as a teacher I am not here to criticize, I am here to help.

In that chapter Paul was giving a good, moral talk with nothing spiritual involved. In this chapter he is trying to explain what he has evolved as his theology, and there is little doubt that this originates solely from Paul. He is setting up his concept of the Trinity of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost in Christian terms. And, because this is the idea he now holds, he is insisting that Jesus is the only begotten son of God, for he did not yet realize that every other human being also has the only begotten son of God in them.

I would like us to realize that these various elements exist in his writings and to learn to distinguish between them because most people are so impressed by Paul's conversion that they believe everything he said was "gospel truth" and this is not so. Of course another question arises here, for obviously Jesus knew that Paul's concept was not what it might be, and he also knew that it would influence generations of people to come. We might ask why, knowing this, he still chose Paul. I think that the answer is one which is true of all forms of spiritual teachings and was expressed by Jesus when he said "many are called, but few are chosen. Straight is the gate and narrow the way; and few there be that find it." I think the main idea behind choosing Paul was to get people at least into the framework of the teaching where they would begin to emerge from the terribly tight ritualistic practices which existed, be these pagan or Judaic.

This was part of Paul's work and part of his karma as apostle to the Gentiles. He is the only one of the twelve disciples who was chosen to teach the pagan worshippers. The Egyptians were not pagans for, although they still worshipped many gods, the teaching given at the time of Iknahton had left a deep impression and it was very close to the concept of the one God. The Hindus had been taught basically the same concept which Jesus gave in another terminology. Paul was sent to those who knew nothing but pagan worship, primarily because he himself was not too far ahead of them in knowledge and understanding. I think it once more

proves that Jesus was a master builder and that he knew the right person to send to the right area. Almost every place Paul visited was a center of pagan ritual until he finally ends in Rome, the largest center of all. You might say that Paul was sent to clean up, whereas the other disciples dealt with people who had advanced beyond that stage and were ready to hear the new concept.

Verses 16-21. In verse 19 we see that Paul does have a certain degree of understanding. He is saying, in effect, that if you make a demonstration, you make it a bit easier for everyone else to make the same demonstration. Every time you break the Law, you make it that much easier for everyone else to break the Law. And, further, that we all live in an Eternal Now. It is not that we set a good example for others, but we make it that much more possible for the same action to take place for others. We spread that thought and action in the ether and we are all more or less influenced by what emerges from the ether in which we live.

This is what we call the race mind. We live in it and we absorb it. To take a very simple illustration, we live in a particular ether which consists of an area called New York City. We do not try to be different, nor do we think about it really, but New Yorkers all have a quality which is typical of this area. It does not come from the height of the buildings or the location itself, but there is a quality of life in this atmosphere which is completely different than that of Paris, for example. Parisians have a totally different overall personality. In the same way, if you live in a small, miserable unfriendly community, you are going to be influenced by that and you are going to unconsciously become like that to a certain degree, depending upon your own individual personality. It is equally true of the opposite situation, of course. We absorb from the race mind to the degree that we are susceptible and have not manifested any control over our own subconscious minds. You will find that when there are epidemics, people are affected by the hundreds and thousands, but there are many people who are not affected because they have no fear of it and are not open to it. But, by and large, people are susceptible to the atmosphere in which they live. By the same token, they have made and are making that atmosphere by their own thoughts, feelings and deeds.

**CHAPTER 6:1-11.** Do you think that Paul meant that we had to physically die as Jesus did? Paul was very much imbued with the idea of physical resurrection, and we have no way of knowing

whether he felt that you could be completely changed and yet continue to live your new life on this plane, or if he believed that the change took place on the next plane. It is evident that this latter idea would not be very startling at that time from the fact that there were so many of Paul's converts who ended their lives as martyrs.

