

VOLUME 31

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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II CORINTHIANS

(Part Two)

Before we continue with the next chapter I would like to point out something concerning interpretation. I find it very fascinating to read what other people have written about Paul and I often wonder if we are all reading the same book. I came to the conclusion that it is like a number of people who witness the same accident and each one gives a different report. To many writers Paul is an initiate who is regarded as a more important figure than Jesus. The people who feel this very often have doubts about the historicity of Jesus and feel that the Gospel of John, for instance, is a compilation of John's own ideas rather than those of Jesus. You will notice that those who regard Paul as being highly developed quote him to prove it, but every text they choose, out of context, is completely open to interpretation.

Apropos of this, I had an experience with differing interpretations which astonished me greatly. At Dr. Fox's lectures we used to sing a very beautiful hymn which I loved, "Open my eyes that I may see, visions of truth thou hast for me." To me it meant that the Presence of God was making me more and more aware of reality. Then I was invited to a spiritualistic church service one morning and that was their theme. They were not appealing to the Presence of God, they were asking discarnate entities to open their eyes and ears. It was the same hymn, but it certainly differed in meaning!

I remember my first discovery of the meaning of atonement, which I thought was very unique. I suddenly realized that it was not atonement, but it was at-one-ment, and I felt as though the dawn had broken. Then I discovered a few other people had realized the same thing. But to the majority of people it is atonement and as such has a totally different meaning. This is one of the reasons why I advocate very strongly that when you find a

specific text has a certain meaning which you intuitively feel is right, you should stick to it no matter what anyone says, because you are more than likely to be right. Most people interpret according to academic standards based on what was known in the past. But there is a level of knowledge or, I should say, a level of wisdom which is far beyond the intellectual concepts of the greatest minds that have ever lived.

CHAPTER 9. You might ask yourself what was the purpose behind the teaching of Jesus and that of Paul. There are many differences we might mention. Paul instructed people in right behaviour and attitude and a rejection of life. Jesus wanted them to live naturally within and without. Jesus' teaching was based on inner freedom and Paul was not free himself. Jesus talks to people as children of God, while to Paul we are all sinners. But there is another point that shows the difference between the two men and the innate drive of each man which comes out very clearly in this chapter: the ego. Paul does something here which Jesus never did. Did you ever hear of Jesus telling people to rush out and make converts? This is what the chapter is essentially concerned with. The Macedonians did not do very well in their collection and Paul had told them of the number of Corinthians who had contributed on his first visit as an example for them to follow, according to verse 2. Paul is interested in the numbers, Jesus was interested in the individual. "Whatever ye do unto the least of these, ye do unto me" said Jesus. But Paul is concerned with how many converts he can make for Christ. This is a decided difference in motivation.

Jesus sent the disciples out once as a means of training them and told them that they were to stay only with those people who received them well and otherwise to move on. But according to Paul if you were ill-received you should stay and convince the people that they were wrong and show them how misguided they were. Jesus did not exert himself to convert people: he talked wherever he went and he attracted crowds. Paul seems to have what would be equivalent to our public relations men at his various centers, and they were to carry on the work of conversion and collection. Jesus' attitude was very much that which is described in the Hindu phrase: "When the student is ready the teacher appears;" but not Paul. The idea of religious missionaries originated with Paul's feeling that we should go out and gather

people for Christ, and it is still going on throughout the world today. I think Paul loved people in his own way, but I think his own weaknesses and his pride were the first things to be served before he served people.

CHAPTER 10. Many people find Paul's words hard to understand, particularly here. In all fairness I do not think we can blame all of it on him, for some of it is editorial, but the tone and ideas given here are very much Paul's. When we read sections like this it is always astonishing that he made as much of an impact on the people as he seems to have done. I do not think, as I have said, that his followers were anywhere near the great numbers we have been led to believe. I also have the idea that he acquired his largest following when he returned to Rome and taught many of the converts who had been arrested in Rome. Paul was the person who had had an experience with Jesus and therefore he was exalted among them. And it was at this point that his stature began to grow. I personally think that if it had not been for the Roman episode we would not have heard much of Paul.

People are strange mixtures of concepts and characteristics. There was no doubt that these people were devout; enough to sacrifice their lives to what they thought was wanted of them. They were also not very intelligent and certainly not intellectual. Paul came to them with the combination of intellect and oratory, plus the fact that he had the experience of being chosen by Jesus to take the place of Judas. Therefore, he started out as being the great personage.

But Paul unconsciously reveals himself again here, and it is strange to see. Every person reveals himself when he speaks or writes. If you listen closely you can always tell the inner motivation of a public speaker. It is a very remarkable person who does not give himself away. Paul has been bewailing the fact that everyone else was egotistical and out for glory at the expense of others. You know the old psychological cliché: "the faults you find in others are those you have yourself." Jesus said a similar thing very beautifully in the Sermon on the Mount when he told us to look for the mote in our own eyes before we criticized our fellowman. But here we have the picture of a man who was completely wrapped up, not so much in helping people as in bringing glory to himself primarily and then, as he adds, to Christ.

There is another interesting sidelight here. As I have said,

many writers believe that Paul was a profound esotericist. One of the points they use as corroboration of this is his use of the term Christ. This is rather surprising. As we have seen, Christ and the Messiah both mean the anointed one. As a Jew Paul expected the Messiah and he rejected the idea of Jesus as the Messiah because of his teaching and the manner of his death. After his conversion, however, he believed that Jesus was the Messiah. I do not think Paul is referring to the Presence of God in the individual when he says Christ, but he is referring to Jesus. According to Paul, Jesus was the Messiah in the flesh and his last act after his resurrection before he transcended was to make Paul a disciple. Therefore, for Paul he was the Messiah without doubt. He is saying here that the effect of the Messiah's mind — or the mind of Jesus — is working in us. Paul never says that the Presence of God is in you, nor does he speak of the idea which Jesus expressed in "Your Father" or "I and my Father are one." Jesus tell us what when we pray we are to say "Our Father," and we have a very specific teaching from him about this.

We should always take individual texts and interpret them according to our own intuition. However, we should interpret it in relation to the man who said it and the context of the statement as well. Context is one measurement we have to gauge what a particular person really meant, as opposed to what we would mean, perhaps, if we said the same thing. Granted no one's intuition has been developed to the point where he can explore to the fullest the meaning of certain texts, say verse 5, but this does not mean that Paul gave or realized that depth of interpretation. We are able to attribute a wider meaning to a person's statement when we find there are no intellectual walls hemming it in. For instance, the tenor of Paul's teaching is you either do this or you are damned, and this is certainly not a context which would allow the interpretation that when he speaks of the Christ he is referring to the Presence of God who dwells within the individual.

For instance, in the case of the woman taken in adultery Jesus said "Go and sin no more." To Jesus there was always the possibility of an expanding growth from that point on. Since this is so, what more need he say to the woman than that? Can you picture Paul dealing with such a situation? Jesus gave a way of life. This is the way it is and what you are going to do about it is your own business. He never coerces, he never punishes; he merely teaches

and demonstrates. Paul continually berates and Paul's teaching is narrowly confined to the specifics which he considers to be important. And to return to verse 7, I do not believe that his is the gnostic understanding of the term Christ, but he is merely transferring his concept of Christ or the Messiah to Jesus who is now on the next plane watching and helping him. He feels that the effect of that mind of Jesus is working for us and praying for us, and this is of course not true.

There is one idea which has some bearing on this concept of Paul's, his mistaken interpretation of the temple of God which we mentioned before, as well as his own insistence upon the validity of these concepts. It is probable that his own process of thought, as well as his self-appraisal, was based upon the concept that the Jews were chosen by God, which was further strengthened, for him, by the fact that he was chosen by Jesus. I am sure that subconsciously, if not consciously, this greatly influenced him. Although the other disciples were Jews, they were not influenced by this concept primarily due to their direct contact with Jesus. Paul was born with a strong ego which was reinforced by the subconscious or conscious idea of the similarity of pattern between one race chosen by God and one man chosen by Jesus.

CHAPTER 11. In verse 4 Paul is referring to the other "false apostles" who have come to Corinth and say that they too represent Jesus and give a teaching which differs from Paul's. What do you think about verses 7 and 8? "I robbed other churches" is a rather strange comment. Actually the word wages is a bad translation. It seems Paul accepted some slight help from the Macedonian church while he was teaching in Corinth, for he was unable to finance his travels in that area in addition to his self-support purely by his own labor. But he feels so strongly that this is against his belief that he says he "robbed" others. Of course this is also a bit sarcastic because he never received personal support from the Corinthians themselves, as their contributions went to the collection for Jerusalem. But the greater part of his "boasting" is that he did not receive support, in spite of the fact that Jesus taught that assistance should be accepted. Paul was extremely proud of the fact that he was self-supporting throughout this entire period regardless of his unstable health. I can imagine that once again his followers were a bit confused since he tells

them to tithe, but only to help the center in Jerusalem, not to help him.

This concept and his concept of sin are two of the major differences between the teachings of Jesus and Paul. And both instances clearly reveal the additional difference between a healthy and an unhealthy subconscious mind. If, as we read this, knowing what we know about metaphysics we remember the old Hindu adage, "WHAT YOU THINK UPON GROWS" we can understand even more fully what happens to Paul, financially and spiritually, as well as to ourselves.

It does not matter whether you are in psychology or metaphysics, whether you are a Catholic or a Hindu: what you think upon grows. If you are going to lambast yourself for every error and spend time in useless remorse, or constantly stress the things you lack in your life, you will do yourself no good physically or spiritually. You are further crippling your subconscious mind and you are going around "Robin Hood's barn" to say nothing of making more trouble for yourself.

