

New Testament Interpretation

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GOSPELS INTERPRETATION

Introduction

In this course we shall follow the outline of the book Your Hope of Glory by Elizabeth Sand Turner. Our metaphysical definitions will be from the Metaphysical Bible Dictionary. The actual Bible texts will be from the Revised Standard Version.

In Your Hope of Glory Mrs. Turner combines history with metaphysical interpretation, as she does in Let There Be Light. In this course we shall deal only with interpretation. Although we shall constantly be referring to the historical Jesus, the lessons are concerned only with the metaphysical meanings.

"Jesus represents God's idea of man in (relative) expression; Christ is that idea in the absolute." (M.B.D. p. 345)

In this course we shall interpret Jesus as: SPIRITUAL AWARENESS AWAKENED AND ACTIVE IN MAN. This will be constant. When the lesson is dealing with the Christ in the absolute, we shall use the word Christ. When the lesson is dealing with the person of Jesus, it will always be in the context of His representing spiritual awareness in man.

Lesson 1

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. Meaning of Jesus as a living metaphysical symbol.
2. Metaphysical meaning of John the Baptist.
3. Metaphysical meaning of Mary as virgin.
4. General metaphysical overview of birth and childhood of Jesus.
5. Metaphysical meaning of the voice of approval at the water baptism of Jesus.
6. Metaphysical significance of the temptations in the wilderness.

II. READINGS

1. John 1; Luke 1-2; Matthew 1-3
2. Your Hope of Glory Pages 15-48
3. Metaphysical Bible Dictionary under headings: Jesus; Mary; Joseph; John; Herod; Wise-men

III. QUESTIONS

1. What does Jesus symbolize metaphysically in human nature?
2. What does John the Baptist symbolize metaphysically in human nature?
3. What does Mary as virgin symbolize in human nature?
4. Was the heavenly voice of approval approving water baptism? If not, what was it approving?
5. Is temptation always evil or harmful? If not, what else can it be?

IV. ADDENDA

The teacher will note that the lesson does not deal extensively with the Christmas story as such. It is felt that the story is so universally well-known that it would not be necessary to give it an in-depth treatment in this course. However, if the teacher prefers to spend more time on it, he or she should feel free to do so.

Lesson 1

JOHN 1:1-18

This opening of the Gospel of John deals with the primary nature of the Word (translated from Greek word "Logos") and also introduces the character John the Baptist.

The statements concerning the Word constitute an amazingly right beginning for metaphysical interpretation of the Gospels for the Word (Logos) actually means the same as creative principle. If a reader substitutes the words "creative principle" for the "Word" and "him," a new insight into this opening paragraph can be gained.

In verse 6 we are presented with first mention of John the Baptist, who later gives testimony to the coming of one greater than himself-- Jesus. "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father. (John bore witness to him, and cried, 'This was he of whom I said, He who comes after me ranks before me, for he was before me.')" (John 1:14-15)

Our Metaphysical Bible Dictionary describes John as representing the intellect in process of becoming illumined; especially in regard to denoting the difference between right and wrong. As the intellect becomes more illumined it is quick to detect the presence of something greater than itself; in fact, it is glad to do so. That great "something" is spiritual awareness (Jesus).

LUKE 1:26-38 Annunciation to the Virgin Mary of the birth of Jesus

During this scene, Mary makes this significant reply to the news brought to her by Gabriel: ". . .Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." (Luke 1:38)

These words illustrate perfect, peaceful consent to spiritual revelation and guidance. Mary as Virgin symbolizes our feeling nature in a purely intuitive and harmonious state. When we are in harmonious agreement with our inner spiritual revelations and directions we receive an "annunciation" of the awakening and quickening (birth) of spiritual awareness in us.

The CHRISTMAS STORY is found only in The Gospels of Matthew and Luke. (Matt. 1:18-25, Luke 2:1-20, Matt. 2:1-12)

The Christmas Story is so familiar, so famous, that it seems redundant to deal with it in any great detail in a course such as this. Metaphysically it is a highly symbolic and very beautiful account of the coming forth into consciousness of a newer and greater level of spiritual awareness than one has ever known before. This new spiritual awareness begins as a glimmer in the mind (babe). It is brought forth through our intuition and our love for Truth (Mary). It is nurtured and protected by right and positive thinking (Joseph). It occurs first

in an area of the soul where we are capable of feeling peace.

The visit of the wise men from the East to the newborn child is described in Matt. 2:1-12. Metaphysically this incident symbolizes the coming forth into the conscious mind of rich soul memories that have been dormant in the deeper levels of the soul. These soul memories bring blessings of powers and abilities to our awakened spiritual awareness:

- (1) Gold: a realization of the richness of Spirit (divine ideas).
- (2) Frankincense: a realization of the beauty of things Spiritual (divine ideas).
- (3) Myrrh: a realization of the eternality of Spirit (divine ideas).

In this same incident we read that the wise men are "warned in a dream" not to reveal the place where the babe Jesus can be found. Herod would destroy Him. Herod symbolizes selfish egotism. Selfish egotism does not want spiritual awareness to grow and expand in us, for that would terminate its days of domination over us. Soul wisdom (wise men) can prevent this.

"And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him." (Luke 2:40) These words, and the additional words "and (he) was obedient to them (his parents) And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." (Luke 2:51-52)

These simple words embody the natural and orderly development of spiritual awareness once it has really been quickened (born) in us. Divine order, cooperation, obedience, common sense; these must be practiced:

The childhood of Jesus may seem quite uneventful, but the very pattern of orderly obedience and usefulness under ordinary circumstances is what is of great importance. Short-cuts, occult or supernatural masters, magic, etc.; none of these are necessary for growth of spiritual consciousness. The example Jesus sets here is the safe and sane method.

In Luke 2:41-50 we read the tradition of the visit to the temple in Jerusalem of Jesus and His parents. When Jesus is found to be left behind on the return journey, His parents return to the temple and find Him conversing with the teachers, amazing them with His answers. This was at the age of twelve years. He makes this significant statement to Mary at that time: "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" (Luke 2:49) In the KJV the same verse is translated "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

In Luke it is obvious that Jesus was aware of His own spiritual purpose even at so early an age. In this and many other places in the Gospel accounts, Jesus makes statements which reveal that He knew what He was in the evolutionary process of this human family. He knew God as our Father. To be in the "Father's house" is to be in, or to appropriate God-consciousness, or spiritual consciousness. And Jesus knew that His role was to live a life in which He was to be the symbolic embodiment of spiritual awareness in man. He knew that His words were to be words of spiritual Truth teaching. He knew His part in the "Father's business" for the human family on this planet. In Matt. 3:13-17 Jesus is baptized by John. Upon His being baptised in the water, these words are heard coming from the heavens, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 3:17)

What does this signify? Is it simply divine approval of water baptism? Or is it a verbalized expression of divine approval of what Jesus had done? What has Jesus really done here? He has given an example of beautiful true humility when such an example was most appropriate. He did not NEED water baptism (John himself recognized this, and said so). But He was thinking of the feelings of John, and He used this occasion to show consideration and respect for what John was trying to do. Spiritual awareness (Jesus) is always willing to "work with" the illumined intellect (John). Jesus is constantly illustrating spiritual awareness in all its aspects, from little things to great and impressive things.

In Matthew 4:1-11, we read of the temptations in the wilderness. These three temptations are in the form of:

- (1) turning stones into bread
- (2) deliberately defying the law of gravity
- (3) worshipping Satan in order to gain wealth in the world

Jesus, of course, does not succumb to any of these. He counteracts Satan's words with His own words of spiritual awareness:

- (1) "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." (Matt. 4:4; Deut. 8:3)
- (2) "You shall not tempt the Lord your God." (Matt. 4:7; Deut. 6:16)
- (3) "You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve." (Matt. 4:10; Deut. 6:13)

Notice that these three statements are direct quotes from the ancient Hebrew laws in Deuteronomy. Spiritual awareness "knows" the proper function of law and how it is applied in building consciousness.

Metaphysically these temptations do not represent blatant evil, but rather subtle errors which arise from the lower levels of personal consciousness (Satan). Basically they represent impulses to use spiritual power in trivial or unnecessary ways, just for the sake of showing that one "knows how" and "can do." None of the things Satan asked Jesus to do were wrong or wicked, but only self-gratifying with no real benefit to the rest of humanity. Spiritual awareness does not "fight" temptations, it simply nullifies them with words of Truth.

Lesson 2

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. The twelve disciples as symbols of the twelve powers of man.
2. Metaphysical meaning of turning of water into new wine.
3. Metaphysical meaning of the cleansing of the temple.
4. Metaphysical meaning of the new birth.
5. Metaphysical meaning of "knowing the gift of God."
6. Metaphysical law of sowing and reaping.

II. READINGS

1. John 2-4
2. Your Hope of Glory Pages 49-68
3. Metaphysical Bible Dictionary under headings: Faculties; Nicodemus; Samaritan

III. QUESTIONS

1. What do the twelve disciples of Jesus stand for in human nature?
2. What is the metaphysical meaning of the "new wine" brought forth by Jesus at the wedding?
3. The cleansing of the temple by Jesus symbolizes what important metaphysical step for any human being?
4. Where and how can a person be "born anew"?
5. What is "knowing the gift of God" as Jesus mentions to the Samaritan woman?
6. What is the metaphysical reason we can rejoice whether we are sowing or reaping in our fields of life?

Lesson 2

The accounts of Jesus choosing of His twelve disciples begin in John 1:35-51. The first mentioned is Andrew. The second, though not named in the text, is believed to be John. The third (brother of Andrew) is Simon Peter. Fourth and fifth are Philip and Nathanael. The choosing of these and the other disciples is variously described in the texts of the other three Gospels; Matthew 4:18-22, 9:9-13, 10:1-4; Mark 1:14-20; Luke 5:27-32, 6:12-17.

The twelve disciples of Jesus represent the twelve powers, or spiritual faculties of man. When the Gospel narrative speaks of them recognizing and following Jesus, it symbolizes the fact that when we begin to function from spiritual awareness, all of our twelve faculties awaken to fuller expression and recognize active spiritual awareness as their inspiration. Prior to this awakening, our twelve faculties were almost entirely under the control of our personal consciousness and its narrow field of self-interest. Once our faculties realize the Christ within as their true source they accept His leadership and work and serve to increase our spiritual dominion and mastery.

- (1) Peter--faith
- (2) Andrew--strength
- (3) James, son of Zebedee--judgment
- (4) John--love
- (5) Philip--power
- (6) Bartholomew or Nathanael (Nathaniel)--imagination
- (7) Thomas--understanding
- (8) James, son of Alphaeus--order
- (9) Simon--zeal
- (10) Matthew--will
- (11) Thaddaeus--renunciation and elimination
- (12) Judas--generative life

The first "miracle" performed by Jesus is described in John 2:1-11 as the turning of water into wine at a wedding feast in Cana. Metaphysically a marriage represents the union of thinking ability (male) with feeling nature (female). Thinking and feeling are the components of consciousness. Until spiritual awareness is really awakened in a person, the union of thinking and feeling produces a very ordinary kind of existence in which the vital energies (wine) can become depleted, and even run out.