Certainly Paul taught that there was no death in the real sense and that there was a resurrection. But the idea that a martyr's death meant that you were following Jesus still had a powerful hold. And it was the moral concept of this death, rather than the spiritual meaning of the resurrection which was the strongest. So the question must arise here as to whether Paul is saying that when you change your life and live it according to the principles of Jesus you are born anew, or whether he thought that you really had to die in order to be born anew in spirit. I think he felt that you could change your life and continue living. However, I am also quite sure that Paul, being extremely dramatic and made up of a great number of complexes, probably thought it would be a wonderful thing to be seen marching through the streets of Rome as he followed Jesus by dying as a martyr. Certainly Paul impressed a great number of people who took it very literally, that the way to salvation is martyrdom, and so the Romans had a "Roman holiday" for a long, long period of time. For instance, even in the case of Thomas, there was a great understanding. Thomas was very dubious as to whether the resurrection actually happened, but he did understand how it could take place. On the other hand, Paul never had any doubt, because what he believed he believed strongly, but he did not understand the nature of the resurrection.

And, since the disciples did understand, it is even more fascinating to see that Paul did not believe what they told him. For him, they were wrong. Despite the fact that they had lived with and been taught by Jesus for three years, and had actually seen what had taken place, Paul felt he knew better. I think Paul could be labeled a bit of an intellectual snob. None of the disciples had an educational background which could be compared with his, in fact most of them had none. Luke, who was not around at the time of Jesus, was educated and I think this is one of the factors which brought Luke and Paul into close companionship. They could talk together as educated men of the world. Matthew had a certain education. He was a tax collector and knew how to add and sub-



tract, but he did not have the intellectual achievements of Paul or Luke or Mark. So I am sure that this, too, colored Paul's attitude. In spite of the fact that Paul had only had one experience which may have lasted two minutes, and this was his only contact with Jesus, from then on he felt he was the final word on everything.

Verses 12-23. This section brings out Paul's lack of understanding even more clearly. It also shows the origin of the Catholic concept of sin, for much of the doctrine is found here. How can the basis of metaphysics which Jesus taught be reconciled with what Paul is saying? How can you consider yourself to be a sinner, and also know that you are a son of God who has dominion over your life? How can you reconcile the two? It is just not possible. I think this should be so clear to us by now that the chapter needs no further discussion.

CHAPTER 7. There are two texts, verses 15 and 19, which are very interesting. This is almost a personal plea, and it is certainly not in accordance with what Jesus taught. Paul spends a great deal of time and attention on his deep involvement with his own guilt complex. I am sure that the guilt complex was with him long before he had his conversion, and it is apparent that a good part of it is centered about sex, as we will see as we continue.

Jesus said that one should forget the past: "go and sin no more." Paul is constantly stirring up the old pattern. We might say that this was the beginning of psychoanalysis. He says, in effect, "let's get rid of the old, but always remember that we are sinners." You do not find this concept in any of the other disciple's writings. For example, James say "Faith without works is dead." It is an extremely practical statement without this element of tearing apart the soul which Paul does not only to himself but to those who listened to him.

This was the major beginning of the foundation of Catholicism, for Paul's ideas found a very ready response in Augustine following his own conversion. The relationship between the two is extremely fascinating. I think most of you know the story of Augustine. Briefly, he was a very brilliant, handsome, dashing young man whose mother had become a convert. He, however, was a real roue, and his mother's one prayer was that he should find God. He eventually became interested in Manichaeism, which to her was the worst form of paganism. She finally prevailed upon him to see Bishop Ambrose and, almost solely to please her, he became his

student. He found little interest in it until one day he happened to open the Bible at random and his eye fell on a text which struck a chord. This was his conversion and awakening.

Now, until the time of Augustine, the Christian teaching had been primarily based on Jesus' accomplishment and on Paul's interpretation. The stress was laid on the crucifixion and the concept that Jesus died for us, and Paul was quoted to prove this. The result of Augustine's emotional awakening was that a young man who was extremely sensitive and brilliant and undoubtedly highly intuitive, suddenly looked back on his life, which could not stand the glare of publicity too well, and he too got a guilt complex. So that Augustine became as intensely fanatic, and far more violent in his own way than Paul. Christianity and its various branches range between the concepts of these two men, but Catholicism has adhered quite strictly to the line of Paul and Augustine.