Paul believes in completely debasing oneself because we are all sinners. Well, I do not believe we are sinners: I do not believe in the word sin at all. I think we have all been very foolish from time to time. I have always said that I think the word stupidity should be substituted for the word sin, because when we do things that are wrong we do them out of stupidity and fear. That is why metaphysics teaches us to live up to the highest we know at all times, for then we will only progress. It does not mean we will not have problems, but we are able to handle those problems. This is a completely different teaching from what we find here. In the very few instances when Paul speaks positively, such as the chapter on love, it is as though he came to the top for the moment, took a deep breath, saw the world as it should be, and then submerged again into his own ideas.

Verses 16-33. Paul was a master of sarcasm, as we see here, and in his own way he was as sharp as Jesus could be. Evidently the Corinthians had been trying his patience and were not following his word as strictly as he desired. And, of course, Corinth had been the seat of his competition with Peter and Apollos, which was a point of pride with him, so he was even more determined to get the Corinthians in line. He also wanted to impress them with what he had gone through.

It would be a fascinating thing to be able to hear Paul speak in person. You get so much more from the intonation of a person's voice than you can from reading the words. Paul was filled with sarcasm and fury, and he gives them quite an account of how he has suffered for their sakes. Paul boasted quite a bit, to use his word. It is true he had an amazing life, but he also owed many of his escapes to the fact that he was far more brilliant than his captors.

Let me ask you a question. Paul went through all the events which he lists. It is true that he was taken prisoner in Damascus, was going to be put to death and he did escape from prison. He had a number of escapes like this. Now you remember when Peter was imprisoned, it was believed that the angel of God came to the door, blinded the captors and Peter escaped. We have seen that this was not what happened. Do you think there was a spiritual phenomenon connected with Paul's escape in Damascus? How does it occur that he always manages to have help at the right time? He is always saved. He is not only saved from death, but he was stoned, beaten, starved and adrift in the ocean, and he was not a physically strong and healthy man yet it could not kill him. I would say he had a consciousness of what he wanted to do and nothing was going to interfere with it until he felt it was time to stop. He had a will which is one of the most powerful in the entire Bible. He used this will, which was part of his drive, to accomplish his purpose. And so he became, in one sense, what he wanted to be: the pillar, the father of the church. But he could not be what he really wanted to be, which was the apostle to the Jews.

In view of our previous discussions of psychological time, we might question the relationship between that and Paul's will to live. His is very much a self-willed time. First of all, his drive was not unconscious: he consciously knew exactly what he wanted to do and how he was going to do it. The subconscious reproduced his physical protection because he was perfectly sure he would continue his work until he felt it had been accomplished.

Psychological time is a very interesting, and also very tragic factor in people's lives. We say that the moment we are born we begin to die. Also, at the moment of our birth our subconscious knows when we are going to leave this plane. Now, as anything else in the subconscious can be changed, so can that be changed. But the majority of people depart at their psychological time because they do not know it can be changed or they do not have

enough enthusiasm or drive for life to change it. Paul had a reason for wanting to stay, for continuing to live. He had a job to do and he pushed and drove to achieve it, and so he changed his own psychological time, if we read his life correctly. Very few people have a strong will, and strength of will is required to alter this time. Incidentally, if you want to see how strong your own will is, try to break a habit. Let us say you want to lose weight and have a sweet tooth. It takes an effort not to eat sweets, and most people are not too successful in the attempt.

Paul reincarnated with a great desire and a tremendous will to further the teachings of the Messiah. This desire is what brought him back, so he came back at a time — which is a larger part of his karma — when a Messiah was here. The fact that he did not accept Jesus as the Messiah initially was due to his own concept of what that Messiah should be. The fact that Paul reincarnated with the idea that he was going to find THE Messiah is of greater significance. The reason why Paul saw a parallel between the chosen people and God, and himself and Jesus, is also why the only thing that happened to his concept of the Messiah was that the identity was changed. The Messiah whom Paul sought was identified with the man Jesus after his experience. Paul's drive did not change: it was basically the same drive he returned with.

I have often said that until we really heal a problem, the situation in the outer life will always be the same; only the names of the people involved will change. This is true here. If Paul had incarnated at a time when Jesus was not here he still would have had this drive. He still would find himself in various dangerous predicaments. He did have tremendous courage and would always fight to the bitter end for his points of view, whether it was for the Judaic concept or for his concept of what Jesus taught. This made no difference to him psychologically.

It is interesting to watch the life of this man. He was a bundle of energy, drive, will, sheer determination and certainly a great love of God, but a God who is defined according to Paul's concepts. For instance, except for the tone of the epistles, they do not differ too greatly from the statements of Isaiah, Ezekiel or Zachariah. Paul remained much more a Jew than he ever became a Christian, because he teaches the tenets of basic Judaism and now he has a name for the Messiah. There was no great change. We have seen the very wide difference between what Paul

is teaching, what Jesus taught and what the other disciples taught.

CHAPTER 12. Paul is speaking of himself and his own psychic vision in verse 2. Paul was psychically open to a great degree and, as we have seen, it is debatable whether his physical condition resulted from epilepsy or the states of trance. I have said that I rather doubt that he was epileptic. Paul was a ritualistic Jew and engaged in prolonged fasts. It is very possible that since he was psychically open this made him more subject to trance. And, as he continued the process over a period of time, he became so susceptible to trance that it may have been difficult to get him out of the state. This too could be what he refers to as his physical weakness. However, in verse 2 he is referring to the experience he encountered on the road to Damascus. There are several other places where he mentions being taken in the spirit, but he specifies that the incident he is referring to occurred fourteen years prior to this letter, which implies that it is the incident with Jesus.

In verse 9 Paul says that God strengthens him in his weakness, which is interesting. His encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus strengthened his resolve, even though it changed the direction of that resolve. At that point Paul was out to make a martyr of everyone who followed Jesus and after that experience he was out to make converts of everyone for Jesus. But through this experience he was strengthened: he became more enthusiastic, more determined and he believed that this was the action of God in him. It is similar to when you change your consciousness. Let us say you have a problem and are disturbed by it. You sit down and meditate and reach a state of consciousness where you know that you have made contact, if only for the moment, with the Presence within you. You suddenly feel completely renewed, and you feel as if nothing can stand in the way of making that demonstration.

In verse 21 Paul does not refer to the physical weakness, but to the fact that upon his return he might find his followers as rebellious as they had been during his previous visit. We are dealing with a complex figure. He has a drive which, in a certain way, is completely sincere. But the question we must ask ourselves is "is the sincerity directed towards Jesus or towards Paul? Or both?" I think he felt that Jesus was a figure to be loved, but he certainly did not teach what Jesus taught.

CHAPTER 13. Although Paul ends with a peaceful benediction, he gave them little to be peaceful about. Did you ever hear of Jesus or John scolding their disciples because they were not living as they wanted them to? Never. Then again, do you think Paul had much understanding when he said in verse 4 "though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God." Do you think Jesus was crucified by weakness? Do you see how clearly Paul's lack of understanding and knowledge is revealed by this statement? He had no means within himself of realizing why Jesus allowed himself to be crucified. Jesus said that no one could take his body from him, for he took it up and laid it down at his own will, and then he allowed himself to be crucified.

Jesus could have stopped them at any given time. But this was the most important part of his plan. The human race was ready for a step forward and he was going to show it to them. That step was the understanding of Love. Humanity's greatest fear was death, and he wanted to show them that there was no death. And so he allowed himself to be publicly put to death so that no one could say that he did not die, but that he just disappeared in order to reappear again.

These are things which Paul was unable to understand because he had not had a spiritual experience. For example, to an orthodox Christian, the Virgin Birth is an actual occurrence in the life of Jesus: to the initiate it is well known that this is a spiritual experience which occurs to and within the individual. Paul was not an initiate. He was close to it, but he could not have had the experience itself and still have the faults we see, the greatest of which, and the most important to overcome in the path of initiation, were self love and criticism. There is another indication of this connected with the incident on the road to Damascus: the first major initiation is a completely personal experience which has nothing to do with an outsider, not even Jesus. It never comes through an intermediary: it is strictly between you and the Presence of God within you.

One other very important point which shows us that Paul did not have this spiritual experience is his conception of the Trinity. He attributes the nature of the Son of God, the Christ, to the person of Jesus. What is the Trinity? We know that there is an Infinite Godhead that created all things; so tremendous in Its power that

It not only created the form of the earth, the planets, the universes and ourselves, but placed in the etheric substance the embryonic potential of all things. This embryo includes everything that we could ever need. It is all there. None of the discoveries made by humanity are new: the idea has always been there and we are just discovering it. So this Infinite Mind is beyond conception.

But this Mind individualized Itself within creative man. It gave a part of itself a personality and life and a physical body and said "I want to see what you can do." That part of Divine Spirit is the Son, and our demonstrations are evidence of what we do and are called the Holy Spirit, or Holy Ghost, which we prefer to call the Manifestation. So when we find Paul, or anyone else, speaking of one person in the form of Jesus as the sole embodiment of the Son of God, it is quite evident that they do not know the esoteric reality. They have never had the experience of the Presence of God within them, the Indwelling Christ, I Am, who is the Second Person of the Trinity.

There certainly is no doubt that Paul was a tremendous personality. I am sure whoever met or heard him never forgot him. I have the feeling that he scared more people into becoming followers than he did by attracting them.

Compare, for instance, the difference between the personality of Jesus, who drew men to him as with a magnet, and Paul, who struggled to get and hold them.

Compare, for example, two statements. Jesus said, "Ask, and it shall be given you. Seek, and you shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened to you".

Paul said, "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." I Cor. 15: 50.

And Jesus answered, "The Kingdom of God is within you." Luke 17: 21.