But as spiritual awareness is awakened in us, our active intuition (Mary) becomes aware of our need for renewal of our vital energies, and communicates this to our inner spiritual awareness (Jesus). When this occurs we allow our spiritual nature to take control of our expenditure of vital energy, and we experience a revitalization. This is the "new wine." This is better than the old wine. The old wine stands for limited degrees of energy derived from nature only. The old wine was good, but the new wine is better. This truth is pointed out by the words of the ruler of the feast to the bridegroom: "Every man serves the good wine first; and when men have drunk freely, then the poor wine; but you have kept the GOOD WINE until NOW." (John 2:10)

The lesson here is that when we realize the presence of the Christ within, we quicken our spiritual awareness to make connection with a higher and finer type of vital energy. This new energy is transformed from a passive potential state (waterpot filled with water) into a living, energizing power (new wine). The source of this new energy is not outer physical nature, but inner spiritual substance and life. Spiritual awareness (Jesus) causes this transformation. "This, the FIRST of His signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee. . . and His disciples believed in Him." (John 2:11)

JOHN 2:13-22 Cleansing of the Temple at Passover

This incident is usually interpreted as being an illustration of Jesus' humanity, in the sense that He expresses anger and resorts to violent action. However one might understand this passage on a literal or historical level, on a metaphysical level of meaning Jesus is here demonstrating an important corrective, purifying process.

The temple is a symbol of our inner being. Animals and money changers represent unnecessary emotions (animals) and materialistic anxieties and a wrong sense of values (sellers and money changers). The power of our spiritual awareness (Jesus) uses the power of denial (whip of cords) which results in our letting go (driving out) of these unnecessary and troublesome factors in consciousness. Notice in verse 15 that Jesus MADE a "whip of cords." This indicates some passage of time which negates the idea of Jesus acting in "hot anger", but rather He is giving a demonstration that man can use RENUNCIATORY ENERGY to eliminate that which should be eliminated.

John 2 ends with this very significant statement about Jesus: ". . . He knew all men and needed no one to bear witness of man; FOR HE HIMSELF KNEW WHAT WAS IN MAN." (John 2:25) Jesus represents spiritual awareness, which comes directly from the Christ Mind in man. The Christ Mind knows and understands ALL that is in man. There are no secrets that can be kept from the Christ Mind. Jesus as portrayed in the Gospels (especially John), was in constant connection with that Christ Mind, and thus He had an insight into human nature that appears infallible.

NOTE: Realizing this understanding about Jesus helps explain some of the strangeness of many conversations reported in the Gospels. Jesus does not always respond to the words other persons speak but rather He responds to what He "reads" in their minds and hearts. This makes it appear to literal readers that He is not really answering questions asked of Him. But in the context of who Jesus is in the Gospels and as metaphysical spiritual awareness, He is answering questions that He reads in the souls of these persons, rather than merely what their lips have spoken.

JOHN 3:1-15 Conversation with Nicodemus

On a strictly literal level this conversation begins by presenting us with a mystery: Why did Nicodemus begin by paying all those fabulous compliments to Jesus? He calls Jesus "Rabbi," he calls Him "a teacher come from God" and he refers to "these signs that you do." Why? How? There is nothing in the Bible to account for all this extravagant praise. So far all we have been told about is the water turned into wine and the cleansing of the temple. Something more than these events must have been responsible for Nicodemus' awe of Jesus. Obviously there is a large gap of unrecorded events which the Gospel of John does not contain.

On the metaphysical level this does not matter. The lesson is clear in the conversation with Nicodemus. Here is a specific instance in which Jesus seems to "read" the mind of Nicodemus. Notice that Nicodemus does not ask a question in the text, but Jesus' response seems to be answering a question. Apparently what Nicodemus really wanted to know about was the kingdom, and how to enter it. Jesus' reply then is clear; ". . . unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God. . . unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." (John 3:3, 5). Nicodemus does not comprehend Jesus' meaning and Jesus does not really explain His meaning. However, Jesus does give a very helpful clue to the meaning for those who are able to detect it. It is in these words: "That which is born of the flesh IS FLESH; and that which is BORN OF THE SPIRIT is spirit." (John 3:6).

Jesus is contrasting the physical birth of the body to the true origin of our being. Physical incarnation (born of flesh) is an event within our eternal life. It is not our origin. Our origin can only be Spirit. Jesus' teaching is that until a person is able to make the distinction in his own mind between the event of physical birth and the Truth of his divine origin, he cannot evolve into higher levels of spiritual consciousness. The student will gain additional insight by comparing this teaching with that of the wedding at Cana.

JOHN 4:1-42 Jesus and the Samaritan Woman

When Jesus asks the Samaritan woman for a drink of water, and she hesitates, He says, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." (John 4:10)

Jesus does not specify exactly what "the gift of God" is, but He connects that gift to the fact that one need only "ask" and one would then receive. In Mysteries of John we are told, "The gift of God to man is eternal life." (p. 65) This is correct, of course, but it does not seem to be what Jesus was referring to in His words to the Samaritan woman. "Eternal life" is too broad a definition and does not really fit in with the other words Jesus speaks. A more exact definition of the "gift of God" would be indwelling Source which leads to eternal life (see verse 14 where the water Jesus is speaking of becomes WITHIN a person "a spring (source) of water welling up to eternal life." God as indwelling Source is God's gift to each of us. Jesus refers to God as Source over and over again. He tells this woman that if she KNEW this gift (Source) she would ask and receive "living water." Later He tells us ". . . ask, and you will receive . . ." (John 16:24; see the same idea in Matthew 7:7; 21:22)

Jesus tells the woman that she has had five husbands and the man she is currently with is not her husband. Metaphysically this symbolizes the futility of trying to live happily and permanently in sense consciousness. The five husbands represent the five senses. Marriages to them symbolize being bound and limited entirely within the senses. The "marriages" did not last; indicating that this is an unsatisfactory state in which to continue to exist.

". . . he whom you now have is not your husband" would mean, in effect, that the thinking self (man) is not in correct relationship with the emotions (woman). Therefore, metaphysically speaking, there is no true marriage.

Also in this 4th chapter of John, Jesus reveals the God of the New Testament. The God of the Old Testament is Jehovah, and the mode of worship is in religious ritual and behaviorism ruled by the mechanical law of cause and effect. Jesus completely transcends this in His life and teachings. And His transcendent view of God and worship begins in these words: ". . . the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him. GOD IS SPIRIT, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:23, 24)

Today, it would be helpful for every person who is a Truth student to ask himself or herself, "Am I still in Jehovah worship, or am I worshipping God who is Spirit? Am I lingering in Old Testament religious thinking or am I unfolding into New Testament spiritual understanding? Do I still adhere to an eye for an eye, or do I follow Jesus Christ in continuous forgiveness of sin?" Such questions can be very beneficial for our individual evolution of consciousness.

Additional insight can be gained at this point by comparing the essential metaphysical elements in Jesus' public activities thus far. "New life" is such an element in the wedding at Cana and Nicodemus stories, "new worship" can be clearly seen in the temple cleansing, and both of these are brought together in this visit with the woman at the well. Rather than occurring "at night" as with the story of Nicodemus alone, when one appropriates both elements, new life and new worship, one is in the "full light of day" ("It was about the sixth hour." (or noon) (John 4:6)). This new state of consciousness can then attract greater good to itself and enter fully into greater expansion (the "many more" who believed in verses 39-42).

Another very meaningful insight we can gain from this account is found in Jesus' words to His disciples when they returned from a nearby town where they had gone to buy food. "Do you not say, 'there are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see how the fields are already white for harvest. He who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may REJOICE TOGETHER. For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor; others have labored, and you have entered into their labor." (John 4:35-38)

In these words Jesus once again transcends thinking based on the Old Testament level of "eye for an eye" cause and effect. He compares human life to fields in which both sowing and reaping are going on all the time. He says that the "harvest" is always available for those with eyes to see it. And He says that sowing and reaping are like two sides of the same coin, and both should be causes for rejoicing.

Also, He indicates that there may be times when we will have to change fields before we can reap exactly as we have sown. But this need not cause us to be unhappy, because we will reap in other fields. The laws of God are not mocked. Divine justice does always prevail. Fields change, but God does not change. Because this is true, Jesus (spiritual awareness) says, "Rejoice together. . . gathers fruit for eternal life."

Lesson 3

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. First metaphysical requirement for spiritual healing consciousness.
2. The need for forgiveness of sins.
3. The metaphysical significance of Bethesda and its healing activities.
4. Man's role in working with God.
5. A greater dimension of the law of cause and effect.
6. Teachings from Sermon on the Mount designed to help break the stalemate of constant even-exchanging in life.

II. READINGS

1. John 5; Matthew 5-7
2. Your Hope of Glory Pages 69-99
3. Metaphysical Bible Dictionary--under heading "Bethesda"
4. "Discover the Power Within You" by Eric Butterworth
5. "Sermon on the Mount" by Emmett Fox

III. QUESTIONS

1. What is one of the first keys to spiritual healing, as illustrated in Jesus' first healing work?
2. What does Bethesda, with its five porches, symbolize in the life of man?
3. In what sense does man "create" in the world?
4. Does Jesus nullify the law of cause and effect in his teachings? If not, what does he do?
5. Does Jesus advocate even-exchanging in life as man's wisest course? If not, what does He advocate?

IV. ADDENDA

In addition to the above READINGS suggestions the teacher may want to listen to the Unity cassette album, Metaphysics of the Sermon on the Mount by Ed Rabel.

Lesson 3

JOHN 4:46-54 Jesus' First Healing Work

Here is another incident from the Gospel of John which poses a mystery on the strictly literal-historical level. Why would an official (nobleman, in KJV) come to Jesus to request healing for his dying son? There is nothing in the Gospels to warrant this action. In Galilee, where this account takes place, Jesus had only turned water into wine. An official would surely need more reason than this in order to have such confidence in Jesus. Here again, we must assume that much has gone unrecorded in the Gospels as we now have them.

Metaphysically, this incident points out something significant in regard to spiritual healing. Jesus first uses the significant word, BELIEVE, when He says to the nobleman, "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not BELIEVE." (John 4:48) Later in the same passage we read, "The man BELIEVED the word that Jesus spoke to him. . ." and finally, "and he himself BELIEVED, and all his household." (John 4:50, 53)

Life is a divine idea. Health and healing are processes which express that divine idea. Divine ideas MUST BE BELIEVED IN. We must believe in health. We must believe in healing. We must believe in the divine idea of perfect life. This is essential for a healing consciousness. Jesus represents the healing consciousness, and He emphasizes the power of belief over and over in all His ministry.

In Mark 2:10 Jesus makes a statement which is one of great metaphysical importance: "But that you may know that the SON OF MAN has authority (power, in KJV) ON EARTH to FORGIVE SINS. . . ." This same statement is contained in Matthew 9:6 and Luke 5:24. In a metaphysical context the term "son of man" simply means "a human being." In our strictly human identity we are "son of man." In our spiritual nature or identity we are "Son of God." The metaphysical meaning here is that it is in our human nature that we have power and authority to forgive sins. Forgiveness of sins is one of our main assignments in the evolution of consciousness on Earth. A person who does not forgive sins cannot evolve spiritually. The great 16th Century German mystic, Jacob Bohme, wrote, "The true Spirit of Jesus Christ is CONTINUOUS FORGIVENESS OF SINS."

JOHN 5:1-9 The Healing at Bethzatha (more familiarly known as Bethesda)

This healing incident contains an important metaphysical point in the description of Bethesda, a place of healing bordered by five porticoes, or porches. This represents the activities of what would be termed "natural cures," or healings which are based upon dependence on activities of nature. The Bethesda healings are those brought about by manipulation of factors found in nature.