Paul's constant cry is "*mea culpa, mea maxima culpa.*" And yet there are times in certain parts of his writings where another aspect breaks through. His chapter on love is one of the most beautiful which has ever been written, in the way it conveys not only his understanding of love, but his longing for love. There are other texts which we will come to which show this other side of his nature. But I have always felt that Paul believed it was a sin to be cheerful: one should not be too happy.

This too must have bothered the other disciples greatly since they knew and believed what Jesus had taught them: that he had come that they might have life more abundantly. Paul's contact with them was infrequent, for they all went their own ways, but I think they left him alone quite happily because he was a most disquieting influence. He was positive and certain about what he believed Jesus had meant and he was able to intellectually talk them down — because they were simple fellows. But they had a great faith and the memory of their actual experience with Jesus, so they were equally certain that this was not in accord with their understanding.

All of the disciples had their own personal limitations. Thomas needed faith, and he admitted that his faith had to grow. Peter was a bit jealous at times. But they recognized that these were human qualities and they never regarded them as sins. They admitted that they were not as strong in a particular department as they should be and that it was their job to improve it, and so they did.

But Paul is constantly tearing himself apart in public and analyzing his failings. Actually, I think that guilt is probably the most popular negative quality which we have in the world today: almost everyone has it to some degree. They do not realize that the worst thing you can do to yourself is to feel guilty. You are not going to help anything by it nor are you going to change anything by it. The only thing that you are really going to do is to succeed in ultimately wrecking yourself.

Dr. Fox used to say frequently that he thought it was a terrible thing to call yourself a sinner and say that you were a "worm and a son of a worm," since it was a horribly disrespectful way of speaking of your parents! He was completely right. But this idea has persisted throughout the centuries. If you have done something wrong, the thing to do is to try to make amends for whatever you feel you have done wrong, then forget about it and do not repeat it. There is an old saying that "nothing is created by wading in the mud." No one has all the wisdom in the world, nor do they know and understand the Law and life so completely that they never make an error. We all make mistakes. But if you make an error, whether it is a small one or a big one, its effect upon you and your life will depend on what you call it. For example, we have all sorts of negative situations which arise with other people and you can either torture yourself with "what he did" or "what you did" or you can release it and go on.

It always fascinates me to see what happens when a person really overcomes resentment. Guilt and resentment can only live when we keep the memory alive, and only then. I have seen this happen with myself and others: when a person really accomplishes a resentment therapy, the details which were so painful and infuriating that they made life a hell during that period begin to fade in memory. You do not remember: they are washed away. I have seen this happen with people who have had phenomenal memories. When you see this happen you begin to realize that guilt is purely a thought in your mind and you keep it alive by constantly thinking of it.

The organized religions constantly remind you that you are a sinner. But you have a choice: you are either a sinner or you are a child of God, and you are what you decree yourself to be. If you look back over these past few thousand years, it is absolutely unbelievable to see how this fallacy has grown and that it con-

tinues. This is basically because people do not like to sacrifice their guilt because so many of us are masochists.

We should keep in mind that we are not dealing with the writings of one who has the final answer. Every so often Paul is certainly very much touched by God and you have the feeling, in the chapters on love and faith for example, that they came about because for the moment the Superconscious, or I Am, took over and really expressed the truth. But most of this is Paul's intellectual understanding of his own limited knowledge of the teaching and his attempt to combine his prior training with his new belief. That is why we find so much stress laid upon the moral issues. Paul spends more time on morals than anyone in the Bible since the time of Moses. The gospels were of an entirely different tone, and it was taken for granted that if you were going to follow God you were going to lead a decent, clean, moral life. But Paul devotes most of his attention to what he considers to be immorality.