M. M.

GALATIANS

CHAPTER 1. Paul is not only speaking of the teachings of “false apostles” here, as he has before, but of the disciples themselves. He says, in effect, “Don’t believe them; they do not know what they are talking about. I am the only one who knows the truth.” He sounds very much like an actor who has played one stock performance and is ready for Hamlet. And once more we see that he still believes that Jesus was God.

There is a certain amount of assurance that what you are given through revelation is fact, and it is this result of the experience which endows the people who have had it with the authority which is so often resented by others. But, and this is the most important point, if the revelation is really from the Presence within you, you will find that what you have been told is never, in principle — perhaps in detail but not in the overall pattern — at variance with the Truth. When it is your own subconscious that speaks, which occurs very frequently and has been mistaken for revelation time and again, then the element of relationship to the Truth is questionable. We are not told in these letters whether or not Paul had revelations after his experience. We do not know. But he is battling everyone else on the premise that their teaching is wrong and his is right. There is practically no point of agreement with the teachings given by the other disciples. This is a very subtle point which is extremely well buried in the letters, but the greatest part of Paul’s inner and outer fight throughout his life as a disciple is that he knows best.

Now re-read the opening text. Paul is stating the basis for his belief that he can do no wrong and that everything he says is right. The only time he falters in this authority is in his evaluation of the role of women and sex, which is fascinating in relation to what we know of the man. But if you take what he says here liter-

ally, it shows that he is constantly at odds with the other disciples and he even goes so far as to say that they are giving the wrong teachings. We also very definitely get the feeling that Paul did not mix with the other disciples because he felt he was, so to speak, a college graduate — the beginning of the cult of PhDism — and he had a post graduate course with Jesus.

From another point of view, I can say very frankly that I am not an enthusiast of those branches of metaphysical teaching which are based on using God as a messenger boy: "I want a string of pearls, therefore I am going to treat for them." But in principle we all believe in the same thing; that there is but one Power and one Presence. What we do with that principle and what others do with it is as different as day from night, but we do believe in the same concept. But Paul is teaching a completely different concept: he is always reminding people that they are miserable sinners. Jesus and the other disciples never taught that at any time, for, as John tells us, "God is Love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him."

CHAPTER 2. In this section we find Paul's version of the argument in Antioch of which we spoke in Corinthians. Actually what happened was that all of the disciples were Jews, and after the resurrection they still insisted that part of the Jewish tradition be retained. Now Paul's greatest desire was to become an apostle to the Jews, but they would have nothing to do with him and so he was sent to teach the non-Jews. Peter still believed in circumcision and did not understand why Paul did not insist that his non-Jewish converts be circumcised before they were allowed to become Christians. Also it seems that a few of the disciples, through their experiences with Jesus, thought it all right to eat with the gentiles, but were nevertheless sufficiently concerned about the opinions of other Jews not to do so in their presence. On the other hand, Paul's idea that faith is the only requirement is more generally misleading than the view that circumcision was necessary. James answers Paul in this respect when he says in his short epistle: "Faith without works (which is the use of the Law) is dead." That is very true. There must be a balance between what you believe in and what you do about it.

Now there was always a jealousy on Paul's part towards Peter, and I would not doubt that it existed in Peter as well, as to whom was the "favorite son." This could be an underlying cause of the

dissension, plus the fact that Peter had the reputation of being, with John, closest to Jesus. To put it in terms of modern publicity, the "right hand" of Jesus would get a much greater reception than the man who had been only a distant server. Peter and John were particularly close to Jesus and wherever they went their fame preceded them. People came in droves to see them and hear their teaching. Evidently Paul was having a bit of difficulty at this time in retaining his followers and this nettled him. So he is doing battle in this chapter by picking up points where he states Peter is wrong and he is right.

CHAPTER 3. Paul's interpretation of the Law is completely Judaic. This is one reason why he does not recognize that there is the need of faith *and* Law, spiritual Law. Furthermore, his interpretation only concerns itself with mental concepts. It is much more an interpretation of the Ten Commandments than the Sermon on the Mount. For example, let us apply his concept to a simple situation and observe its effects. I believe I have complete faith in God. Let us say I decide that it would be very advantageous for me to go to Europe this summer and I dwell on this thought. According to Paul, since I have faith, there is nothing more I have to do. This means that someone will come in and present me with a ticket; and because I have faith I can just sit here and a runway will be elevated to the 10th floor so that I can step into the plane. I do not have to lift a finger if I am justified by faith. I am making a rather absurd commentary on it, but this is exactly what is implied in what Paul is saying. And there are a great many people who do just this. They will speak the Word and then sit back and wait, and of course, nothing happens.

If Paul was the great initiate that many writers think he is, then he would know certain things. It is certainly true that the first thing which is needed is faith. But he would also know that whatever is required in his life from a material to a spiritual need, has already been given him and is his, but he must take the actual steps, whether they are spiritual, mental, emotional or physical, to bring it into manifestation. It is not going to come by just sitting and saying "Lord, I believe." On the other hand, if Paul believed in only faith, as he says here, then why did he rely so completely on his own physical efforts and why did he preach his own laws to everyone else? Either you do this or you are damned; no man should do such and such; and he lists all the things he

considers to be taboo from food to sex. He made his own laws and then he says that man should live by faith, not law.

It is certainly true that if you make a god of the Law then you become an occultist: you are utilizing the Law for yourself, not in the name of God. This is why, for instance, in the meditation we always use we say "God is the only Presence; God is the only Power" but God is both. If I am going to concentrate exclusively on Power, then I am going to find myself cut off from the source of contact with the Presence of God. But if I concentrate on the Presence, I do not have to do anything more to develop the power, because the more I concentrate on the Presence, the more the power grows along with my knowledge and ability to use it. It is possible that Paul was referring to this fact, but if he was, then it certainly is a confused presentation. While it may be the fault of later editors, without doubt it is one of the most confused chapters of Paul.

Paul says, for instance, that all you have to do is to have faith: he does not say anything about the necessity of changing yourself. How do you have faith? What do you do when you have faith? If you believe something, then your next step is to act on it. "Faith without works is dead." Paul's concept of faith is that it is sufficient unto itself, and that is not exactly true. Jesus said quite the contrary, and he certainly had the greatest faith we have ever seen. Faith without works is better than nothing, but if you have faith, be prepared to do the work.

CHAPTER 4. In the opening section, if the fifth verse was not added you might say that Paul was speaking in symbolism, in which case he would have been quite correct. But in view of the fifth verse we see that Paul is speaking of the Virgin Birth as it pertains to Jesus. He is speaking of the physical birth and is saying that through the power of Jesus we were then adopted. This is one of the texts which most clearly reveals the fact that Paul did not know or understand, and when he did not understand he then reverted to hearsay which he gave as doctrine. On the other hand, he should have known his own scriptures well enough to recall that the 82nd Psalm says "ye are gods and sons of the Most High." It says nothing about adoption, and neither did Jesus.

Again the question arises, how is it possible for theology to adopt Paul's ideas rather than what Jesus taught? You might say the theological minds of the time were trying to find a logical

explanation for what had been said, and Paul deals almost entirely in explanation according to his intellectual understanding. But we are all familiar with the gospels. We know what Jesus said and what Paul said: which do you find the easiest to understand? I would think that one would gravitate to the teaching which was simplest to understand, and it seems to me that the teachings of Jesus were far more logical and simple than Paul's. Yet practically all of the Christian creeds bear the stigmata of Paul and few if any teach what Jesus taught.

It is fantastic when we view this in the light of these epistles. There is no doubt that Paul reveals the fact that he did not know what he was talking about in verses 4 and 5. And there are many other texts, such as verse 11, which show how little he knew. If he knew anything at all about spiritual growth he would have realized that no matter what he did it was never in vain. He is trying to personally hold on to his converts. Paul continually makes conversion and his teaching a very personal issue. And his presentation, as we see from this, is that we cannot possibly hope to think of ourselves as divine except by adoption, which is a very startling idea, especially for a metaphysician. In verse 19 we see that he believes that the Christ image has to be formed in you, as he said earlier, "*We shall bear the heavenly image.*" So we realize more and more that Paul's concept was definitely his own and not that of Jesus.

CHAPTER 5. It is curious that Paul speaks of murder in verse 21, since it would be assumed that the new converts would not kill their fellowman. It is also ironic since he knew that Moses had killed a man, and that he had been instrumental in the death of Stephen. But Paul tends to put Moses and, of course, himself beyond the law. His ego was quite well established. He tells them that if they were circumcised just to prove that they were of this faith or the other, it availed them nothing for it was only important to live according to their inner faith, not to conform to the other ritual. But he also makes it very evident that outer form is very much part of this. There are certain things you can and cannot do physically and circumcision does not alter the case. There, of course, he is right.

Paul's problem is that he has no use for the physical world. In addition to that, his prescription for changing the pattern of activity is a very violent one which is ineffective and which does

more harm to the subconscious — of which he seems to be unaware — than anything else. We all know from our own experience the struggles which arise in training ourselves in positive thinking and controlling the emotions. But we do it gradually: we do not take a hatchet to cut out the emotions. That would be as dangerous as anything we could possibly do to ourselves. Paul's idea of change is to perform radical surgery. The subconscious is the habit pattern mind, and when you want to change a particular pattern it is a bit difficult and we are at war with ourselves for a time. How great that war is, or how violent it is depends upon ourselves. Paul, however, is without patience. He has absolutely no patience with himself or with other people. Even though he speaks of patience as being a component part of the expression of love, he is the most impatient figure we meet in the entire Bible.

CHAPTER 6. It is really astonishing to see how continuously Paul talks about the need of suffering. The idea is constantly emphasized throughout his writings. You know, in Hebrews 12:6 he says "for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth" and I had the temerity to change it to "for whom the Lord loveth he chaseth," and I think I am quite right. But this shows that interesting peculiarity which is true of every human being: no matter how much you learn, no matter how deep your desire is for learning, and no matter how great is your ability to learn and interpret, it must always be colored by the personality and the total attitude of the individual.