The five porches at Bethesda stand for the five senses through which man makes contact with nature and its processes. This, in fact, is the whole method of conventional material medica. Healing which depends solely on man's manipulation of nature can be successful, but it can also be long, frustrating, expensive, and uncertain. This is illustrated in the plight of the patient whom Jesus encounters.

Jesus represents spiritual awareness. His entry into Bethesda symbolizes bringing a new and greater dimension of consciousness into current healing practices. Jesus does not avoid Bethesda, nor does He criticize it. He simply adds His consciousness to it. As a result, a man who had not been healed finally realized his healing. This spiritual awareness within ourselves, when recognized and called upon, can facilitate healings in the physical, emotional, and mental levels of our being that have long been frustrated by only appealing for help "out there" - in the five porches of Bethesda, or the sense world.

JOHN 5:17 Man's True Role in God's Creation

". . . Jesus answered them, 'My Father is working still, and I am working.' (John 5:17) In this statement Jesus (spiritual awareness) reveals the true relationship between the Father's, or Spirit's work, and the work performed by man. The works (laws, ideas) of Spirit are always working. They ARE. They live, they work, they are eternal processes.

Man, as such, does not actually work in exactly the same sense. Man does not actually CREATE in the absolute sense of the word. What man does is duplicate the creative process and then produce. Man brings forth into manifestation from the already finished Creation of God. In doing this, man is in every sense a true worker. Jesus verifies this fact in His next words: "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever he does, that the Son does likewise. For the Father loves the Son, and shows him all that he himself is doing; and greater works than these will he show him. . . ." (John 5:19-20)

MATTHEW 5-7 SERMON ON THE MOUNT--Part I

The Sermon on the Mount can best be appreciated if one has some understanding of how it transcends the Old Testament level of religious thinking. Old Testament religion is based on strict adherence to the mechanics of cause and effect ("eye for an eye; tooth for a tooth, etc.") This is the accepted standard for Jehovah worship. Jesus reveals God as Pure Spirit, Father, Absolute Good. A different standard applies in the worship of God as Spirit. The Sermon on the Mount reveals this new standard of religious thinking.

Jesus does not nullify cause and effect, except on its very lowest and crudest levels. The level of the law called Mosaic (from Moses) helps show us right from wrong (Ten Commandments). It helps us to behave properly. It is necessary for basic survival.

The higher and greater dimensions of the law (grace and Truth from Jesus Christ) present good as the only enduring reality. They (grace and Truth) do not just tell us to behave properly in order to survive, but they point the way for our consciousness to begin evolving toward regeneration and perfection.

Since so much excellent material on the Sermon on the Mount is available, we will not go into great detail in this course. We shall touch only upon what may be considered the metaphysical highlights and essentials.

NOTE: For more detailed metaphysical interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount we recommend:

- (1) Your Hope of Glory, Elizabeth Sand Turner (p. 90)
- (2) "Sermon on the Mount", Emmett Fox
- (3) "Discover the Power Within You", Eric Butterworth
- (4) Metaphysics of the Sermon on the Mount, Ed Rabel
(Cassettes only)

The Beatitudes which open the Sermon are remarkable for the fact that they describe mostly negative states, but call them "blessed." Upon careful reading we find that the "blessedness" really does not lie in the state itself, but in the fact that help for all those states is available because of God's spiritual laws. When we open ourselves to God's help, the negativity of any state is transformed into the blessing of overcoming it and receiving recompense for such overcoming.

"Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them." (Matt. 5:17) The law Jesus refers to is the Old Testament religious standard. It is the law revealed by Moses and consists of basic cause and effect (eye for an eye, etc.). Jesus talks of "fulfilling" that law. But how? How does one "fulfill" something such as that? It is by transcending it. To transcend that which was is the right way to fulfill the purpose for that which was. Mechanical cause and effect have served their initial purpose, which was to insure survival and show the difference between good and evil, right and wrong. The teachings of Jesus touch a higher level of law, a level which includes that marvelous thing called "grace."

"Make friends quickly with your accuser. . . ." (Matt. 5:25); ("Agree with thine adversary quickly. . ." KJV). This is pure symbolic metaphysics--not literal instructions on outer behavior. This instruction has entirely to do with inner attitude. A conscious inner change of attitude is the most powerful instrument for good in the problems of human relations.

Nothing is more sure and more effective. Yet, for many persons, it is the most difficult of all things to do. If a person will make the effort to change (make friends with, harmonize, agree) any inner attitude based on antagonism or resentment, a process will be set up in consciousness which will bring forth possibilities of miracles.

"Do not swear at all. . . . Let what you say be simply 'yes' or 'no'. . ." (Matt. 5:34, 37; "yea, yea; nay, nay. . ." KJV). Much time and energy are wasted in something Jesus calls "swearing falsely" or "fore-swearing." (Matt. 5:33) This is a form of making unnecessary promises. We do it all the time, and it is a waste of time. Why bother to make promises? Why not just "deliver the goods?" How can we know what tomorrow may bring? If we lock ourselves into a promise projected into the future, who knows what trouble and inconvenience it may result in? But if we simply use our wisdom and good judgment day by day, and respond to life situations in that spirit (let what you say be simply "yes" or "no") then we are not locked in to any foreswearing or unnecessary promising.

In Matthew 5:38-48 Jesus speaks sentence after sentence in which He urges us to stop indulging in even exchanges in life all the time. He tells us to break the unprofitable inertia of insisting on dealing only in even exchanges. He states this in dozens of different ways, some of them quite shocking to many persons. But the bottom line is this: even exchange is not profit, is not growth, is not evolution. Even exchange is sameness. Giving more, loving more, and blessing more help break the stalemate of even exchange and result in profit, growth, and greater evolution. Jesus alludes to this as "being perfect." Jesus completes this section of the Sermon with these significant words: "You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matt. 5:48)

The model for prayer (Lord's Prayer) is contained in Matt. 6:9-13. It is well to remember that Jesus presents this as a model, a pattern, rather than as a set piece which must literally be repeated verbatim. Of course, it has become JUST THAT! But Jesus did not originally mean for it to become a fetish. We can keep it from becoming a fetish simply by making sure we do not mechanically speak it by rote. If we keep our minds open to the meaning behind its wording, the prayer will prove to be an ever-renewing inspiration. (See especially Emmet Fox' treatment of The Lord's Prayer in his book "Sermon on the Mount.")

Lesson 4

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. Metaphysical insights from the Sermon on the Mount concerning:
 - (a) Keeping the single eye
 - (b) Be not anxious
 - (c) Avoiding unfair judgments
 - (d) Not casting pearls before swine
 - (e) Asking and receiving
 - (f) Erroneous belief in safety in numbers
 - (g) Warning against false prophets

II. READINGS

1. Matthew 5-7
2. (Same as in Lesson 3)

III. QUESTIONS

1. What is meant by keeping the single eye?
2. Why is the habit of anxiety a serious mistake?
3. How should we judge? How should we not judge?
4. What is the metaphysical principle which assures us that sincere seeking will have successful results?
5. What is the metaphysical meaning of "false prophets," and how can they be detected?

Lesson 4

SERMON ON THE MOUNT Part 2

" . . . if your eye is sound . . ." (single, KJV) ". . . you cannot serve God and mammon." (Matt. 6:22, 24) In this teaching our attention is called to one of the most vitally important of metaphysical realizations. The essential meaning here is the necessity that we acknowledge only ONE TRUE SOURCE for all our good. The "sound eye" or "single eye" is the acknowledgment of one source, God.

False sources (things which we erroneously believe to be sources) are called "mammon." Mammon cannot help being mammon. Mammon symbolizes the things of the world. There is nothing intrinsically bad or evil about this. But to worship mammon is wrong. And we worship that which we call the source of our good. Only God is the true source of all good, and only God should be worshipped. This is keeping the "single eye," and the result of keeping it is that ". . . your whole body will be full of light . . ." (Matt. 6:22)

Matt. 6:25-34 contains the great "be not anxious" statements. Anxiety is a negative emotion. There are times when moments of anxiety are quite natural, and they may even serve a useful purpose--just as the emotions of fright, sadness, remorse, etc., may sometimes serve useful purposes. But when any negative emotion becomes a habit or an attitude, then it becomes useless and dangerous. Anxiety is one of these.

The habit of anxiety is a type of rejection of God. And rejection of God is the most serious mistake a human being can make. Jesus urges us not to make that mistake. He urges us to let go of anxiety and remember the Truth instead. The Truth is always here. It is the omnipresence of God. And in His urgings, Jesus includes this wonderful assurance: ". . . your heavenly Father knows that you need them all (these things). But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well." (Matt. 6:32-33)

"Judge not, that you be not judged." (Matt. 7:1) This is the complete sentence spoken by Jesus, not the abbreviated version sometimes quoted, which can be misleading: "Judge not" (period). Judgment is one of our twelve spiritual faculties, and they are all to be used. If Jesus had simply told us not to judge, He would be contradicting much of His own teachings.

When Jesus tells us not to judge in a manner we would not want to be judged, He is also implying that we should judge in a manner we would be willing to be judged. The kind of judgment none of us wants is that of condemnation. Nor do we want anything negative about ourselves called a finality. Otherwise we can judge others fairly, as we are quite willing to be judged fairly.

"Do not give dogs what is holy; and do not throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under foot and turn to attack you." (Matt. 7:6) "Dogs" and "swine" can be metaphysically understood in this statement as symbols of anything in life to which we should not connect our sense of I Am. Our sense of I Am is a pearl of great price. It should also be considered as holy. It is very important that we give our sense of I Am only to that which is worthy. The worthiest of all are divine ideas. If we connect our sense of I Am only to divine ideas, then we are always on safe ground. Divine ideas will never "turn to attack" us. Swine (negative emotions) will always "turn to attack" us.

"Ask, and it will be given you: seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For every one who asks receiveth, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks, it will be opened." (Matt. 7:7)

These words are surely among the most positive in the entire Bible. Nothing quite like them had ever been uttered before. Why could Jesus make such a tremendously positive statement? Simply because He understood the laws of God so thoroughly. He also understood the powers within man's consciousness as no one else had ever understood them.

God's love, wisdom, substance, and power are omnipresent. These aspects of God are what respond to man's efforts in consciousness. These aspects of God are what result in answers to prayer. On a trans-historical level, much of what Jesus taught seems particularly appropriate for later times, as though He knew that evolution for mankind would progress, and the time would come when man would have developed consciousness to the extent where swift and sure answers to prayer would be normal procedure.

That time has now come. We are evolving into the new Age (Aquarius, New Testament, Kingdom of Heaven, Worship of God in Spirit, etc.) The time has arrived for the fulfillment of many of Jesus' words, which were still only "promises" back when He uttered them. We now have a consciousness of sufficient power to assure us of swiftly, if not instantly answered prayer.

In this section of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus makes a statement which many Truth students choose to ignore (or they blame it on incorrect translation!). "If you then, WHO ARE EVIL, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!" (Matt. 7:11)

This is clearly a case of Jesus using the word "evil." He uses it many other times. He also often uses the words "sin" and "wicked." These are not words which Truth students like to hear. They are words which many Truth teachers refuse to ever speak. Yet Jesus did not hesitate to speak them when they were the words which said what He had in mind.

Evil is not the name of a "thing." There is not something in the world called "evil." The same goes for sin. It is not the name of "something." Yet sin and evil exist. Then what exactly are they? On a metaphysical level of thinking, the meanings of "evil" and "sin" become quite clear: Evil and sin are words we use to refer to ANY HUMAN ATTEMPT TO NEGATE ANY DIVINE IDEAS.