Apropos of this facet of his writings it is fascinating to see that many people are quite violent in their dislike of Paul, which is not true of the other disciples. They may not be able to tell you why they dislike him, but they feel that he is a thorn in the flesh. Very often this is because people who are trying to live what is called the good Christian life (a phrase I dislike) find that he touches upon the things which they do not want to give up, which irritates them no end. People resent even more his attitude of looking down his nose at those who are not marching along his white line of behaviour.

Nevertheless, he does touch on many things which pertain to all of us. For instance, the two verses which we mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, 15 and 19, pertain to every human being in the world. This is one of the spots where we find ourselves saying "Why, this happens to me too." For instance, you want to go on a mental diet and the first thing you know you are off of it. You want to stop resenting a person and you go to work on it. You are perfectly sure that you have finally overcome it when suddenly something occurs regarding that person and you find you are fuming again. These statements are the human aspects which make Paul attractive or unattractive, according to our own ideas, but at least they do make him very personal.

CHAPTER 8:1-15. Paul continues to hammer away at the idea of sin. His is the old Jewish concept of sin. Too, his idea of

being led by the spirit is, at least in these chapters, not too clear. Paul had many problems to overcome including a healthy temper and a good deal of sarcasm which he used with no mean ability. But what he calls sin is everything that pertains to good living. This in itself was completely contrary to what Jesus taught. You know, the church does not like to think about the fact that Jesus was a man of joy. They always portray him as the man of sorrows: a poor man who had no place to lay his head. And yet the church in Rome is the antithesis of this in its tremendous wealth.

Here Paul is caught betwixt and between these concepts and his view of sin. He believes in the vows of chastity and poverty to such a degree that he never took anything from any of his followers and he earned his own living. This does not come from Judaism, but from Paul's martyr complex. If there had been a distance of time between them, one could well believe that Paul was the incarnation of John the Baptist in their fanatic similarities.

Verses 16-39. Here we see where the idea of saints came from, since they are mentioned in verse 27. There were no saints, as we understand the term today, at that time. On the other hand, Paul uses this term frequently to refer to those who were "set apart for God's possession, use and service," according to *The Interpreter's Bible*. However, Jesus taught that the Presence of God is in each of us, so we see the dichotomy between Paul's concept, which is retained in the orthodox theology, and that of Jesus.

Once again, in verse 28, we find one of those strikingly beautiful expressions which have become familiar statements in the metaphysical framework: "If God be for us, who can be against us." Then again, in verse 39: "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life . . . nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God." These statements of Paul's are absolute gems, and they are insights which give us all food for thought, but they are found in the midst of totally opposing ideas. Do you really think, for instance, that the Presence of God in you ever suffered? No, He did not. The Presence within us is never affected by the negative things which occur in our lives. He is always aware of what happens to us, but is never involved in *any* negative occurrence. But Paul has the idea that the Presence of God suffers for us, and it is through His suffering that we in turn become liberated. It is a completely wrong concept. Jesus most certainly never taught this, nor is it found in the gospels, so we see that Paul never had enough

of the actual teaching to know what it was.

CHAPTER 9. In this section Paul brings in many ideas which have absolutely no bearing on the subject. This is partly because of his complete misunderstanding of the subject itself. What he says here is completely opposed to what Jesus said about forgiveness and mercy. Furthermore, he does not understand the meaning of the seed. The symbol of the seed is the basis of the mystic, gnostic, real Christianity, and his idea of it does not coincide in any way with the real teaching. There is not only a misunderstanding, but an ignorance of what really exists. Since Paul's teaching is the basis of the Christianity of today, I would like to take a moment to discuss this in relation to some of the statements which he made in the previous chapter, as well as the present texts.