We know that Paul suffered continually in one way or another. He suffered physically from bad health, therefore, in his mind, he was being punished for something. But his affliction, as he frequently refers to it, never kept him back from being what he thought he should be. Paul knew of Jesus' healings, but we never hear of Paul trying to heal himself or asking for help in healing. It was a question of either it did not occur to him or he did not believe in it, or that he felt he was a greater hero because he did all this in spite of his suffering and his affliction. We do not know. But we do know that he saw everything in terms of his own suffering and guilt complex.

In a similar way, Paul's attitude towards women stemmed from his own experiences. If you look back on the Bible and the characters of the different prophets, you will notice that in each case their instructions or prophecies take on the quality of the

personality of the man himself and his experiences. This is what makes it such an interesting study. For this reason I am sure Paul must have had a very strong guilt complex, because his predominant theme is guilt and sin. There must have been something in his consciousness which brought this to the fore all the time.

Sometimes I watch myself fairly objectively and one of the things which I have never had the slightest desire to indulge in, even before I was in metaphysics, is worry. If I have a problem I say to myself, "Well, since I don't have to meet this until next Monday, I am not going to think about it until next Monday." And in all of the lectures I have given, if I mention the word worry once in two years, that is frequent. It does not occur to me. Do you see my point? Jesus talked about the fulfillment of life. He rarely spoke about sin. There was a progressive forward moving approach in everything he said because his whole attitude towards life was progressive. It was a completely life fulfilling and joyous expression.

You can observe the personality of the man as it comes through in the way he teaches. Each metaphysical teacher gives a completely different presentation. They will speak of the same basic ideas, but the stress or interpretation will be unique. We do a great deal of suffering with Paul, because Paul wanted to suffer. Paul gloried in his suffering and the church followed through by teaching that suffering was the greatest gift of God. We are to glory in misery because if we are suffering then God is showing us how much he loves us. If it is all the same to you, I would like to have God show us His love in another way.

EPHESIANS

CHAPTER 1. There is no doubt that the letters of Paul have been very much edited which we see by the differences in phraseology and rhythm and the choice of words. No one, as far as I know, has as yet discovered definitely which are the edited parts or what has been added, but they do know that tremendous changes have been made and that some of the letters purported to be his may well have been written by one of his followers. In particular, there is a great divergence of opinion as to whether

this is authentically a Pauline epistle because of a distinct variation in style and in certain ideas. Nevertheless, this is fairly typical of Paul's form of words and it has, at least to me, the pomposity of Paul. I am perfectly sure that Paul was lacking a sense of humor. This man did not have the ability to laugh at himself, and woe betide anyone who laughed at him. I have always felt that Paul was a pompous, strutting little figure with a tremendous intellect and ambition, whose greatest problem was getting Paul out of the way.

Here we have the same concept which we found in the first of Paul's letters: his picture of Jesus as a God-man come to earth. It again reveals his lack of understanding, yet he bases his message on this. Once again we find the doctrine of salvation through professed belief, which we have today in evangelism and some of the orthodox creeds. I have never been able to understand how that is supposed to work. I believe in many things, but I do not think any one or all of them is going to save me if I do not do any more about it. If those people who believe this really tried metaphysical self-discipline, then they would know that there was a great deal more to it than to say that you believe in Jesus. This is a strenuous inner discipline, as we well know. What is more, we do it in the privacy of our inner selves with no one to applaud or pat us on the back and say "You poor dear, I know you are working so hard, and I know what it is taking out of you." You rise and fall with the appreciation of no one but yourself.

One of the hells which man has made for himself is that he loves to be appreciated. It has given rise to the practice of outer discipline and asceticism in place of inner discipline and growth. The only time in the history of Jesus where he allowed himself to be put in a position of danger or pain was at the moment of the Crucifixion, other than that his life was perfectly beautiful and full. He lived the kind of life he wanted to live. He taught by the example of what he believed in and what he did, but the entire form of Christianity was based on the Crucifixion; the asceticism of John the Baptist; and the fanaticism of Paul, with complete disregard for what Jesus taught. It is perfectly true that if any of the churches took the Sermon on the Mount as the real foundation of their belief and practice and taught their people to live it inwardly and outwardly, there would be a totally new approach and a new world in Christianity, of this we can be assured.

CHAPTER 2. Again you will notice that there is no mention of the process of growth at all. There is also another thing. What do you think Paul means by grace? I am sure, for instance, Paul thought that he was personally endowed by God through grace. He gives the picture of an anthropomorphic God looking down and choosing one, two, or three of us and saying "Now I am going to give you grace," and you received it and the rest of us did not. The term grace, which is used very loosely with no idea of what it means, is sprinkled throughout Paul's teaching. Jesus never used the term, nor did he refer to the meaning which we believe the term expresses.

Paul's idea of grace is similar to his idea of faith, in that developing faith, to him, is a process of receiving something which does not otherwise exist, and grace means that you receive something which also did not exist before. This is puzzling, for Paul was a great scholar of Judaism and had a certain degree of esoteric knowledge, so he should have known the power of the mind. It is possible he felt that he was dealing with such spiritual infants that he had to make it as simple as he possibly could. But we saw in the book of Acts that Paul did know of the existence of various stages of development in spiritual growth with their attendant inner and outer results. We have no way of knowing why he speaks of these effects being the result of the fortuitious action of grace here, and does not mention inner development through growth. Frankly, he is using many words which really mean very little.

One of the reasons why Paul so frequently stresses circumcision, as he does here, was because that was a great point of disagreement between himself and the other disciples. He is right when he says that it makes no difference. He is, however, arguing not so much from the point of teaching as from the attempt to get back at Peter. Peter was not nearly as astute or brilliant a scholar as Paul and he too sometimes became a bit confused between his Judaic training and the new teaching. Peter believed that in order to become converted you must begin as a Jew, as they all had, and be circumcised, and then you were born again. Peter had a methodical mind which functioned in a step by step process. Do you remember in the book of Acts when Peter did not want to eat food that was not kosher? He had a vision which told him, in effect, "What is the difference? Who says this is clean or this is un-

clean? Now get over these ideas." Peter applied the concept to food but not to other rituals which were part of his Judaic background as they were part of Paul's. But Paul was intelligent enough to begin to realize that these things did not influence the man.

CHAPTER 3. We have been dealing with Paul for quite some time. You might ask yourself, apropos of verse 4, what has Paul told us of the mystery of God? What kind of teaching do you think he has given as to how we are to be a follower of Jesus? A member of any orthodox creed would fulfill the requirements of a follower, not of Jesus, but of what Paul believed. The great difference between Paul's teaching and that of Jesus is described by Jesus when he told us not to obey the letter of the Law, but to obey the Spirit. Despite the fact that Paul is supposedly teaching this concept, all that he has given, with the exception of the chapters on love and faith, is the letter of the Law. He added his own rituals, and the only one he removed was the requirement of circumcision. Here Paul made his great stand against the letter of the Law: other than that he stresses the need of outer conformity.

What Paul teaches is how he feels about life: it is his own philosophy. For instance, if Paul were here today unchanged in point of view, he would disapprove not only of our group, but of the entire metaphysical movement. He would say that we were ungodly in the way we live and approach the metaphysical concept: we were not obeying the Law; we were not worthwhile followers of Christ. What Paul had apparently never learned was that the whole motivation of metaphysics as well as the teaching of Jesus is the desire to accomplish the inner work to become one with God. It is completely dependent on what we do about ourselves, and no one in the world can make you do anything about yourself unless you want to. A friend of mine and a well-known teacher says there is one secret place in the human being which no other human being can touch or influence, and that is in the realm of your thought and will. We can be taught, we can be given answers, we can be guided and helped, but no one can do the work except ourselves. And it is not the sort of work we can parade before our fellowman. The only thing that can ever be seen is the result we manifest in ourselves. The moment we begin to work and we stick to it, there is no doubt of the fact that the results become extremely evident. But this was not sufficient for Paul, if he knew about it to begin with, and that is a big "if."

One thing we can say, which is in Paul's defense for the moment, is that he did not have the benefit of knowing or of having physical contact with Jesus. His sole contact with him was in his spiritual experience. Apropos of this there is a very interesting point which is never brought out in the religious view of his first experience, which relates to his being stricken blind. The moment you are affected in your flesh by any malady you are most vulnerable. It is then not a question of arousing a person's emotions by introducing them to a new idea which inflames them, which they then are able to think through and digest. The moment you are physically afflicted you are vulnerable because, if you are human, and we all are, the first reaction is panic. This is especially true in the instance of a man who has perfect eyesight and is suddenly blinded. Then Paul was told — and do not forget that he could not see, he heard the voice — that he would be healed. From that moment on Paul was open, but he was open only to the healing: he did not open himself to the teaching. He felt, as we have said before, that the other disciples could not understand what Jesus had told them, and that he knew much better than they because of his superior intellect and background.

The orthodox teaching comes from him, and I have often wondered what would happen if the church ever brought out the reason behind Paul's change: that moment of panic and fear and the seemingly miraculous circumstances of his physical healing. If you view his experience from the point of its dramatic structure, you see that when Paul was most vulnerable he was catapulted into a new idea the depths of which he neither explored nor knew. If he had ever explored it, his teaching would not be what it is. Another indication that he did not explore the teaching as it was given, and instead adopted his own interpretation, was that there was little or nothing of healing in his own instructions. Since his introduction to the teaching began with such a striking personal healing, it is strange to see that his interest and desire to learn did not follow in this direction.