There must be a human being involved in order for it to be sin or evil. Without a human being who is doing it, there is no sin or evil. But the moment any human being is doing it, then there is sin or evil. But we should always remember that sin and evil are not the names of real things; they are words which name certain misguided human efforts.

"Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few." (Matt. 7:13, 14) This is another statement made by Jesus which seems to be largely ignored. He is, in effect, telling us that it is unwise to trust large numbers just because they are large. He warns us not to believe that safety lies in large numbers. We need not be ashamed to be a minority, if that minority is on a right path. The mob may choose a wider and easier path, but mobs are usually untrustworthy. "The way is hard" means exactly what it says. Development of the whole person; spirit, soul, and body, is a gift from God. Our part in receiving that gift requires hard work (not "toil"), a dedication for Truth and perseverance in consciousness like no other human endeavor. Advanced metaphysical thinking always sees God as ONE. And metaphysical thinking always understands that one with God is a majority.

"Thus you will know them by their fruits." (Matt. 7:20) Jesus makes this commentary after giving His warning about false prophets. (Matt. 7:15-19) What are false prophets? Most people think they are persons who do not belong to the same religious movement that they do. Anyone who believes in or teaches something religious which I do not understand or agree with, I am tempted to call him a false prophet.

But, as in all cases, Jesus had a meaning that goes much deeper than the surface of religious opinions. There is an important metaphysical meaning here, and metaphysical meanings are the same for all persons, regardless of time, place, or circumstances. A false prophet refers to anything in life which makes promises but does not keep them. False prophets abound in the world. They can be found in religion, in business, in the arts, and in human relationships. They are not necessarily "wicked," but they are false. They do not produce the results they promise.

How can we recognize a false prophet from a true one? By the results in people's lives. "Thus you will know them by their fruits." Examples of false prophets:

- (1) All negative emotions
- (2) One-sided opinions
- (3) Negative thinking
- (4) Belief that anything can be a finality
- (5) Seeking revenge
- (6) The belief that "more" equals "better"

Jesus ends the Sermon on the Mount using the imagery of a house built upon a foundation of rock and one built on a foundation of sand. (Matt. 7:24-27) The house is a symbol of consciousness. A person who builds his consciousness on teachings of metaphysical Truth is building an indestructible edifice, which nothing in the outer world can damage or destroy. A person who builds his consciousness only on outer appearances, popular opinion, negative thoughts and emotions, etc. is building a dangerous edifice for his place of abode.

It is interesting to note that in all teachings Jesus includes the fact that man always has freedom of choice in his use of consciousness. God does not force Truth on us. God reveals it. We have freedom of choice, and life is always bringing to us opportunities for choice.

The final paragraph concerning the Sermon is: "And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were ASTONISHED at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes." (Matt. 7:28, 29) Indeed they must have been astonished. Nothing like this can be found in all recorded literature. Jesus' sentences are like a series of beneficial shock treatments to the mind. Most persons are in a state of semi-sleep where religious thinking is concerned. Most persons live by the motto "seeing is believing." The words of the Sermon on the Mount go against this state of mind inertia. When spoken with the divine authority which Jesus had, these teachings must have had an impact difficult for us today to imagine.

But every word of this Sermon is totally contemporary. In fact, the teachings are more applicable today than when Jesus spoke them. Mankind has evolved a great deal in 2,000 years. Jesus' teachings are on the level of new age thinking (Aquarian, New Testament, God as Spirit, Kingdom of Heaven) and mankind is now in process of evolving into this new level.

Lesson 5

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. Metaphysical meaning of man being "under authority" to do spiritual works.
2. Man's worth being measured according to his willingness to love and to forgive sins.
3. Metaphysical meaning of the "unforgivable" sin or blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.
4. Metaphysical parables on the meaning of the kingdom of heaven.

II. READINGS

1. Matthew 8:12-13; Mark 4; Luke 7
2. Your Hope of Glory Pages 99-112
3. Metaphysical Bible Dictionary under "heaven"

III. QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to be "under authority" in the sense that the centurion speaks of it to Jesus?
2. Under spiritual evaluation, what is it that most determines a person's value and worth to the universe?
3. What constitutes sin or blasphemy against the Holy Spirit?
4. Metaphysically, what is the kingdom of heaven?

Lesson 5

Matthew 8:5-13 HEALING OF A CENTURION'S SERVANT

This healing incident is of remarkable metaphysical interest for a special reason. It is found in the words the centurion speaks to Jesus when Jesus offers to come to his house in order to heal a sick servant. The centurion says ". . . Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only SAY THE WORD, and my servant will be healed. For I AM A MAN UNDER AUTHORITY, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, "Go", and he goes, and to another, "Come", and he comes, and to my slave, "Do this", and he does it.' When Jesus heard him, HE MARVELED, and said to those who followed him, 'Truly I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such faith . . . Go; be it done for you as you have believed.' And the servant was healed at that very moment."

This centurion is an extraordinary example of a person who had an insight into an aspect of metaphysical Truth which was almost unheard of in those days. He understood the LAW OF THE WORD which can be fulfilled by a person of sufficient consciousness. He recognized in Jesus one who had the sufficient consciousness.

The Law of the Word is much better understood today. Much emphasis is given to it in the Unity teachings. The law of the Word is fulfilled in manifestation. In the case of this incident, it would be fulfilled as healing for the servant.

The thing which caused Jesus' admiration of the centurion's faith was the centurion's comparison of Jesus' divine authority with his own authority in the Roman army. He was under authority of the Roman government. And as he accepted his role under authority, so he had those under his authority who would carry out his word of command (soldiers, servants).

So it was with Jesus, and so it is with any of us who make a commitment to Spirit. We place ourselves under divine authority. We are willing to serve God in any way He directs. We are directly under the authority of Spirit when we are totally willing to carry out the work of Spirit. When we do this, truly and willingly, we then discover we have powers and forces which work UNDER OUR AUTHORITY, and they go to work to carry out the fulfillment of our word.

You and I do not HEAL. But we are under authority to work to bring forth healing. Under divine authority we can speak the words of Truth concerning healing. Then the powers and forces that are part of the healing principle and processes (soldiers, servants, angels, etc.) are quickened and activated in the whole wonderful pattern.

Man is not the Source. But he can place himself under the authority of the One Source, God. Then he has dominion and power. Then he can do the works which Jesus did, and eventually even greater works than those recorded in the Gospels.

One of Jesus' most beautiful and meaningful statements to us is: "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matt. 11:28-30)

This statement of Jesus might best be taken fully into our understanding if we regard His references to Himself as referring to that which Jesus stands for in all of us: awakened and active spiritual awareness. When we rely upon our growing spiritual awareness and follow the guidance that comes through such awareness we find that we really do have a source of comfort and reassurance always with us.

There will always be "yokes and burdens" for each of us. But these need not be too unpleasant or heavy. Jesus knew that the character of our troubles is mostly determined by our attitude toward them. When we are functioning in quickened spiritual awareness we discover we have much more freedom to choose our attitudes than we ever realized we had. We find we really are able to give our problems "the light touch," and thus find that solutions are comparatively easy.

LUKE 7:36-50 Love and Forgiveness of Sins

In this incident we read of the actions of a woman designated as sinful. She anoints Jesus' feet with ointment and her tears, and she dries His feet with her hair. When the Pharisee whom Jesus was visiting at that time comments on the woman's sinfulness, Jesus makes this reply: "'Therefore I tell you, her sins, WHICH ARE MANY, are forgiven, for SHE LOVED MUCH. . . . ' And he said to her, 'Your sins are forgiven.' Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves, 'Who is this, who EVEN FORGIVES SINS?' And he said to the woman, 'Your faith has saved you; go in peace.'"

This incident has at least two important metaphysical points. The first is a repetition of something Jesus has already taught: human beings on Earth have the power and authority to forgive sins. In fact, only human beings can forgive sins because only human beings can commit sins! One person can forgive another person's sins.

The second point brought out here is the supremacy of love on the spiritual scale of values. No single factor is of more worth than love. This woman represents errant human nature in general (her sins were many). But the redeeming factor was the love in her heart as expressed toward Jesus. Love is the supreme redeeming factor in all human nature.

If you were to ask the mind of the universe itself, "Of what value and of what worth am I in this universe?" The reply of the Universal Mind would be, "You are valuable in the exact degree you are loving. You are worth as much as you are loving. The more loving you are, the more you are worth to the universe. The less loving you are, the less you are worth to the universe."

Jesus will repeat this idea many times in different ways throughout His ministry.

Matt. 12:31-32 THE "UNFORGIVABLE" SIN

"Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. And whoever says a word against the Son of man will be forgiven; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit it will not be forgiven, neither in this age or in the age to come."

Here we have the words which have become the basis for the frightening doctrine of "unforgivable sin." How many persons worry and torment themselves with the thought of possibly having committed it? This requires metaphysical thinking. Sin and blasphemy against the Holy Spirit means to contradict or reject or believe lies about the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the name of the human concept of God's good, active in a person's life. Anything a person thinks, says, or does which contradicts or rejects the activity of God's good in his life is blaspheming against his own good or the Holy Spirit.

Jesus' use of the word forgiven or "not be forgiven" is what causes much confusion in regard to this teaching. What is really meant is that a person who is rejecting his own highest good (Holy Spirit) is in a state of consciousness in which he cannot receive that good, since God does not force blessings upon anyone. The person himself has made himself someone who cannot be GIVEN the good, simply because he is rejecting (blaspheming, sinning against) the coming of his good (Holy Spirit).

But the "unforgiven" state lasts only as long as the sin or blasphemy lasts. When the attitude of mind is changed (repentance) the sin ceases, and the "unforgiven" state changes. When the blasphemy (rejection) stops, then the "unforgiveness" stops. Then all is forgiven and a new phase of development begins in that person. Later Paul gives the solution in a nutshell: ". . . be transformed by the renewal of your mind. . . ." (Romans 12:2)

Mark 4:26-29

Matt. 13:31-33; 13:44-46

Luke 17:20

PARABLES ON THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

Jesus talks a great deal about the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God. He always does so in the form of parables. Jesus does not make too much distinction between the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God, but when the symbolism of the parables is understood, it is seen that there is a distinction. The kingdom of God is said to be "within you." The kingdom of heaven is said to be "at hand." The kingdom of God is an absolute. The kingdom of heaven is relative.

The kingdom of God is omnipresence. It is absolute, changeless. It is within, but it is also everywhere. It is God transcendent.

The kingdom of heaven is relative. It is not an absolute, but rather an evolving something. When the parables of Jesus are studied carefully, an unmistakable pattern emerges which reveals the definition of the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven refers to the process of a growing, unfolding, expansion of consciousness of God and Truth WITHIN AN INDIVIDUAL.

Put this definition to the test by using this definition when reading a kingdom of heaven parable. You will see that the definition holds up. The mustard seed, the treasure hidden in a field, the pearl of great price, the little leaven in the dough. All these symbolize a person's growing and expanding consciousness of God and Truth; the kingdom of heaven.

NOTE: The instructor should discuss as many of these parables in class as time permits, illustrating the idea of expansion and growth in consciousness.

Lesson 6

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. Metaphysical significance of "My name is Legion; for we are many."
2. Metaphysically correct way to handle rejection.
3. Metaphysical points contained in the feeding of the 5,000.
4. Metaphysical significance of Jesus walking upon the water.
5. Symbolism of "bread from heaven."