The reason why these chapters are so very important is that they show us the inception of a wrong theology. This is not what Jesus taught. This is not what the disciples, other than Paul, believed. For example, the doctrine of the Catholic church was based upon Paul and the furthering work of Augustine. Their idea was that Christ is the second person of God, the son of God, who incarnated in human form and took the name of Jesus: Jesus and the Christ were one and the same. And so you and I have no access to that without the aid of an intermediary. Pay attention to the text in chapter 8:15: "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear: but ye have received the Spirit of *adoption*, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." If you are an adopted son, you are legal heir, you are not a lawful issue through birth. This is the first great fallacy on which all of Catholicism and much of the rest of Christianity is based. But Jesus said: "I go unto *my* Father and *your* Father;" "When you pray, go unto your Father in secret;" "ye believe in God, believe on me also;" "I of myself can do nothing, but the Father within doeth the works;" "greater things than I do shall you do;" "*Our* Father." Do you realize that this is one of the most important chapters of error in the entire Bible?

Here is the first expression of the idea that you and I and every other human being are merely sons by adoption because what Paul understood to be Christ and Jesus was something unique and separate from every other human being. He also says that Christ and Jesus died for us. For instance, he says in chapter 8:26:

“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” Do you really believe that the Presence of God in you is in the least bit affected by what happens to you physically if you go wrong? Do you think, for instance, that if you have a cold, arthritis, or cancer, that I Am has it? If you do, you had better change your concept, because He does not. This is one reason why I am paying so much attention to this chapter. We must be very clear in our own understanding as we read Paul to determine the corresponding and divergent ideas. It is extremely important, not only as it pertains to historic Christianity, but as it pertains to our own beliefs and, therefore, to the effect in our own lives.

To return to chapter 9, we see that Paul reverted to the original Judaic concept of Jehovah as the God of vengeance and wrath. He still has an anthropomorphic concept of God as a wise old man with a white beard who sat on a throne keeping notes on all of us. What do you think he means by the seed? He means it in the sense of the physical seed. Once you fulfill certain laws you become the children of the promise and you are given the seed. Nothing could be further from the truth. You see, Paul is making what we might call a class distinction. If you have been imbued with certain ideas, particularly those which Paul has taught, you now accept a new dispensation and you accept Jesus as a saviour. Paul grants that Abraham and Moses had some knowledge, but only if you accept the new concept is the seed with you.

Actually the seed is a word found in many old religions which is used to describe the Presence of God in each human being: that which gives us life. For the majority of people this seed does nothing more than animate them for many, many lifetimes. It is not until we begin what we call a metaphysical life and go on a definite meditative program that this seed begins to grow in our consciousness. This does not mean that the Presence of God has been less than complete within us, but that we have no contact with that and we have no consciousness of it until we begin to pursue this path. It is then that the growth of this idea, the seed, begins to expand until we finally reach the experience known as the Immaculate Concept and the Virgin Birth. As we have seen, the Immaculate Concept refers to that point when we finally achieve

conscious awareness — not merely intellectual knowing — of the Presence of God in us. This only takes place when the subconscious, the soul, has been sufficiently cleansed of the negative qualities to be made new. It is through this process, whereby the soul becomes virginal in its cleanliness, that the Immaculate Concept is formed. This is the meaning of the seed. There is no human being, no matter how vile he may be — not even a Hitler — who could possibly lose this seed. It may not be anything more than a seed for millions of aeons to come, but as long as that individual has any self-consciousness he has the seed within him. What he is going to do about it is another story.

One thing that people rarely realize is that Paul was limited in his understanding because his spiritual experience was limited: he had only one great spiritual experience. And, as he discusses his concept of the seed and what it means to him he brings in many ideas which show his limitations quite clearly, such as the obvious example in verse 18. We know that the Presence of God in us does not, and would never “harden our hearts” to the truth.