CHAPTER 4. This is not all Paul's writing. One part which is his is verses 23 and 24, which is another version of an earlier text. There is quite a mixture here of material which was added two or three centuries later and quite a bit of fairly authentic Pauline material. He is more or less paraphrasing the Ten Commandments when he speaks of lust and not being deceitful, etc. But one point

is quite interesting: he begins to make some differentiation between the figure of Jesus and the Presence of Christ, and this distinction becomes increasingly evident. You remember in the preceding letters Paul spoke of Jesus and Christ as one and the same. His idea that there is one body and one spirit "through you all and in you all" is quite correct. However, this is also a Judaic concept, so it is intriguing to see how much of Jesus' teaching he really knew and how much came from his own background.

There is not as great a difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament as some people believe. The Old Testament, of course, was written about a people who — by virtue of evolution — could not understand love as a ruling force. They could only understand the rule of power. I often suggest that students read Frazer's "The Golden Bough." There the history of worship is traced very clearly, from the most primitive of men who lived in terror and believed that they had to appease a strange power in the heavens, to the concept of today. Gradually you see the growth of the mentality as this concept changes from a God of terror to a God of fertility who will keep them in food and luxury if he is appeased, from which stemmed the phallic rites and worship. Little by little this concept changes until we reach the concept of One God in the Old Testament, but He, too, is a God to be feared. If you do wrong, you have to be punished, so therefore He must be a God of wrath.

Then Moses introduced the idea of a God of love, which is beautifully expressed in Deuteronomy 30:19,20 where he even puts this choice up to man: "This day I place before you life and death, good and evil: choose life, choose good." This was the beginning, the planting of the seed. As we get into Isaiah we find it more and more developed, especially in II Isaiah: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people saith your God" and "I am a God of love." The statement in Isaiah 9:6 is to some people the beginning of the messianic symbol, and to others — again depending on how you understand the text — it is the beginning of the realization that the Presence of God is in the individual: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." This realization is a growing thing, until you come to the time of Jesus who teaches one concept. It is not a God of wrath or fury: it is not a God who has to be propitiated in order to give us life, but it is a God of love. This is a new concept in the sense that, first, it is all inclusive and,

second, it includes the fact that God does not punish us, we punish ourselves by our wrong use of the Law. But Paul has not grasped this concept. He touches on it at times, but he basically says that if you do not do such and such a thing you are going to hell with the unbelievers, which shows his lack of understanding.

CHAPTER 5. The church was considered by Paul to be the body of Christ, and was therefore devoted to the concept of Christ. Since this has consistently been the orthodox point of view, I do not think we need discuss it at length. Paul, however, compares this relationship between the church and Christ to that of husbands and wives, and in so doing reveals his characteristic attitude towards the marital relationship.

Jesus had a very interesting attitude towards marriage which we saw when we discussed his statement in Matthew 19:6: "Therefore, what God hath joined together in heaven, let not man put asunder." Most people believe that Jesus was referring to marriages which have been religiously or legally performed. He was not. And if Paul had had any idea of what Jesus meant I am not sure he would have remained a Christian. If he did have any understanding of this relationship he did not convey it in his letters. Incidentally, one of the things which has always interested me when he deals with this subject is that he is always careful to admonish husbands to love their wives, but he does not seem to care if wives love their husbands.

Jesus rarely mentioned marriage or sex, and he never discoursed on the subject. It is mentioned briefly in the Sermon on the Mount, in the instance of the women taken in adultery, and when the scribes tried to trap him by asking what happened to marriage in life after death. His answer to the scribes, the quotation from Matthew given above, shows how different his concept is from Paul's. Paul continually makes an issue of sex. Jesus believed that marriage was a perfectly normal part of life. Paul seems to think it is an abnormal relationship that should be done without.

When we discussed Jesus' statement in Matthew you may recall that I quoted one writer who said he believed sex was the searching of a split-divinity for its other half, which is quite true, and to which I added "that is why we have so much trouble with the trial and error method." I do believe this, and I believe that there are times when people may meet that other person and then may, or may not, be ready to pick up the thread and live their lives to-

gether. But this is not Paul's belief: his is a very physical, legalistic approach. Paul's conception is that if you are married it is because this is the will of God and so this is the way you must live. But Jesus meant that what God has joined together from the beginning, no man can put asunder.

I think that any one of us, if we give any thought to the why and wherefore of life, must arrive at the conclusion that we cannot live it in just one span. There is too much injustice, cruelty, misery and very few people in a given lifetime achieve happiness or fulfillment of any sort. Then you look at what seems to be tremendous injustice and you say, "I believe in God and God is Love, and if God is Love how can He be unjust?" So you begin to realize that there must have been a before. I have often wondered at the church's idea that there is a hereafter, for it should certainly include a before. Why they insist on eliminating this concept I do not know. If there was a before, and I am as convinced of this as I am convinced that I am sitting here now, then there are certain details of my life and everyone else's life which were involved with other human beings. We do not live in vacuums, therefore there are certain people who were vitally important to me at a point in the past and who are equally important now. I may not know them now in the same terms, by the same names, or even as the same sex, but there was a past contact. And, since we are constructed in a certain way, there must always be someone with whom we want to share our lives. This is the pattern of life. As you get a better perspective on life, you can very often see people whom you know belong together. On the other hand, you see people who, without considering reincarnation, never should have been married, which is unfortunately true of most of our marriages.

I think we are all becoming increasingly aware of one thing about Paul, and that is his repetition. These letters are, of course, his communications to the various centers he established, so there is a valid reason to repeat the same ideas. The result for us, however, is that we are continually meeting a recurrence of Paul's ideas about what is right and wrong and about sex and marriage. Every so often we find one text which is worth wading through all the rest because of its import. We have had several of them already, and we will encounter a few more. But those individual texts do not alter the fact that Paul is extremely repetitious, even within the framework of a single letter. Those texts which have be-

come the foundation stones for metaphysics such as, "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind" and "Your body is the temple of the living God" are merely inserted occasionally throughout his letters. Paul, furthermore, does not concentrate, as Jesus or John would do, upon such a text to clarify and elaborate its meaning. He throws it in and passes over it to revert to his customary demand that you believe in Jesus Christ as the only means of salvation.

The most fascinating aspect of the figure of Paul is his psychology. I do not think Paul was a great teacher. I am certain that when he talked to people, due to his enthusiasm and impetus, his own beliefs and ego, he was able to sway them as any orator could. There is a similar example in our time of some of our more popular evangelists. I have watched the healing lines and seen people come to the platforms in wheel chairs and walk away without them. I do not think this has been staged: I think that one can generate enough hysterical force to make people forget their disabilities momentarily. The great question has been how long the healings will last. But the stress and hysteria of the moment create a kind of power which can do many things for that moment — but only for the moment.

Most of them state that the only thing you must do is to say "I will be saved. I believe." Those words are the simplest words in the world to say, but the most difficult thing to do is to implement them by acting in accordance with them. Crowds can be stirred into a frenzy. They take the vow and become followers. A day or two later the excitement dies down and then the old pattern is resumed and people return to their usual beliefs and way of doing things. The same thing is true of Paul's approach to a great extent, even though he does reach certain spiritual heights in a few instances.

In the gospels, when Jesus has convinced Thomas that he has resurrected, Thomas says: "I believe," and Jesus comments on how great is the belief of those who come after who have not seen. Now we are those who come after and who, for the most part, have not seen. We believe, first, merely because it strikes a chord of truth in us and, then, because in our own fumbling little ways we prove it in our lives. But here is a man who had a tremendous experience, and the only result — and I am not being unkind, because I admire Paul in many ways — was that he became

a demagogue.

CHAPTER 6. Was there anything new in this chapter? It is still the same moral commentary. It is a very interesting little chapter on how to treat your parents but, you know, Moses said it much more simply: "Honor thy father and mother." There was no need for an entire chapter on the subject. The only particularly significant point is in verses 11 and 12, but, as always, he merely touches the idea and does not explain it further. He says "Put on the whole armor of God" and then says no more about it.

This is interesting in regard to Paul's understanding. In almost every epistle we have there has been a single reference to a deeper life, and that is all. He goes on to say here that everything would be known through Tychicus "a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord." However, I rather doubt that he could impart anything other than the physical and moral details of Paul's efforts and teaching, and I also doubt that Paul himself imparted much knowledge beyond the outline we have in the letters. Paul simply does not go beyond the subject of morals and ethics.

PHILIPPIANS

CHAPTER 1. This chapter reveals Paul's concern over the rivalry, which we have discussed before, as well as his own confusion. For example in verses 21-24 he says "For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." By the phrase "to live is Christ" we see that Paul is trying to conceive of the Presence of God as living in him, but this is in the context of his own belief that the sooner he is out of the body the closer he will be to heaven which, of course, is one of his great points of misunderstanding. Again, do not forget that the disciples generally accepted the idea that following Jesus meant leaving this world through martyrdom because Jesus was crucified. If you study the gospels, and certainly by this time Paul had first hand accounts from the disciples, you see that Jesus did not die because he thought he would please God by dying; he died to show that there was no death. Paul could not accept this, but he was not alone in his lack of acceptance.

It is interesting to see that in verse 23 Paul speaks of departing to be with Christ. The concept of heaven, or the abode of God being above, came from the earliest primitive people. When you

trace this history of worship you find that the greatest source of terror for primitive man was storms which came from "up there." Then the belief gradually came into being of some great god who lived beyond that and the earth was separated from the above by a gigantic saucer. On the upper side of that saucer everything was good, and if the god did not like what was happening down here he would tip the saucer and we would have storms and lightning, snow and ice. Whatever it was that sat up there had power over whatever was down here, and therefore that power had to be constantly appeased and worshiped. Little by little, as man began to evolve he incorporated this primitive conception into his idea of what he called heaven. And then he decided that because everything up there was beautiful and good, and since there were so many terrible things happening on earth without any apparent cause, there must be a power beneath which caused these things and so that was called hell.