II. READINGS

1. Matthew 10, 14; Mark 5-6; Luke 9; John 6
2. Your Hope of Glory Pages 112-131

III. QUESTIONS

1. What is the metaphysical logic of the statement, "My name is Legion; for we are many."?
2. What is meant by "shaking off the dust of your feet" after experiencing a rejection?
3. Give at least two important metaphysical points illustrated in the symbolism involved in the feeding of the 5,000.
4. Metaphysically, how can we duplicate Jesus' walking upon the water?
5. What is the difference between eating "manna in the wilderness" and "the bread of life from heaven"?

Lesson 6

Mark 5:1-20 HEALING OF A DEMON-POSSESSED MAN

The two outstanding points of this incident are (1) the reply of the man when Jesus asks, "What is your name?" (2) The entry of the dispossessed demons into the herd of swine who drown themselves in the sea.

The man gives his name as, "My name is Legion; for we are many." Demon possession is another form of insanity, but there is only ONE form of sanity. The name of insanity is "Legion" for it is "many." The name of error is "Legion" for there are so many. The name of negativity is "Legion" for there is so much. But what is the name of Truth? What is the name of Reality? It is not "Legion" for there are not many, but only ONE!

The dispossessed demons entering into the swine is a very, very esoteric bit of symbolism. (It should not be thought about literally!) It has to do with a little-understood process in which negativity from human consciousness can actually be transformed into lower levels of life forms, until it becomes dissolved back into elemental substance. All forms of energy can be reduced back into elemental substance. When something is "drowned" or "burnt to ashes" in Bible symbolism, it refers to that particular energy-form being reduced back to elemental substance.

Mark 5:25-34 A WOMAN HEALED AFTER TOUCHING JESUS' GARMENTS

In this incident Jesus would symbolize a healing consciousness. The woman in need of healing represents any person who has any degree of belief in healing and faith in the power of God to heal. Such a person does not have to grasp an understanding of the whole healing process in order to be helped. Such a person need only make a sincere effort to grasp whatever understanding of the healing process he or she is able to grasp. Even if they can "ONLY TOUCH ITS GARMENTS" the contact has been made, and the healing process will be quickened.

"As you enter the house, salute it. And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. And if any one will NOT RECEIVE YOU, or listen to your words, SHAKE OFF THE DUST FROM YOUR FEET as you leave that house or town." (Matt. 10:12-14)

Metaphysically, this has to do with human relations and the fact of rejection in human relationships. All persons experience rejection. It is a normal fact of life. (Jesus was often rejected. Even God is often rejected!) It does no good to resent rejection or brood over it or try to get revenge for it. Jesus reports the only spiritually-correct way to handle the shock of being rejected. He says, in effect, that if you are rejected, LEAVE! But as you leave, be sure to shake the dust off your feet. Feet represent the faculty of understanding. This use of the word "dust" is as a symbol of clinging negativity, or negative emotions that are a reaction to being rejected. The meaning here is that one must shake all clinging negative emotions from one's power of understanding before going forward after being rejected.

Clean feet are welcome in most places. Dirty feet are not. An understanding that is free from the filth of negative emotions is usually a welcome guest in most places. Go forward with clean understanding. In God's world, one door does not close on us without another one opening.

"Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's foes will be those of HIS OWN household. He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and he who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it." (Matt. 10:34-39)

This passage constitutes what many persons consider the most puzzling and disturbing of Jesus' discourses. It cries out for metaphysical interpretation, for only spiritual understanding can detect its real meaning. The big clue to its meaning is the way Jesus uses the term "his own." Jesus uses this term to denote what we now call personal consciousness, or a self-centered attitude. "His own household" would refer to a totally self-centered state of consciousness. This is a dangerous state for a person to remain in. In fact, it can become a person's own worst enemy ("a man's foes will be those of HIS OWN HOUSEHOLD").

Any one who loves the components of personal consciousness ("he who loves--more than me") more than spiritual awareness (Jesus) is not yet ready (worthy) of spiritual awareness. There really is nothing harsh or shocking about this teaching. It is simply metaphysical logic.

The "sword" brought by Jesus symbolizes the two-edged action of the word of Truth when spoken in spiritual awareness. The peace that Jesus does not bring is the mistaken notion of peace held by much of the world in general; the "peace" of inertia and resistance to change or growth. The peace given by spiritual awareness (Jesus) is entirely different. It is inner peace, and it is not diminished by change or challenges. It grows with experience and usage and sharing.

Mark 6:30-44

Luke 9:10-17

Matt. 14:13-21

John 6:1-13

Feeding of 5,000 Persons

The feeding of more than 5,000 persons with an initial supply of five loaves of bread and two fish is perhaps the most spectacular of all Jesus' public demonstrations of the power of spiritual consciousness (miracle). Bread symbolizes spiritual substance. Fish symbolize ideas. Five loaves of bread symbolize the spiritual origin, character, and purpose of the five senses. Two fish represent the two ideas of polarity--yes and no. The hands of Jesus symbolize the working power of spiritual consciousness. When, in spiritual awareness, we recognize the spiritual origin, character, and purpose of our five senses, and when we have spiritual awareness of how to handle the ideas of "yes" and "no" in our lives, we then have power to produce, reproduce, and increase the forms brought from substance into our manifest environment. Through bringing forth such increases of forms we are able to meet the needs and satisfy the hungers of all the factors in our life (symbolized by the 5,000 hungry ones).

Jesus lifts up His eyes (recognizes the one Source), gives thanks, and breaks the bread and fish into proper pieces. This represents the use of good judgment in apportioning the things we are to bring forth and share in our lives.

NOTE: It is believed by many students of metaphysical Christianity that Jesus had a deep knowledge of the laws of atomic and sub-atomic structure of molecules. He understood the true nature of the atom, and could trace its development from spiritual substance. With this understanding, His mind would logically express the powers of consciousness to control arrangements of atoms, molecules, and thus, forms of matter.

Matt. 14:22-33 JESUS WALKS UPON THE WATER AND PETER'S ATTEMPT TO DO LIKEWISE

This incident is so interesting as a story that one must remind one's self that it has a metaphysical meaning. The boat (individual consciousness) is on the sea (ordinary life) and the sea becomes troubled with waves (turbulent ups and downs) and contrary wind (events not going as expected). Upon this sea Jesus is seen walking. This symbolizes the fact that spiritual awareness (Jesus) enables a person to keep on top of the ups and down of life and unexpected turns of events in life. Jesus was touching the sea with His feet (understanding) but He was not immersed in the sea (identified with all the negative factors in life.)

Peter represents faith. Peter alone wants to step out and also walk upon the water. Jesus gives him permission; and Peter does step out upon the sea and successfully walks on it for a few steps. But then we are told "when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink. . . ." This can happen to us when we attempt to overcome our troubles in life or make progress in life by just faith alone. Faith alone can bring us victory and success for a while, but not for very long. Unexpected events can come in such ways that may alarm us and cause us to exchange our faith and courage for apprehension and fear. When this happens we are in danger of sinking down into the negative factors in life. We are in danger of "drowning" in a sea of troubles.

But Peter does not drown. He cries out to Jesus, "Lord, save me." Of course he is saved. Spiritual awareness is always our sure salvation. And remember that Peter DID walk on the water. . . that should tell us all something about ourselves!

In John 6 we have the first of the many magnificent monologues spoken by Jesus in this Gospel. These monologues are so deep, so powerful, and so esoteric that they cannot be comprehended by conventional thinking. We cannot simply read them, memorize and quote them, or even really think of them in terms of literal statements from a literal human intellect. They are discourses with food for thought of a quality which can generate the very special type of energy needed for further evolution in consciousness at this particular time in our evolutionary history.

In this first monologue (John 6:25-59) Jesus dwells on the theme of His being the "bread from heaven" which we are to eat if we would enter the process of regeneration. When reading these paragraphs it is important to keep in mind what Jesus symbolizes--spiritual awareness of the Truth of God regarding man and man's evolution. This is vital. The acceptance of Truth and spiritual awareness (eating of it as bread come down from heaven) becomes the very substance of our existence.

To drink of the blood of Jesus means to live the life of spiritual awareness by following the teachings of Jesus in our day-to-day existence.

"I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died." (John 6:48, 49) This illustrates the need for the human family to connect its sense of I Am to a new energy source. The old source (manna in the wilderness) symbolizes NATURE ONLY. This was once good enough for sheer survival, but it is temporary and no longer suffices for our next evolutionary step. We need the energy that comes from the body and blood of Christ, which symbolizes a higher energy source than nature and physical matter. That higher source is spiritual awareness in consciousness. The higher level is called "heaven." The result of this new energy appropriation is not just survival, but is regeneration. Regeneration is the next step in humanity's evolution, and the teachings of Jesus all pertain to attaining this next step through CONSCIOUSNESS--not through ritual, through nature, or through "good behavior."

Lesson 7

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. Metaphysical meaning of Jesus' teaching of what "defiles" a person.
2. Jesus illustrates the difference between human opinions and spiritual Truth.
3. Metaphysical significance of the transfiguration incident.
4. Metaphysical symbolism in the manner in which Jesus pays the temple tax.
5. Jesus teaches there are no "finalities" for evolving mankind.

II. READINGS

1. Matthew 15-18; Mark 7-9; Luke 9
2. Your Hope of Glory Pages 131-150

III. QUESTIONS

1. What did Jesus say is the only thing that defiles a person?
2. What is the Truth of each person's real identity? Is this also true of his personality? Explain.
3. What is the metaphysical reason that Jesus is found standing alone at the end of the transfiguration scene?
4. How did the father of the sick boy help bring forth his healing?
5. What is one of the metaphysical meanings of "Leave the dead to bury their own dead"?

Lesson 7

"And he called the people to him again, and said to them, 'Hear me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside a man which by going into him can defile him; but the things which come out of a man are what defile him. . . . What comes out of a man is what defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, fornication, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a man.'" (Mark 7:14-16, 20-23)

Jesus uses the word "defile" in a very special way. Metaphysically it means to contaminate the consciousness with negativity. In other words, SIN. Negative thoughts come to us and negative emotions arise in us, but they are not sins until we express them. This is a very subtle teaching, but a very important one.

NOTE: Harmful things which enter can hurt the body (nervous system, digestive tract, blood stream, etc.) but this type of harm, while definitely to be avoided, is not the same as the very dangerous "defilement" spoken of by Jesus. Jesus gives very much the same teaching in His words: "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matt. 10:28) This type of "hell" is, of course, useless, unnecessary suffering of any sort. Anything which can cause this is a source of "defilement" for us and should be avoided at all costs. The most common form of self-defilement is to connect one's sense of I Am with any negative emotion.

Matt. 15:21-28 HEALING OF A CANAANITE WOMAN'S DAUGHTER

The remarkable thing about this incident is found in Jesus' strange words to the woman seeking healing for her daughter, and her amazing reply. Jesus says to her, "It is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." Then her reply, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table."

Jesus' ministry was primarily for the Jews. Canaanites were social and religious outcasts in the eyes of the Jews. It is as though Jesus had read into this woman's soul and recognized something in her which only needed to be awakened and quickened in order to perfect her own healing powers of consciousness. Therefore he deliberately said something to her which He knew would awaken that needed factor. So He challenges her by comparing Canaanites to dogs. Instead of becoming angry or indignant, she responds with humility based upon her love and concern for her daughter. This does it! This is the awakening of the needful factor in her own consciousness. Jesus knew it had been done, and He says to her, "'O woman, great is your faith! Be it done FOR YOU as YOU DESIRE.'" And her daughter was healed instantly."

Matt. 16:13-20 WHO SAY YE THAT I AM?