CHAPTER 10. We might call this chapter an apologia to the Hebrews. Paul continues, in his zealously for his new found belief, to correlate it with the historical Judaic teaching. Verses 5-8 are based upon the teaching of Moses in Deuteronomy 30:11-14, and he quotes, although incompletely, the famous text of Moses, in verse 8. But his interpretation of the Word in verses 9 and 10 is certainly a far cry from the metaphysical concept of the Word as the perfect Idea in the mind of God. It is interesting to see how Paul seeks to make even the references he himself has chosen fit his own particular concept. He omits the concluding phrase of the quotation from Moses: “The word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that *thou mayest do it.*” In other words, we have been given the power of the Word to use in our lives. But to Paul it is sufficient that we say we believe in Jesus and believe that he was raised from the dead. Then again, in verse 17, the word of God refers, in Paul’s view, to the preaching of the gospel. I think these instances are sufficient indication of his approach in this chapter and that the other points of confusion are easily discerned.

CHAPTER 11:1-21. I do not think we would call this good metaphysical thinking, and it certainly has no relation to the teaching of Jesus. However, verse 1 is very interesting for in



this point he was in agreement with Jesus. Jesus never had any idea of abolishing the Judaic concept. As he himself said, "salvation is of the Jews." What Jesus intended and what even Paul understood, was that this was a widening and enlarging and more intense awareness of the potential of the human being and his relationship to God. It was only political pressure and the limited understanding of people which caused this cleavage between Christianity and Judaism. Jesus continually referred to his Judaic background and Paul too realizes and stresses this. The cleavage began with the rabbinate because the temple was more of a political organization than a religious one. Jesus said that people did not have to pay to worship God, and the religious leaders wanted money from them. It is basically as simple as that. Jesus was a threat to that order but he had no intention of destroying Judaism. He himself said that he had not come to destroy the Law but to fulfill it.

Verses 22-36. However, despite this one point of agreement, Paul again reverts to his Judaic understanding of God. He is bringing out the figure of Yahweh, not the figure of God which Jesus taught. He pictures God as very purposely making people presumptuous and causing them to err just for the sake of showing them that He has mercy. If you strip the later editorial interpolations from the teaching of Jesus you find that he draws a picture of the Presence who dwells in every human being, and the Law of the universe which governs every human being until they learn to use the Law for themselves. He brings it down to a very fine point, particularly in the Sermon on the Mount.

First of all, Paul takes it for granted that everyone who does not accept Jesus as a saviour is a sinner. Secondly, he reverts to the old concept of sin in the Old Testament. Jesus says little or nothing about sin, and yet he was certainly well aware that there is no one who is perfect. Jesus makes us aware of the Law. He tells us that it is wrong if we do not put God first in our lives and that if we do not live in accordance with the Law, and if we carry resentments we are going to pay for it. He takes it for granted that we follow the Ten Commandments, but he carries them beyond the physical plane. For instance, in the commandment on adultery he says that the physical act itself is wrong, but it is just as wrong if you think it mentally. He brings out the fact that the most important thing in life is the power of thought. He does not say that you are

a miserable sinner and are going to burn in hell unless you follow his words — but Paul does. It is quite fascinating to see the great difference between them and see, in spite of it, the tremendous impact which Paul made on people.

There is no one who has not done things, consciously or unconsciously, which have been wrong from the point of view of what we might call sin (which is a word I detest, as you know). But I am perfectly sure that the only thing to do when you do break the Law and know it is to face it and say "I have been a fool and I am sorry. I am going to pay for this I know, and I am going to do my best to make sure I do not repeat it;" and then forget it. This is the only thing that should ever be done. No one is perfect: each day that we live we do something we should not do, be it major or minor. But if I have done it I am not going to beat my breast and make all sorts of penances. For what? If I do that I am only impressing the subconscious more strongly that I have done wrong and so I am inevitably going to repeat that wrong. The only thing I can do is say I am sorry, forget it and make sure that I do not repeat it.