This concept is at least twenty thousand years old, and probably older than that, and yet in our so-called brilliant civilized world of today we still believe that heaven is up there and hell is down below. And, as we recall, this was also a Judaic concept, so we can see that Paul was very firmly entrenched in his Judaic background. Jesus never said this. He said that the Presence of God was *within* you: the kingdom of heaven is *within* you.

The inability to think is probably one of the most fascinating aspects of the human mind, which is so amazingly equipped to do just that. I have had the belief for a long time that there is much more to it than meets the eye. Man has learned to think to a certain degree: he has self-consciousness. We are all familiar with Descartes statement "I think, therefore I am:" I am by the fact that I can KNOW a thing. Man is what he knows, or what he spends his energy to know. He has expended it materialistically, commercially, scientifically, and to some degree culturally, but where it has come to religion, he has not thought — he has merely accepted. It is almost as though dust had been sprinkled in his eyes by the power of darkness not to let him think. He accepts, for the most part, without question.

CHAPTER 2. Before we discuss this chapter, I would like you to ask yourselves if you think this is esoteric writing. To many people it is. However, the key to the level on which Paul understands and writes is in verse 5. This, again, is a pillar of

metaphysics and, once again, for Paul it has an entirely different meaning. In metaphysics it refers to the Presence of God in the individual and the process of growth through the direction of our thoughts and meditations by which we find conscious contact with Him. To Paul it refers to the idea that we should be like-minded," that we should think like Jesus who, to him, as he goes on to say in the following verses, is the Lord, or the only begotten son of God.

Then in verse 15 there is another phrase that, when understood in the context of metaphysics, would seem to indicate a greater knowledge on Paul's part: "that ye may be blameless and harmless, *the sons of God*, without rebuke." Throughout his epistles, however, Paul refers to his followers as sons through adoption and, moreover, only those are sons who have accepted the teaching. In other words, he is using the term in the Old Testament sense of a chosen people, rather than in the sense of each individual being a child of God because the Presence lives within each of us.

I would like to elaborate on this distinction somewhat because it is most important for us to be able to distinguish between the underlying truth which gives a certain meaning to a statement and the meaning which is implied or expressed according to the degree of understanding of the writer. We have referred throughout the New Testament to the gnostic or esoteric meaning. This gnosis is the underlying knowledge or teaching behind all religions and their scriptures and is not limited to the Christian period. The early church fathers decided that references to mysteries, meaning that which they did not understand, were heretical and so the term gnosticism has come to be associated with an heretical interpretation of the teachings of Jesus. As we have seen, however, the Bible itself is written on many levels and the Cabalistic and esoteric are the most significant of these. And, as Jesus himself said, he gave milk to the multitudes and meat to those who were able to understand, and his teachings and parables are designed to reveal these levels.

Now both the Essenes and the Gnostics taught the path of soul growth and the stages of initiation. They also taught the concept of God as the great Intelligence — not an anthropomorphic God sitting in heaven — with His own ideas and concepts, one of which was to clothe part of Himself in human form endowed with free will and then see what would happen. This is why we are told that we can never know God the Father, which is the

Infinite Mind, but we will know God the Son who is within us. The progressive knowledge of this is the basis of Gnosticism and the basis of Jesus' teaching.

At the time of the organization of the early church, Gnosticism was felt to be a great danger because many people followed its teachings. The early leaders of the church, as we have seen, had little direct spiritual experience themselves and no direct knowledge of Jesus and his teachings. They felt that in order to hold the church together they must have a set interpretation, a unified teaching, and so they began to delete and alter in the original teachings those things which they did not understand or which they believed people should not know.

The Gnostics, furthermore, did not elaborate on their teachings. They believed, initially, and then came to know through their own experience. They did not argue or discuss points because they felt that unless you had an experience it fell on deaf ears, which is perfectly true. Most of the students of the disciples were without experience, so they did not know what was really being said. They consequently felt if they could not explain it, it should be deleted, or translated into terms which they felt to be good and harmless. This is the basis of our present day scripture.

Paul was very much aware of this religious element, and it is possible that Paul's writings originally contained the gnostic element and were also altered to fit the church's requirements. This, however, is extremely doubtful because, as we have seen, of his lack of understanding of certain basic esoteric concepts such as the seed. Also he is teaching the moral and ethical concepts of Judaism. And, moreover, his main interest in the life of Jesus was with the crucifixion and resurrection. He seemed to have had no knowledge or interest in any of the other events which transpired in the life of Jesus.

There are many old manuscripts which give this inner teaching of Gnosticism, many of which are in the Vatican Library and some in Israel. The discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls has brought a number to light and has also widened our understanding. Other than these there are, notably, the *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* in London, *The Gospel of Thomas*, a recently published book edited by G. R. S. Mead entitled *The Hymn of Jesus*, and a few more.

Many scholars have dealt with this recently discovered material, and have written of the discrepancy between the ear-

lier manuscripts and the form of the gospels we have in our Bible. We have, however, only to refer to the story of the birth of Jesus in the gospels themselves to see how many discrepancies there were even among the first disciples. Most of the original manuscripts were hidden or doctored to fit the need of the moment. We need nothing more to clarify the situation than to realize that the teaching Jesus gave set men free, and the doctrine which was evolved from this makes them slaves of ritual, intermediaries and theology.

There is another interesting point in this connection. The Aramaic version of the Gospel of John is quite different and far more beautiful than the King James version. I met an Aramaic scholar some years ago who said that you really could not interpret the Bible without a knowledge of Aramaic unless you had an inner eye, an understanding eye, for the change of words from one language to another conveys an entirely different meaning. We not only have a watered down version, but one which has been indirectly altered by time and the differences in words. We all know that there are many words in the King James which have practically no meaning for our present day understanding unless we trace them to their original meaning. That is one reason why I suggest that in reading your Bible you take key words and trace them to their root source in the Webster's Unabridged Dictionary. Very often you will find a completely different, and often esoteric, definition than what the contemporary sense of the word implies. One word which comes to mind is *avenge*. We think of it as being punishment for wrong doing, when it actually means to stand up for. Or take the word *yoke*. The word *yoga* in Hindu means to bind together, a cohesive force, and it is also their word for love, which is a cohesive force. There is no more binding force in the universe than love. There are a number of these key words which, when you trace them back to their root meanings, will provide a completely different picture of the text.

CHAPTER 3. In verse 7 Paul is patting himself on the back by saying, look at what he has given up for Christ. He has given up the things which were the most important of all to him, and he realizes that their loss was as nothing because he is now pressing on to the high calling. Of course there is no doubt of the fact that Paul was extremely sincere in his desire to find God. We are not questioning his sincerity, but the way he went about it. I just

pray, because there must be some record, that one day we will come across the histories of the other disciples and what they did. The only one we have any knowledge of, and that is rather sketchy, is John, who went to the island of Patmos and spent the rest of his days teaching and writing.

But the difference between John's teaching and Paul's is as different as day and night. Incidentally, it is very interesting that in the little book *The Hymn of Jesus* Mr. Mead says that the real gnostic teaching of the gospels is the Gospel of John, which accounts for the difference in the writing. Paul's writing is not difficult to understand. It primarily deals with deportment: this is how you are to behave; this is what you are to do. Every so often you come across a perfectly beautiful text such as verse 13 which has a true metaphysical meaning. In metaphysics we are told to forget the past and live today so that we can live tomorrow more fully. This is what the text says. Actually we study Paul mainly because of these isolated texts and, in addition, because he made the greatest impression of all the disciples and, ironically, almost more than Jesus, on the world.

In verses 14 and 15 we again find one of the great texts of metaphysics. It is a great metaphysical statement, but Paul refers it to his belief that he is right and everyone who does not agree with him is a sinner: for he says in verse 17 that they should be "followers of me" and goes on to remind them of the wrong teaching given by others. Now I grant you that a teacher or minister must have some feeling of assurance that they know what they are doing and they believe it is right. But that does not mean that they have a corner on the truth. Naturally, I believe that our beliefs are the highest Truth, if not I would neither try to live it nor teach it. But I am perfectly sure there is a greater truth than what I know and I hope to keep on discovering it. If the day should ever come when I stop learning, that is the day I should leave this plane fast. There are other denominations with other beliefs, and while I do not agree with them, I respect their right to believe. I do not call them dogs, as Paul does in verse 2. I do not like religions which teach fear, but that has nothing to do with the people who believe in it: I like the people but not the teaching.

CHAPTER 4. Again we find two of Paul's very great texts in verses 8 and 13. In between we are told, in effect, to "do what I do. Follow me for I have done it." It gives an amazing

picture of this man. There are moments when he really seems to hit upon the thing that we all want to realize and express, and then he jumps right back into the little human being who is not satisfied with anything and who resents anyone else who speaks with authority. He says that if you do not take his word for the truth you are absolutely no good, and then he comes out with statements such as these.

Paul has never been objective about himself. He does not see himself clearly. For instance, in any of the experiences which he has had — except for the first experience, and even that did not make the impact it should have — he has never been able to view himself as he really is. First of all, whether as a Jew or as a Christian, he was and is a fanatic. There is no middle road for Paul. It is either/or, and the either is exactly as he sees it, and if you do not see it the same way you are as nothing. There is no one in the entire Bible, with the possible exception of the first Isaiah who was a bit of a dictator at times, who was as critical as Paul is of those who do not agree with him. And yet this is the same man who wrote the chapter which says “though I speak with the tongues of angels and have not love . . .”. It is a strange contrast which we find in him.