Jesus' first question to His disciples in this passage is: "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" "Son of man" simply means "human being or human nature." So the question is really asking what human beings say about other human beings. In other words, what are the human opinions of human beings about each other?

"And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.'" (Matt. 16:14) This answer is symbolic. It stands for the wide gamut of opinions that human beings in general hold about other human beings. In the realm of human judgments and human opinions ANYTHING GOES. Jesus does not comment on this; He just lets it go.

But His next question is not asking for generalities of human opinions. His next question demands a Truth answer. "But who do you say that I am?" And for a question of this nature only one correct answer will do, and Simon Peter (faith) gives that answer: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Matt. 16:24-26 THE WORTH OF MAN'S SOUL

"Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life (soul, KJV)? Or what shall a man give in return for his life (soul, KJV)?"

NOTE: In ancient Semitic languages and biblical Greek there is no distinction between the words "life" and "soul." However, "soul" has an important metaphysical meaning, and it is in this context that the teaching can be most helpful.

In this statement to His disciples, Jesus clearly reveals the value to be placed on the state of our soul. He indicates that nothing in all the world is worth more than the state of our soul. There is nothing of equal value to it as far as man is concerned. The soul is the sum total of man's inner awareness; it is his most precious possession. Jesus (spiritual awareness) knows this and gives man's soul top priority in the scale of value of existing things.

Luke 9:28-36 THE TRANSFIGURATION

The luminosity of the person of Jesus is an interesting phenomenon, but it is not the real metaphysical point of this incident. The main point is the appearance of Moses and Elijah conversing with Jesus as they "spoke of his departure, WHICH HE WAS TO ACCOMPLISH at Jerusalem." As a cloud descends and obscures the scene, a voice is heard from the cloud saying, "This is my Son, my Chosen: listen to him!" And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone."

Moses stands for the letter of the law of cause and effect.

Elijah stands for demonstration of the power of the law of cause and effect.

Jesus stands for spiritual awareness in man which has understanding of greater dimensions of the law than just mechanical cause and effect.

Jesus (conscious awareness of higher laws) includes knowledge of the letter and know-how in demonstrating, but He transcends these levels. "Listen to him" says the voice from heaven. In other words, man has evolved to the place where he no longer needs to worship cause and effect (Moses) nor does he have to worry about how much he can prove that law (Elijah). He is now qualified to follow the guidance of his own awakened spiritual awareness in all his ways (Jesus Christ).

Mark 9:14-29 HELP MY UNBELIEF

Jesus constantly emphasizes the necessity for man to believe in the power of divine ideas. Divine ideas require man's belief in them in order for them to express their energies and powers in man's existence. Healing (life, health) is a divine idea.

Jesus says to the father of this boy, "All things are possible to him who believes."

NOTE: Jesus only says that belief creates a possibility. He does not say that mere belief will make something happen. It is important for Truth students to understand this. Otherwise one might think that Jesus is saying that you only have to believe something to make it happen. Not so. Belief is only the first step in a demonstration. It merely establishes the possibility.

The father of the boy is an example of honesty personified. He states his willingness to believe in order to create the possibility for his son's healing. Then he reveals his honesty and humility with, "help my unbelief." Obviously the help came, for the boy was healed.

Matt. 17:24-27 JESUS PAYS THE TEMPLE TAX

Jesus says to Peter, ". . . go to the sea and cast a hook, and take the first fish that comes up; and when you open its mouth you will find a shekel; take that and give it to them for me and for yourself."

Jesus represents spiritual awareness. Peter represents faith. The tax collectors stand for the demands made upon us by man-made factors in life in the world. These may be just or unjust, but they come to all. Jesus here presents a highly symbolic formula for correctly meeting and fulfilling all the many demands made upon us by earthly life.

The sea here symbolizes the realm of ideas (fish), the realm of potential and possibilities (waters of the sea). The hook symbolizes an attitude of expectancy and willingness to receive. The right idea will come to us if our faith is willing to receive the idea. When the idea comes through our faith, it will contain the right guidance and right answer for us. It will result in the proper supply for the particular need we are concerned about. The tax is paid.

"Then Peter came up and said to him, 'Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven.'" (Matt. 18:21-22)

Once again, Jesus presents us with a teaching that had not been known to exist prior to His stating it. Jesus consistently presents love and forgiveness as the highest of all human efforts and the mightiest of spiritually motivated acts. Nothing can surpass love and forgiveness in human expression. Over and over Jesus repeats this theme, but over and over human beings ignore or forget it.

"Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has no where to lay his head." (Luke 9:58) Here Jesus is reminding us that human beings (Son of man) are evolving souls. As such, we have no fixed, final "resting place" in the universe. Every place we are in can be our right place, but none can be our permanent place. We are learning, growing, expanding units of consciousness. We are unfolding, evolving souls.

"Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:60) Only those who believe in the reality of death are concerned with proper burial of "the dead." Those who are in Truth do not believe in the reality of death; that is, as any sort of finality. Truth reveals that there are no "dead" that are to be buried. Only a corpse is buried; and a corpse is simply the remains of abandoned physical atoms and molecules, which is not the person.

Lesson 8

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. Jesus' strange sounding statements concerning Himself, His origin, and His place in the world.
2. Jesus' demonstration that analysis of sin is not necessary in bringing forth healing.
3. Metaphysical meaning of a more abundant life.
4. Metaphysical reason for "rejoice that your names are written in heaven."
5. The need for a new type of religious thinking.
6. Metaphysical meaning of the good Samaritan.

II. READINGS

1. Luke 10; John 8-10
2. Your Hope of Glory Pages 154-167

III. QUESTIONS

1. Which of these two points did Jesus illustrate in the incident of the adulterous woman:
 - (a) She was not guilty
 - (b) No person has a right to condemn another

Comment on your choice.

2. What is the metaphysical reason Jesus did not really answer the question as to whether the man born blind had sinned or his parents had sinned?
3. What does spiritual awareness (Jesus) save us from, and what does knowing the Truth free us from?
4. What is the metaphysical meaning of "Rejoice that your names are written in heaven?"
5. What kind of religious thinking is most appropriate for the new age?
6. What is the one great metaphysical point of the parable of the good Samaritan?

Lesson 8

John 8:1-11 NEITHER DO I CONDEMN YOU

In this incident Jesus speaks one of the most potent utterances of spiritual awareness in all literature: "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her." Jesus was adamant about the wrongness and futility of condemnation of human beings by other human beings.

In this particular incident, it was not a matter of the woman merely being accused of adultery, she was caught in the very act. This gives a certain significance to the fact that nowhere does it say that the woman is pardoned or declared innocent. Not at all. It was just that she is not condemned. Notice Jesus' parting words to her: ". . . go, and do not SIN AGAIN."

John 8:12 "I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." This is one of Jesus' most condensed statements that help us understand His metaphysical meaning for our world. We can understand that Jesus was fulfilling a particular role in the evolutionary pathway of humanity on Earth. He symbolizes spiritual awareness awakened in man. Here the word "light" is used to identify this meaning. Light has two important metaphysical meanings: living intelligence and spiritual awareness. Jesus utilizes both these meanings in this statement of self-identification:

- (1) "light of life"--living intelligence
- (2) "light of the world"--spiritual awareness in earthly man

John 8:23, 24 "He said to them, 'You are from below, I am from above, you are of this world, I am not of this world.'" Here is a further statement concerning the source of the I Am identity. The "I Am" is "from above," the perfect pattern for humanity in God-mind, which is perceived in higher levels of consciousness. Only metaphysical understanding can make sense of this. The relationship of the I Am consciousness to human consciousness is a vertical one. ". . . and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all MEN to myself." (John 12:32)

John 8:31-32 "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." Jesus' ministry has had two major roles in the world. The first was for the people of His time and place, and it was a ministry of works. The second was for posterity, for people of the future, and it was the ministry of His words. The words of Jesus all have metaphysical meaning for PEOPLE OF TODAY. It is only in recent times that the metaphysical meaning of Jesus' WORDS have taken hold in people's understanding. The words of Jesus teach Truth, and Truth is the only thing that will "save" people; that is, set people free from repetition of useless, unnecessary suffering (hell).

John 8:56-59 "'Your father Abraham rejoiced that he was to see my day; he saw it, and was glad.' The Jews then said to him, 'You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?' Jesus said to them, 'Truly, Truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.'" Here again Jesus makes a reference about Himself which only metaphysical understanding can comprehend. The reference is again to the eternal nature and source of the "I Am", the Christ identity of all persons as it exists outside time in God-mind.

John 9:1-8 HEALING OF A MAN BORN BLIND

The metaphysical significance of this incident begins with the question asked by the disciples: "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" This is the question of human judgment. Jesus' reply is the reply of spiritual understanding.

"Sin" is a strange, but important word. Sin does not name a "thing." Sin refers to any human effort to negate any divine ideas. Sin refers to the basic cause of all human unnecessary suffering. It is a "generic" word.

The disciples represent the human tendency to use sin as a justification for human misfortune. In other words, they believed that if the sin could be explained to them it would justify the fact of the man's blindness. (NOTE: Is it not interesting that they included his parents' sins as a reason, as well as his own sins as a reason for his being born blind!!)

Jesus does not think on the same level as the question. Jesus never thinks on the level of any negative question. He thinks on the level of spiritual Truth, and His replies are always coming from that level. He indicates that the "sinful" reason for the man's affliction is not their business. Their business is how to help the afflicted one. Since Jesus has a transcendent healing consciousness, then that was the channel of help for the man, and the blindness was healed.

John 10:10 ". . .I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." In this statement Jesus is making reference to something we are now beginning to comprehend - the more abundant life which results from keeping the words of Jesus by making the effort to live them in daily existence. We are discovering that this enables us to draw upon a higher and finer kind of vital energy. Life "increases" in a subtle but unmistakable way. Sincere religious thinking generates a unique kind of energy in consciousness. The highest type of religious thinking is exemplified by Jesus Christ. His religion is found within His words, and today we are just beginning to discern the real meaning of His words, and we are making an effort to conduct our lives upon those meanings. This is New Testament religion, this is the Aquarian Age level of evolution. This is also called, by Jesus Himself, "the kingdom of heaven."

John 10:17-18 "For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again; this charge I have received from my Father." This statement should once and for all cause us to toss aside any further thought about Jesus (spiritual awareness) being a "victim" of anyone or anything. Jesus is here describing the power over manifestation which occurs in the regeneration--even to the physicality of the body. It is difficult for one not on that level

of consciousness to even conceive of such power of control. But physicality is simply an arrangement of molecules and a certain atomic vibratory rate. Modern science is proving that man's mind can directly control such factors. Jesus was simply far ahead of the historical time He had incarnated into.

Luke 10:17-20 THE RETURN OF THE SEVENTY AND JESUS' REPLY TO THEM

"The seventy returned with joy, saying, 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!' And he said to them. . . . 'Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but REJOICE THAT YOUR NAMES ARE WRITTEN IN HEAVEN.'"

Jesus is here saying something of great significance to those who have dedicated themselves to a life of spiritual Truth. He says that those who make a serious commitment to Spirit become known as INDIVIDUALS to the "heavenly hosts." Up to a certain level of consciousness, most persons are part of group consciousness (race consciousness.) They have individuality, but they do not really function entirely as individuals, so are not "known" (in a sense) as individuals on the higher levels of being.

This changes when one reaches a certain level of superconscious awareness. We are then "known" as individuals, and our worth to the universal plan of God (evolution of man) is recognized as our INDIVIDUAL worth (your name is written in heaven--rejoice!).