Here Paul picks up every little detail of possible wrong and he pounds away at it. Actually, I would love to know how many people really understand what he is saying here, because it certainly is confusing rhetoric. Every so often he says things which give the picture of God as all Wisdom, all knowledge and all power: it is there, but he keeps it separate from the individual.

CHAPTER 12. Probably one of the most famous texts in all metaphysical teaching is "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." I think that is the flag of metaphysics, and it is completely true. But, on the other hand, for Paul this transformation includes an element which no metaphysician, and certainly not Jesus, ever recommended: in verse 15: "weep with them that weep." It is quite contrary to everything that Jesus taught. If you remember, even in the case of Lazarus, who was a close friend of his, Jesus wept when he was alone and first heard the news. But, when he came to raise Lazarus and was with the family at the tomb, there was no weeping, but a complete concentration and a complete belief in what he was doing. "Lazarus, come forth." He did not weep or wail or commiserate with the family. But Paul has not reached this point nor does he understand it.

It is apparent that Paul had studied the Beatitudes by this time, because this is almost entirely based upon them and the Sermon on the Mount. However, what they meant was still beyond him. This is quite clear in verse 20, for example. Paul had a great desire, but he had neither the knowledge nor the experience. As we go on we see that he slowly learns a little more, but until his death he retained the attitude of knowing better than anyone else, and yet in this chapter and on other occasions he warns others not to be too conceited. It is ironic in view of the fact that his understanding never reaches that of the other disciples.

CHAPTER 13. In this chapter we find one of Paul's most beautiful texts in verse 12. On the other hand, he is speaking of the most primary conceptions of Jesus. He is interpreting the Sermon on the Mount and the Ten Commandments and applying them on a completely physical level. Very generally, in the first part of the chapter Paul takes the statement "render unto Caesar . . ." and gives his own interpretation of what Jesus meant. He completely misunderstood it, because Jesus never advocated pacifism of any sort. Jesus did say that when you lived in a country you obeyed the laws of that country. For instance, if we do not like an administration, we are still good Americans and obey the laws of the country. We may not like the administration but we respect it. This is what Jesus meant when he said "render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's." Paul takes it from the point of view that you are to stand still and let yourself be pushed down and trodden on for this could be counted up for you as good deeds after your martyrdom.

Then in verse 7 he speaks of the Judaic concept of fear. But Jesus said "the Father loveth you," and how can you fear someone who loves you? There can never be any fear. Paul is portraying the Judaic concept of Yahweh as a God of wrath and vengeance here. The disciples realized that God did not sit up in heaven and punish us for our sins, but that we invoked the Law wrongly and so brought its results upon ourselves. But Paul does not have this understanding. If he had he would have said something about it because he is exceedingly explicit in what he says. He has molded the early concept of God by his own conception of what Jesus taught.

I must say that I sometimes have a great sympathy for the confusion of the early Roman converts. This too was part of the

general teaching of Paul which, added to their misunderstanding of the crucifixion, caused many of them to become martyrs. Paul taught that the body was of no use: Spirit was all that mattered. The most wonderful thing you could do was to be put through hell because then you could inherit goodness, virtue and all of the rewards of heaven. For this reason many people went into the arenas to find death very cheerfully, because then, according to Paul, they would be saved.

**CHAPTER 14.** This chapter is quite clear, I believe, and needs little discussion. We might note that verse 4 is the most metaphysical statement that Paul makes in Romans. Paul never judges. He states what he believes rather authoritatively, but if you do not agree with him, that is up to you. He stated his belief, and he staked his life on it: that his belief was not as broad as it should have been is another story.

Paul concerns himself with the subject of food here because he was dealing with many people who had been raised as orthodox Jews and some of the pagans of Rome had joined them. He was very much concerned that they would be influenced by the orthodox ways, which is also why he stresses the difference in sabbath days. Vegetarians certainly did not get their idea from Jesus, for he ate meat of all sorts and drank wine. The orthodox Hebrews were very careful about the food they ate, however. And those who ate the flesh of animals would eat only that which had been decreed to be clean.