The concept of love according to Paul, and a few others since then, is that the way you show love to a person is to insist that they do as you tell them. It is a matter of “don’t do as I do: do as I tell you, because I know better than you.” But the stronger the personality, which is the emotional drive, the more violent is the outpicturing of that concept. You cannot call Paul a man of peace. Although he likes to think of himself as a man of peace, as we see here, there is nothing peaceful about Paul. There is very little tenderness in Paul and, I would say, there also is very little compassion in him.

This chapter brings out another distinct difference between his teaching and that of Jesus. It is evident that Paul believes it is the Presence of God, or Jesus, telling him to be well or sick, or to “abound” or “be abased” as he expresses it in verse 12. You have only to read this objectively to see how removed this is from the teaching of Jesus. Jesus never told anyone to “be hungry or be sick; it is good for your soul.” Quite the contrary, he says “Take up your bed and walk;” “Go, and sin no more;” “And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.”

COLOSSIANS

Again, there is a divergence of opinion among scholars concerning Colossians; not this time about its authenticity, on which most of them are in agreement, but concerning the date it was written. Many believe that it was written in prison in Rome, which would place it in the final years of Paul's life. Actually, I believe this letter was written before the others. They are not necessarily arranged in the Bible in the order in which they were written. It seems to me this was written when he was still filled with enthusiasm and his first understanding, and had not run afoul of that thing called competition.

CHAPTER 1. As you see from this, Paul's ideas are still not quite in the metaphysical framework that Jesus gave, as we see especially in verse 14: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." This text also brings up a question which I think we should clarify for ourselves.

Theology has taken the attitude that Jesus alone had the power of forgiveness. Unfortunately, most people have accepted this because they also believed that he was God incarnate, as Paul does here. However, Jesus was not speaking for himself, but the Presence of God was speaking through him, and certainly each and every one of us has the power to forgive. If that were not so, he would not have said as often as he did that we should forgive everybody. Furthermore, he would not have said that we could do all the things he had done, if we did not have the power to do so. It is not that you or I specifically have the power, but the Presence of God within us has this power which we are able to express. When we turn to that Presence and have reached the point where the "little me" is completely disconnected from the emotional impact of a particular incident caused by a person we cared for, then we are able to forgive.

We are so filled with and used to intellectual phrases, without realizing what they really mean, that they actually cease to have meaning and power for us. For instance, in meditation we say "God is Love. I understand that, I express it, I radiate it to everyone on the face of the earth, excluding no one." The next time you say that, ask yourself do you just say it or do you mean it? Have

you ever thought about it? Or is it just a question of saying it like, "Well, my hands are soiled and I am going to wash them." I wish it were that easy. It has to mean more to us than just a momentary feeling. It has to come from deep within us.

I do not think there is any human being who has ever lived in our time who has not encountered cruel or painful incidents that have created scars in the soul and memory. We are affected by them to a great degree until we can really forgive or, as I sometimes call it, go on a resentment therapy. Then several amazing things happen. A person may have the worst memory in the world, but when it pertains to a deep hurt or resentment they will remember the most minute detail of it, although they may not be able to remember the name or face of someone they met five minutes ago. But if it concerns a personal, emotional incident which has created a sore spot in the subconscious, they will remember it vividly the rest of their lives, or until they accomplish a resentment therapy.

The first thing that happens when you do that therapy is that you are completely disassociated from the emotional reaction to the person or the situation involved. The second thing you find is that no matter how marvelous your memory may be, you cannot remember the details; they slowly but surely evaporate. I have seen this happen with many people as well as with myself, and I have a photographic memory. Once in a while when something comes up that reminds me of what happened in a particular situation, if I try to recall the details, I cannot. Yet I can relate unimportant conversations word for word which have occurred from the time I was five or six years old. This means that there has been a complete catharsis of the soul as far as the specific incident is concerned; that it is wiped out.

So the act of forgiveness is more than just words. We have to perform a mental and emotional operation on ourselves. Then the outer picture must change. There is no doubt of that. Another indication of your success is that you suddenly feel that you can draw a deep breath, and you feel as though a load, albeit unconscious until now, is gone. And then something very beautiful happens in the outer world.

We do have the power of forgiveness, but we are the ones who must exercise it for ourselves. The human being is such a strange creature that somehow the act of telling another person who we respect what happened makes us feel better. The appeal of

confession in the church and of psychiatry is the feeling of relief at "getting it off your chest." And then, because the human being still believes he should be punished, the church steps in and gives him something to do for penance before absolution, and he is cleared. Whether or not this takes effect in his subconscious is entirely dependent on the individual.

To return to this chapter, one indication that this is an earlier letter is that Paul is very pleased with the people he is addressing, and there appears to be none of the dissension he later encounters. In verse 27 we find another famous metaphysical banner: "Christ in you, the hope of glory." It would appear from this that Paul referred to the Indwelling Christ. However, that he believes Christ is Jesus personally is shown in verse 3: "we give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." So he has not progressed beyond the stage of believing that Jesus and Christ are one and the same.

Then in the 28th verse he says "we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." When I first read it, which was shortly after I was introduced to metaphysics, I thought, "Does it mean that we will be perfect *like* Jesus, or does it mean that we will be perfect in Jesus?" He literally says in Christ Jesus and, as you recall, Paul was convinced that Jesus was God in the beginning, and then he vacillates between Jesus is the Christ, and the Christ is not confined to Jesus. So this again indicates that this was one of his earlier letters. Paul is very definite here in his statements about Jesus being the Christ, and he does not exhibit his later uncertainty which resulted from his own desire to realize the Presence of God within himself. Also, at this point he is still very emotionally involved with his experience.

I am sure, for instance, you can recall your own metaphysical debut which usually is accompanied by a beautiful demonstration. The initial excitement buoys you up. You are sure you know all the answers and you have to go out and talk about it. Some of the things you say are apt to be a little bit off, shall we say, the given path of metaphysics. Paul is still at that stage in this letter. This is a Paul who is still somewhat untouched by his own ego, for, as I said before, the competition had not begun. He is delighted that these people were very much for him and that he had been successful in his visit with them, and so he felt very much at ease which was, for Paul, a very joyous state.

Incidentally, did you ever think of Paul in connection with the statement "the sons of God shout aloud for joy?" Can you picture Paul shouting aloud for joy? It is almost an impossibility. Yet Jesus said, "I have come that ye might have life and have it more abundantly." But Paul, quite to the contrary, did not believe it should be abundant. He was rather adverse to what he called the foolish luxury of the world. This was a sin to him because it took the mind off God. In another sense this is ironic because, from what is known of Paul's earlier life, he came from a fairly well-to-do family and he lived very well. So it seems that after his experience he changed his mind completely. So far as I have ever discovered, no one knows why. It could have been that this was his way of doing penance for his former actions against the new teaching — this we do not know.

CHAPTER 2. Verse 9 is certainly a very clear statement of the fact that at this point Paul believed that Jesus was God incarnate. From a theological point of view, the question has always been to what extent Paul endowed Jesus with the nature of God. Did he think Jesus was the Godhead come to earth, or did he refer to the mystery of the Son, the Second Person of the Trinity? He may have studied this in esoteric Judaism. The concept of the Trinity, however, was completely opposed to the traditional Jewish concept which was monotheistic and excluded the triune manifestation of Deity. Paul may or may not have been aware of the Trinity, but he certainly was raised in the monotheistic idea. Suddenly he was completely swept away by his experience, and here his claim is that Jesus is the embodiment of the All. Little by little he began to make his way to a clearer understanding, but it is far from clear at any time. He never really comes to the point of realizing that Jesus was the most perfect embodiment of the Presence, but not God Himself and that the Presence is in each of us.

It is also questionable as to whether his concept of the body of Christ was that Jesus was suddenly going to encompass all of us in his divine nature. It is impossible for us to determine because we only get a vague idea from his letters and they have been tampered with. But one thing history has revealed about him is that the impact of his very dramatic encounter and blindness was so overwhelming that to him it was a supernatural occurrence. Jesus must have been God Almighty, for who else could do these things? This feeling, coupled with his enthusiasm and awe kept

him from clarifying his own concepts.

To the church the body of Christ refers to the church itself as the literal body of the Christ who manifested in the form of Jesus. In metaphysics we refer to the first two words of the Lord's Prayer: "Our Father" and to us the body of Christ is the group of people who believe that the Presence of God is within each person and that in Spirit we are all one. There is a wide difference in these beliefs and in what they mean in our lives. Then again in verse 2, when he says "the mystery of God and the Father" he is trying to explain that there is a mystery of God which, to him, is that Jesus was God.

His statement about circumcision in verse 11 shows that Paul did know a few esoteric facts, for "the circumcision made without hands" refers to a change which takes place through the development in the endocrine chain of glands. We have spoken of the "mystic marriage" before, and we know that this takes place at the time of the third major initiation. The explanation of this will be given fully when we reach Revelation. The knowledge of this stage of development goes back to the beginning of time, and this is what Paul is referring to here. Jesus made one of the great statements about it when he said, "If thine eye be single then thy whole body shall be filled with light." Paul knew of these things although he had not achieved them, and every so often he gives a hint of it. How much his followers knew is something we have no means of determining.

I am sure by the end of his life Paul was convinced that he knew more about what Jesus was teaching than Jesus himself ever knew, because he added a number of things that Jesus never taught. There is one thing we should remember: Paul was equally as brilliant as the first Isaiah, and he was almost as brilliant as Moses. Moses, however, was not only powerful but he had great humility. Moses was quite different in that he always felt his own unworthiness in attempting to do what he did. Paul, on the other hand, was perfectly sure that God was very fortunate in having him as an emissary. It is these insights which make the Bible fascinating.