Luke 10:21-24 JESUS' REFERENCE TO NEW AGE RELIGIOUS THINKING AND NEW SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING

"In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes; yea, Father, for such was thy gracious will' Then turning to the disciples he said privately, 'Blessed are the eyes which see what you see! For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.'"

Jesus is here speaking about the new understanding of spiritual Truth which was just then dawning into the consciousness of mankind. Jesus' teachings were concerned with this new level of thinking. But there were many on the old level who were entrenched "know-it-all" (the wise and understanding on that old level). These persons are not teachable. Metaphysical truths do not take hold in their minds. These persons would not benefit from Jesus' teachings.

The "babes" symbolize those who are willing to think in a new way. These are the teachable persons. These would be able to receive the revelations shared by Jesus. Foremost among these were the disciples. Two thousand years have passed since Jesus spoke these things, and today we have verification of so much of what Jesus said. Only today are there emerging more and more persons who are able to discern the true (metaphysical) import of Jesus' words. The time really has come for New Thought, and soon this will manifest as the New Age (kingdom of heaven on Earth).

Luke 10:25-37 PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

One of the outstanding lessons in this parable is the absolute need for COMPASSION as an ingredient of consciousness if one is to evolve into the new age and the eventual regeneration. Love, forgiveness, and compassion were all presented on an equal basis by Jesus over and over again. Yet, even today, with our much clearer perception of the validity of Jesus' teachings, we seem to forget this most essential of ingredients. Compassion is one of the keys to the kingdom of heaven, and without it, one will not enter.

Lesson 9

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. Metaphysical meaning of Jesus' visit with Martha and Mary.
2. Bad results of expressing one's negative states instead of correctly denying them.
3. Warning against addiction to acquisitiveness.
4. The wisdom of maintaining spiritual humility.
5. Metaphysical meaning of the parable of the prodigal son.
6. Metaphysical meaning of the parable of the unrighteous steward.

II. READINGS

1. Luke 11-15
2. Your Hope of Glory Pages 167-181
3. Metaphysical Bible Dictionary under headings Martha; Mary; son, prodigal

III. QUESTIONS

1. What is one of the main metaphysical lessons in the story of Jesus' visit with Martha and Mary?
2. What is the difference between correctly denying (letting go) of negativity and actively expressing it (sending it out from one's self)? What are the results of each?
3. What is the difference between attaining prosperity and becoming addicted to acquisitiveness?
4. Metaphysically, why is a lack of true humility a dangerous state for a person?
5. Give an important metaphysical point to be found in the parable of the prodigal son.
6. What was the "wise" thing the "unwise" steward did after he was found out? Why does this make metaphysical sense?

Lesson 9

Luke 10:38-42 JESUS, MARTHA, AND MARY

Although this appears as just a minor domestic incident in the life of Jesus, it actually contains an important metaphysical lesson. Jesus stands for spiritual understanding of Truth. Mary and Martha stand for two aspects of our intuitive and feeling nature. Martha stands for that aspect of our feeling nature filled with concern for the doing of things properly in outer life. Mary stands for that aspect of our feeling nature more concerned with receptivity and reflection on the truths governing all of life, more especially our inner life.

Mary and Martha are good friends of Jesus, signifying that what each stands for metaphysically is good and right for our over-all development. But Martha's complaint to Jesus about Mary not helping her indicates that the Martha factor can be prone toward negativeness. Is this not true of that part of our feeling nature which gets all concerned over what is going on "out there," or what is not going on "out there"?

Jesus says, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about MANY THINGS; ONE THING is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her." These words show that Jesus valued the concern for our inner life as much better than anxiety about the outer details. He calls the treasures of our inner life "the good portion", and he says that these inner realizations are a permanent blessing to our consciousness (shall not be taken away from her).

What is this "one thing is needful" which Jesus mentions? He does not specify, but it would appear to be BALANCE--balance between outer business and inner realizations. Both are good, but balance and control are necessary to keep them good. Otherwise outer concern can turn into negative anxiety. This is a lesson we seem to have to learn over and over again.

Luke 11:24-26 "When the unclean spirit has gone out of a man, he passes through waterless places seeking rest; and finding none he says, 'I will return TO MY HOUSE' from which I came.' And when he comes he finds it swept and put in order. Then he goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first."

This is a very symbolic analysis by Jesus on the subject of negative states or negative emotions in consciousness. A person can do one of two things in regard to a negative emotion that has entered him. He can correctly deny (separate, reject, renounce) it by refusing to connect his sense of I Am to it. Or he can connect his sense of I Am to it. If he does this, he is sure to eventually express it (it "goes out from him" as himself). If this occurs, Jesus says that the negativity will not "rest", but will return to its "house" (the sense of I Am it is connected with). It has also increased its energy of negativity, and thus causes the person who expressed it to experience greater distress than before. Another important corollary lesson

here is that denial is just half of the necessary work. Once the consciousness is "swept and put in order", it must be refurnished with strong, affirmative statements of Truth. Then there is "no room" for negativity to reestablish itself.

Luke 12:15 ". . . Take heed, and beware of all covetousness; for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." Jesus continues with the parable of the man who devotes his whole life to the accumulating of possessions. Then Jesus concludes: "But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." (Luke 12:20-21)

One of the greatest obstacles to spiritual unfoldment is addiction to material acquisitiveness, especially when done for its own sake, or for the purpose of passing things on to one's offspring. To become possessed by one's possessions is a thing which can happen to anyone who is not spiritually awake. The only possession REALLY WORTH DOING EVERYTHING to acquire is a greater consciousness of God. All else can become clutter. When a person "dies" that is all he can take with him. What a person leaves behind materially never constitutes true prosperity for his heirs. You cannot give prosperity through a will or a bequest. You can only give "things." What is not gained by a person by means of the laws of consciousness cannot be that person's true prosperity, but will become clutter, or sometimes even a curse.

Luke 13:1-9 JESUS COMMENTS ON TWO CURRENT TRAGEDIES

For many readers this commentary is puzzling and disturbing. Jesus refers to the question that is in people's minds as to why certain accidents and tragedies involve certain persons rather than others. Jesus indicates that in cases of physical misfortune in this world, the question really is not WHY some persons and not others, but rather why ANY persons. Accidents and catastrophes are products of many negative factors, most of which are beyond what we would consider rational explanation. Nothing is really gained by analyzing fate's choosing of victims. Jesus says that what is really required is "repentance." Repentance is a strange word which is almost always misunderstood by modern man. It is defined as "remorse, regret, a sense of guilt." This is not the meaning Jesus had in mind. His use of the word repentance has to do with a complete change in one's thinking. It is only by making an effort to raise our level of thinking that we experience a rise in our level of being. We can rise in consciousness to a level above that in which accidents, tragedies, and injustices are possibilities for all who remain on that level. ". . . Unless you REPENT (change your thinking) you will all likewise perish." (Luke 13:5)

NOTE: The student will benefit here by looking up the word "metanoia" in any large unabridged dictionary. "Metanoia" is the actual Greek word that is translated "repent" or "repentance" in the New Testament.

Luke 14:7-11 PARABLE ON THE VALUE OF TRUE HUMILITY

Only a person who has gained spiritual awareness can appreciate the value of true humility. Humility is a factor little understood for the most part. Jesus realized its value in spiritual unfoldment and He strongly emphasizes its value here. What is true humility, in the metaphysical sense? Basically it consists of willing sacrifice of vanity in a manner that is helpful to others. There are many ways this can be done, and Jesus' parable illustrates one of those many ways.

A person who has spiritual awareness does not find it at all painful to sacrifice vanity or selfishness to help others feel better. He knows there is no loss in doing so, only gain. But not a gain of egotism, rather a gain of greater consciousness. This particular teaching probably cannot be understood theoretically--it must be tested by putting into actual practice. But one who has proved its validity needs no further convincing. Remember--vanity is a NEGATIVE EMOTION. ALL negative emotions inhibit spiritual growth.

Luke 15:11-32 THE PRODIGAL SON

This parable tells us that we are all free to claim our divine inheritance from our Father and use it any way that we choose. Our divine inheritance consists of all the divine ideas in the Mind of God that pertain to man. Basically, they are our twelve spiritual faculties, which originate as divine ideas.

One son chooses to squander his inheritance in a "far country." This symbolizes any areas in life which are lacking any sort of spiritual interests or spiritual commitment. This is the realm of gross materiality and sensuality. Jesus often refers to this as simply "this world." But this world leads to depletion, futility, and exhaustion. The son experienced a type of "famine," which symbolizes any person who is in the predicament of not being able to receive any real soul nourishment from things in his outer world. Most persons sooner or later come to this type of dead end in their existence if they have no spiritual interests or spiritual commitment.

The return of the son to the father's house is a masterpiece of metaphysical symbolism. The father holds no grudges, asks no questions, demands no apology, makes no accusations. He simply joyfully welcomes him home. This is pure Truth. God is our Father, and we are often His wayward child. But when we choose to return to Him in consciousness we receive only a total, loving welcome.

The resentful, older brother is an interesting symbol. He stands for hidden guilt and resentment. There is a bit of this in everybody, and it needs to be understood as well as overcome. The father does not scold or blame the resentful brother, he only tells him that he has the same rights as the prodigal son and that they are still all one family. So it is that God's love responds to every part of our human nature.

Luke 16:1-8 PARABLE OF THE STEWARD

The meaning of this parable is one of metaphysical logic. We are all stewards of God's good. Nothing belongs to us, everything belongs only to God. But we have access to all that the Father has. Our true role is not "ownership," but stewardship.

We all make mistakes and we all misuse the Father's goods. In the parable Jesus depicts the steward as admitting his mistakes, and then taking steps to rescue as much good as he can from the debtors to his master. When the master learns of these efforts, instead of scolding or punishing the steward for the mistakes, he commends the steward and calls him shrewd (wise, KJV).

If we realize we have done wrong in our life, it is best to admit it. Don't try to cover-up or justify. Don't wallow in guilt or remorse. Face up to the mistake. The parable then indicates that we can look for SOME GOOD TO BE DERIVED even from the mistakes. But we must make the effort to look for it. Whether we find the good or not is beside the point. It is the effort that counts. This is what our indwelling Lord will respond to. We can be blessed as a result of what we do when we have realized our own "unwise stewardship."

Lesson 10

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. Metaphysical reason for the futility of doing only what one has to do in life.
2. Metaphysical approach to the raising of Lazarus. (SEE ADDENDA)
3. The fallacy of calling attention to one's superiority over others in an attempt to gain favor with God.
4. Unusual nature of Jesus' comments regarding marriage and sex.
5. Metaphysical meaning of selling our "riches" to give to the "poor".
6. The nature of all-inclusive prosperity.
7. Jesus' definition of a true minister.

II. READINGS

1. Matthew 19-20; Mark 10; Luke 17-18; John 11
2. Your Hope of Glory Pages 184-194
3. Metaphysical Bible Dictionary under heading Lazarus (SEE ADDENDA)

III. QUESTIONS

1. Why does Jesus call doing only what one has to do being an "unprofitable servant"?
2. Metaphysically, is the raising of Lazarus a "once in history" miracle? Why or why not?
3. Does persistent repetition wear down God's resistance to our requests? If not, what might it do?
4. In spiritual judgment, how valid are the words "inferior" and "superior" when used to compare oneself with others? What is the true criterion in Spirit?
5. Did Jesus teach there is an absolutely right or wrong in matters of marriage and sex? What was his general tone about this?
6. How many persons are eligible for true prosperity? Explain.
7. What is one important qualification for a true minister?