**CHAPTERS 15 and 16.** I do not think we need discuss these two chapters at length since most of the material in chapter 15 has been previously covered and chapter 16 is the conclusion of the letter relating to persons who have no meaning for us in this context. Too, chapter 16 is considered by many people to be a later addition designed to connect Paul with certain representatives of the Christian center in Rome. At any rate it seems quite evident from this that Romans was not compiled while he was in Rome at the end of his life. He was in Corinth when this was written and on his way to Jerusalem.

Since the opening section of chapter 15 is written in such a negative tone it is well to remind ourselves while reading it that Paul was continually punishing himself as a result of his deep martyr complex. I think if he had known of hair shirts at that time he would have worn one. We know that Jesus lived on the

best that life could offer, and wore clothes which were of the finest quality. Paul went around in the meanest possible clothing, practically starved himself and, as we see here, the donations which he did collect went to Jerusalem or to the centers which he had organized. In between his teaching and his bouts with ill health and scourgings, he tried to earn a living at his trade: this was purely self-punishment. Jesus gave the opposite instruction to his disciples, yet Paul is teaching what Jesus is supposed to have said, and this is what he understood.

We can say one thing for Paul, even though he had a most mercurial temperament, I do not think he held a resentment towards anyone. To a great extent he really had understood and demonstrated what love was. Although he was not the most prepossessing or lovable of characters, this freedom from resentment does stand out. Furthermore, he has a magnificent integrity: he stakes his life on what he believes, right or wrong. But he evidently frightened people more than he appealed to them because of his fanaticism.

The symbolic meaning of losing his sight as a result of his experience tells us something about him metaphysically. Eyes are associated with the soul and we call them the windows of the soul. The impairment of sight signifies that you do not have the wisdom to see the true picture. No one knows the effect an experience has upon another individual, however, although Paul's experience caused a great change in him, it was his first great experience on the spiritual path. He never realized that there still was a long way to go before he could reach the level of Peter or John. And then, because of his impetuosity and belief in his own brilliance, he was certain that he understood all things better than the disciples, and completely disregarded the fact that they had spent three years with Jesus while he had never met him in the flesh. He knew it all and this was one of his faults. There is no doubt that he had trained his mentality, but he felt that he was among the most brilliant, if not the most brilliant, of men on earth.

This is another reason why he is such a fascinating figure, because of all the disciples he was the one who understood the teaching the least, as well as being the least mystically inclined. The real meaning of the word mystic is one who has had a conscious contact with God, and Paul was not a mystic at that time. Nor was he an occultist, for occultism seems to be a field of which he knew little. He did learn to heal. And he learned, if he was

threatened by someone who tried to usurp his power — which of course to him meant that black magic was used against him — how to protect himself and end it, purely by speaking the Word. But he knew nothing of the nuances of black magic. He knew nothing of the development of the human being through what we call the meditative life. These are points we should bear in mind as we continue with the epistles, for they become increasingly evident.

In Romans, we find the beginning of the theology of the church that was to come. We also find that Paul's teaching had little to do with the teaching of Jesus. This was due to the fact that Paul had never personally known Jesus.

After his tremendous experience on the road to Damascus, Paul was a changed man. Of this there is no doubt - but he did not know the teaching, nor would he listen to the disciples whom Jesus had taught and trained.

What he did was to give his own interpretation of the teaching, and the difference between the ideas of Jesus and Paul are tremendous.

And so the history of the Catholic Church begins.

M. M.

Thank you, and God bless  
you.

Mildred Haun



## 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.

## \*FORMULA FOR DEMONSTRATION

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

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

**S**eek And Ye Shall Find,

**K**nock And It Shall Be

Opened unto you"

- *JESUS*

(\*The formula is ASK .... Mildred Mann )

VOLUME 29

THE BIBLE SERIES

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