CHAPTER 3. Verse 3 is very beautiful and is a text which is frequently used in metaphysics. Once again, however, the difference in its application is shown by the fact that metaphysics does not include Paul's beginning phrase "For ye are dead;" and simply uses the statement "your life is hid with Christ in God."

Then in verse 9 Paul speaks of putting off the "old man with his deeds." The old man is, of course, the old you, and Paul is perfectly right when he tells them to get rid of anger, blasphemy, etc., and to put away fornication, uncleanness and covetousness, but I cannot say that what he tells us to do in place of this presents a very attractive picture. It seems that he does not believe that by his very nature man is good. Man left alone will respond to kindness. It is only when he becomes fearful of his fellowman and does not have enough knowledge or faith to understand the situation that he reacts in what really is a form of self-defense. This, in turn, gives rise to the negative characteristics we all want to overcome. It is also significant that Paul describes this overcoming in terms of mortification. He is closer to the truth when he says in previous letters, "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind," or when he speaks of the action implied in verse 10.

This chapter is very interesting in what it reveals of Paul's ideas of what a good life should be. It reminds me of a very charming student of mine who was raised as a Scotch Presbyterian. I will never forget an incident she related to me one night when she was commenting on how greatly metaphysics differed from the way she was raised. It seems she came from a large family and her father was very devout. On Sunday after church and dinner the family was supposed to sit with folded hands. One beautiful spring day the children asked if they could take a walk in the sunshine and the father told them it was definitely forbidden. After they had pleaded with him, he finally said they could go out, but "Mind you, don't enjoy yourself." Every time I read this chapter I am reminded of this incident and wonder again how Paul and sects such as this would interpret the text "the sons of God shout aloud for joy" or Jesus' statement that we are to have life more abundantly.

Once again Paul wrongly advocates radical surgery in removing negative characteristics, but there is an aspect to the process of overcoming which pertains to us as metaphysicians. Actually, the reason why we progress so slowly is because few people have enough self-discipline to make themselves work. If you have so little will power that you cannot give up a habit such as smoking, should you want to do so, or stay on a diet, how in the name of heaven do you think you are ever going to accomplish your real development?

The act of discipline is not a fascinating procedure. Most

people, for example, have great difficulty in concentrating. You will never be a mystic and you are not very good as a metaphysician unless you can concentrate. People often ask me if I can give them an exercise to develop concentration. There are a number of them and, frankly, they are among the most boring procedures I have ever encountered. But if you want to learn to concentrate, sit down and do it through gritted teeth. One exercise which is helpful, is to take a pencil or pen and concentrate on it for five minutes and then write down everything you can think of that pertains to it. The subject matter which you are given to concentrate on for the first three months is apt to be rather dull, as is the pencil, but this is not an exercise for enjoyment, this is an exercise for self-control.

The thing we are working for, whether you realize it or not, is a complete integration of the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual levels of our being. What do you think the word integration means? A complete oneness. The first requirement for this is that you give your complete attention to whatever you are doing at a given moment, and *nothing* distracts you. Can you do it? If you cannot do this my suggestion is — and it is the kindest suggestion I can make — go and work until you can. Because, other than that, you will not accomplish what you seek in speaking the Word for yourself or treating for anything you want in your life.

What do you think it means when we say “change your thought and keep it changed?” You do not have to concentrate after you have spoken the Word, but you do have to have enough will power and interest in the idea you have put forth to keep your mind off that to the exclusion, as well, of all negative ideas and feelings. For instance, you know your name. You do not go around all day long saying “I am so and so”: you *know* you are. It is that kind of knowing about what you have decreed which you are to maintain. When other thoughts of insecurity creep in about your possibility of achieving this, what do you do? Can you rule these thoughts out and stay with the original idea? Can you? **CHANGE YOUR THOUGHT AND KEEP IT CHANGED.** It does not do any good, for instance, to say in the morning “I am divine spirit. I am the child of God. God is wisdom: that wisdom is guiding me. The door is opening for me now,” and then to wonder the next minute “What will I do? How will I get this done?” In order to *keep* your thought changed you require concentration.

Once you speak the Word, forget it and let it work. But the thing that completely wipes out your work is the doubts that come in and the negative concepts you think about and express. What is the Golden Key? You see the Presence of God handling the situation. Then, almost inevitably, you will suddenly find that all of the negative ideas begin to flood you and you are told to immediately make your mind like a radio and switch it back to station positive. And Golden Key it again. Now if you have any degree of concentration, this will not be difficult. If you have no degree of concentration you will be doing it all day long.

One of the great difficulties for people when they are first told to meditate is that they cannot keep their minds on God. It is very difficult. Time and again people will tell me that they just cannot seem to keep their thoughts on one subject for three minutes. But there are ways to accomplish this. This is why I tell people to write out psalms in their own words. It accomplishes two purposes at one time. You accomplish a meditation and you obtain a degree of concentration. Because, strangely enough, the mind and emotions will follow the movement of the physical, particularly when you are trying to think something through. If you are writing out a psalm — you may not like the idea and fuss like mad — but in the process of reading and explaining it to yourself and then writing it down it is impossible for your mind to wander, whereas it may wander if the hand is not occupied. This is one of the best ways I have discovered in teaching people how to meditate. When they finally get to the point where they have no difficulty and begin to enjoy it, then of course there is no further need for writing.

An integrated individual is one who is completely concentrated and one-pointed. A friend of mine had an interesting statement: "No matter what you are doing, you must do it with a plus. Whether you like it or not, do it with a plus." When he was asked what he meant by a plus, he said "You give it everything you have. You are completely occupied with what you are doing, be it physical, mental or emotional activity. You work with blinders on, oblivious to everything other than what is in front of you." This is another form of concentration. But wherever you find you have difficulty with concentration, you should by all means give yourself some exercises such as this to develop it.

To return to Paul, in verse 16 he advises them to teach by means of psalms and hymns, which seems strange to our ears.

This is a very old ritual, however, that stems from the earliest forms of pagan worship. It was discovered that the sound of music and rhythm had certain effects on the consciousness. Today we know that vibration of any kind affects the consciousness, but on the whole the ritual of music has descended to a rather empty spiritual exercise in most churches. Gospel singing is a form which is closer to the original use.

There is nothing more beautiful, to my mind, than to hear a wonderful choir or organ in a very beautiful setting. It does not have to be in church: it can be in Carnegie Hall or at home. In our time, people do not utilize music to any great extent to raise their consciousness, and some of the old hymns can actually have the opposite effect. It has been used for this purpose from early times, however, and was not new with Paul. There is no mention of it in the teachings of Jesus given in the gospels, which is interesting, for in the Old Testament song and dance were frequently used to express thanks and joy, most notably in the book of Psalms. Rhythm was also often used to send people into trance, as it still is in many of the primitive religions of today, particularly among the African tribes. In most of these forms nothing other than the beat of drums is used and after listening to this for a period of time a certain response is set up in many people.

In metaphysics we give the teaching devoid of any ritual. But we can all individually use music as a means of elevating our consciousness, say, before meditation. In a similar way people will sometimes read a book which has given them a spiritual lift, or contemplate a beautiful view. Any of these methods are perfectly wonderful and do have an effect on you provided you are open to their influence.

CHAPTER 4. There is an interesting phrase in the third verse: "praying also for us that God would open unto us a door of utterance to speak the mystery of Christ." You can interpret the word mystery in two ways: as *the* great secret which cannot be revealed, or as something which has to be very carefully explained in order to be understood. It seems evident that Paul was speaking of it in the latter sense and that he was trying to explain what this mystery was, but I do not think he makes it very clear. If this letter was written later in his life, he may have known that the Presence of God was in him and every other human being, or if this was an earlier letter, it may have indicated the dawning of

this realization, but it would have been much simpler to say it that way. However, let us give him the benefit of a doubt and say that he did say it that way and later editors changed it.

As you can see from the notation at the end of the book in the King James version, it was believed that this letter was written from prison in Rome but, as we have seen, there is now a good deal of conflicting opinion regarding this. And, as a result, we can only discuss his ideas, as we have been doing, in the personal, rather than the chronological context.

Here we see that Paul felt his disciples should go forth and be just as stern as he had been in training people to follow his ideas of what Jesus taught, as if this had come from his own personal contact with Jesus. It is quite fascinating especially when we see how totally opposed the basis of his teaching is to that of Jesus. Paul was completely sincere in his belief that there is nothing to be gained by living on earth. This is the tenor of his teaching. You have to live here, but do not enjoy it. This, of course, is the philosophy behind Hinduism: that the sooner you can get out of the cycle of earth lives, the better off you are. However, in Paul's case, this is completely contrary to his earlier Judaic training. As we have seen in the Old Testament, there was no emphasis on an after life in Judaism, for your continuance of life was derived from your children who carried on your name and your blood. So life here was of the greatest importance. Paul certainly did not get this idea from Jesus who taught that the kingdom of God was within you, here and now. We do not know where Paul came across this concept. It may have come solely from the misunderstanding of why Jesus was crucified, but he certainly completely changed from the Judaic concept to his own, which was not Christian. And from this came the idea that life here is a life of sin and suffering and we are all sinners.

Paul felt that the importance of his discipleship depended on the number of converts he made. He had to prove to the other disciples as well as himself that he could deliver more "Souls to Christ" than they could. And this he did.

But the competition was completely one-sided. Jesus had never told them to engage in popularity contests. He told them to give the message, and 'to as many as would receive them'. In other words, Jesus believed in the old statement, 'When the student is ready, the teacher appears.'

Paul believed people had to be forced, cajoled and kept in line by him, and then he would be the mediator between them and Jesus.

Jesus said, "When you pray, enter your closet in secret and pray to your Father, and He shall reward you openly".

M. M.

Thank you, and God bless
you.

Mildred Mann

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