IV. ADDENDA

The raising of Lazarus is a tremendously important event in the life of Jesus, both historically and as metaphysical symbolism. The reason we have not devoted more space to it in this lesson is because it is so thoroughly dealt with in the Metaphysical Bible Dictionary. The teacher may study the second half of the discussion in the dictionary under the heading "Lazarus."

Lesson 10

Luke 17:5-7 "The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith!' And the Lord said, 'If you had faith as a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this sycamine tree, "Be rooted up, and be planted in the sea," and it would obey you.'"

Here Jesus is telling us something very peculiar about the power of faith. It is not a matter of quantity. Faith does not need to be increased--it just has to be expressed. Our awareness of faith and our consciousness of it may increase, but faith itself is a constant. We either use it or we don't. If faith is used, it works. If we do not use it, then all the increasing of it in the world does not matter.

Luke 17:7-10 "Will any one of you, who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep, say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down at table'? Will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare supper for me, and gird your self and serve me, till I eat and drink; and afterward you shall eat and drink'? Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? So you also, when you have done all that is commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy (unprofitable, KJV) servants; we have only done what was our duty.'"

Jesus is here refuting the old belief that it is our duty to deal only in even exchanges in life all the time. Even in religion the standard was "an eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth." This is the Mosaic concept of spiritual law. Jesus sought to teach us how to raise our level of thinking above this mechanical approach to life. We must break the habit of insisting on even exchange all the time, otherwise we shall not grow.

In this paragraph He gives an illustration of this kind of erroneous thinking by using the example of DOING ONLY WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO IN LIFE, AND EXPECTING TO BE REWARDED FOR IT. He says that by doing only what you have to do, there is no profit. Not that it is wrong to do what you have to do, but it is not profitable. Profit comes from doing something a little more than that which is required anyway. This is a way to break free from the "even exchange syndrome."

John 11:1-44 THE RAISING OF LAZARUS

The following interpretation is taken verbatim from Mysteries of John by Charles Fillmore: "Jesus represents man in the regeneration; that is, man in the process of restoring his body to its natural condition, where it will live right on perpetually without old age, disease, or death. A necessary step in this process of body restoration is the quickening of the sleeping Lazarus, who represents the vitalizing energies in the subconsciousness that feed the body and give it the life force that renews its youth." (p. 109)

"The raising of Lazarus is performed every day by those who are putting on the new Christ body through the resurrected Christ life." (p. 112)

Luke 17:20-21 "Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, he answered them, 'The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, "Lo, here it is!" or "There!" for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you (within you, KJV).'" The key ideas here are "observation" and "within" or "midst." Jesus is referring to outwardly directed observation by the intellect. The intellect is "observer of knowledge" and a repository of facts. While this is a most useful function, it does not bring a realization of the kingdom of God to a person. Realization of the kingdom OF God can come only when a person is not intellectually saying, "Lo, here, or Lo, there," but has become inwardly still and silent and acknowledging the loving presence and power of God. It is only when one learns the art of turning within and seeking inner meanings that the reality of OMNIPRESENCE (kingdom of God) is revealed. But even then, such a realization is possessed only by inner understanding and not by the perceptive faculties or senses.

Luke 18:1-8 PARABLE OF IMPORTUNATE WIDOW AND JUDGE

This parable is often misinterpreted to imply that loud and persistent importuning will wear down God's resistance and cause Him to give in to our insistent requesting. But this is not correct, since this meaning requires that the judge in the story symbolizes God, which he most certainly does not. This judge symbolizes human judgment in human nature. This is what is worn down and may give in when subject to persistent importuning.

Jesus clearly states that God's response to our prayers is an entirely different matter. His rhetorical question, "Will he (God) delay long over them?" is answered by, "he will vindicate them speedily." This is in contrast to human responses. God does not lose patience with human folly and weakness. God compensates and vindicates those who seek justice through prayer.

Luke 18:9-14 PARABLE OF THE PHARISEE AND THE TAX COLLECTOR

In this parable Jesus exposes the futility of trying to "gain favor" in the eyes of God by calling attention to our superiority and pointing to the shortcomings of others. The attitude that I am good because there are others who are worse than me, or I am superior because some others are inferior, is a fallacious attitude which makes a mockery of prayer. Each human being has the same status on the spiritual scale of values. That status is neither inferior nor superior in the comparative sense. The only spiritual status is INDIVIDUALITY.

Matt. 19:1-12

Mark 10:1-12 MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, SEX

These sections are similar to certain statements Jesus makes in the Sermon on the Mount, but with some additional comments.

Jesus must have been aware that almost all of His listeners (and later, readers) think of marriage, divorce, and sex in strictly literal, humanistic terms. Mankind may not yet be able to approach these subjects on a metaphysical level of thinking. They may be too important, intimate, and personal as literal things in our human life and as functions of the sensual physical organism and emotional nature.

But by carefully pondering Jesus' statements, we can see even these things as symbols of certain metaphysical factors. His words concerning them have a puzzling and ambiguous effect on many readers. Most people wish that Jesus had taken a clear, literal, unmistakable moral stand on marriage, divorce, and sex. They wish He had stated clearly exactly what was RIGHT and what was WRONG in these matters. But such is not the case.

It may seem that only a cut-and-dried approach to these matters is the proper one. But Jesus helps us see otherwise. Metaphysically, marriage, divorce, sex, adultery, etc. all have symbolic meanings. This should be kept in mind when one is tempted to fit Jesus' words into some fixed point of view about the "rightness" or "wrongness" of things in any area of intimacy of human relations, especially marital or sexual. NOTE: It is very significant that Jesus closes His discourse here with: "He who is able to receive this, let him receive it." (Matt. 19:12)

Mark 10:17-31 JESUS AND THE RICH YOUNG MAN

"You lack one thing; go, sell what you have, and give to the poor. . . ." Did Jesus mean these words literally? If so, then if all the rich people in the world sell all that they have and give it to the poor, then the poor become the rich and rich become the poor. Thus, we are in a sense right back where we started from.

Metaphysically the rich young man would symbolize the richly developed part of our human nature, mainly the personality. Mankind has worked hard to enrich personality. Most people are actually rather top-heavy in personality. There comes a point in each person's unfoldment when it is wise to make certain adjustments and rearrangements in consciousness. There comes a time when one should begin to sacrifice some of the richness of personality in order to give more energy to further development of soul or "essence." If a person does not have a richly developed personality then such sacrifice does not mean very much. But sacrifice from a richly developed personality is quite valuable. Jesus' teachings help us realize this and we find the idea in His teachings in many ways. This is one of them.

Matt. 20:1-16 PARABLE OF LABORERS IN THE VINEYARD

The meaning of this parable is all-inclusive prosperity. The laws of prosperity work for all persons who are willing to let them work. These different groups of laborers symbolize the different kinds of cooperation many may express with the laws of prosperity. Those who work long and hard, those who work shorter hours, those who work less hard, those who do very little actual labor--all are rewarded. In other words, all honest effort

is rewarded under divine law. It is futile to resent another's prosperity just because we may have worked harder than that person. Prosperity is for all God's children, and the manner in which one attracts prosperity is an individual matter of consciousness.

Mark 10:42-45 JESUS' DEFINITION OF A TRUE MINISTER

"And Jesus called them to him, and said to them, 'You know that those who are supposed to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant (minister, KJV), and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve (ministered unto, but to minister, KJV), and to give his life as a ransom for many.'"

A person who can really understand and live by these words would be a true minister in the Jesus Christ sense of the word. The greatness and value of any human being (son of man) is really determined by the degree of his willingness toward service and usefulness. Also, it is determined by the degree of his willingness to love.

To "give his life as a ransom for many" does not mean to lose one's life. To "give" does not mean the same as to "lose." To give it means to give it usage and expression in such a way that the whole meaning of one's life becomes a process of lessening unnecessary suffering (ransoming for as many fellow human beings as possible (for many)).

Lesson 11

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. Spiritual awareness helps overcome avarice through gentle influence.
2. Jesus' repeated references to His true role in the world.
3. Metaphysical meaning of not wearing a wedding garment.
4. Metaphysical meaning of rendering unto Caesar and unto God.
5. Jesus' final words concerning marriage and regeneration.
6. The greatest commandment of all.
7. The metaphysical dangers of the "Scribe and Pharisee" levels of religious thinking.

II. READINGS

1. Matthew 21-23; Mark 11:12; Luke 19-20; John 12
2. Your Hope of Glory Pages 194-211
3. Metaphysical Bible Dictionary under headings Zacchaeus; Scribes; Pharisees

III. QUESTIONS

1. Can spiritual awareness influence us to let go of avarice? Comment on your answer.
2. Is good excuse-making a valid substitute for honest effort? If not, why not?
3. What is the metaphysical meaning of not wearing a wedding garment?
4. How can we render correctly to both Caesar and God?
5. Why is God not "the God of the dead"?
6. What is the greatest commandment of all?

Lesson 11

Luke 19:1-10 JESUS AND ZACCHAEUS

This incident illustrates the process wherein a person is rewarded for even small efforts (climbing a sycamore tree). But the same person receives greater reward for greater effort ("Today salvation has come to this house.").

Awakened spiritual awareness (Jesus) has the power to illumine all parts of consciousness. Zacchaeus, in the first part of the story, represents avarice. He is touched by spiritual awareness (he climbs a tree and sees Jesus.) When Jesus is aware of what Zacchaeus has done, He realizes that Zacchaeus is capable of reforming. So Jesus tells him to come down from the tree and goes to counsel with him in his house. As spiritual awareness influences him, he becomes illumined. He declares, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore it fourfold." This illustrates the letting go of an avaricious attitude and an acceptance of new spiritual motivation.

Luke 19:11-27 PARABLE OF THE POUNDS

This rather harsh-sounding parable is an illustration of the fact that growth of spiritual consciousness must be an INDIVIDUAL effort. Spiritual growth is a process which involves only the individual himself and the law (Lord) of his own being.

The investments mentioned represent the efforts one makes in thought, feeling, and attitude in order to learn and serve. The more willingly and wisely one makes these efforts, the greater is one's progress in spiritual unfoldment. On the other hand, reluctance to make such effort will lead to soul inertia, and this stops further spiritual unfoldment.

Excuse-making carries no weight in spiritual law. It is quite simple: for those who are not willing to make effort, growth is "taken away." For those who make the right effort, growth is "given."

NOTE: The Gospel accounts of Palm Sunday, the beginning of Holy Week, are found in the following sections:

Mark 11:1-11

Matt. 21:1-11, 14-17

Luke 19:29-44

John 12:12-19

The student will find a helpful discussion on this event in "A Study of The New Testament" by Dr. Herbert Hunt.

John 12:44-50 JESUS' WORDS CONCERNING HIS TRUE ROLE IN THE WORLD

"And Jesus cried out and said, 'He who believes in me, believes NOT IN ME, but in HIM WHO SENT ME. And he who sees me sees him who sent me. I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. If anyone hears my sayings and does not keep them, I DO NOT JUDGE HIM; for I did not come to JUDGE the world but to SAVE the world. He who rejects me and does not receive my sayings has a judge; the word that I have spoken will be his judge on the last day. For I have not spoken on MY OWN AUTHORITY; the Father who sent me has himself given me commandment what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has bidden me.'"

Matt. 22:1-14 PARABLE OF THE WEDDING GARMENT

The conclusion of this parable has to do with the discovery by the king that one of the guests at his wedding feast is not wearing a wedding garment. He asks, "Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment? . . . Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness. . . ."

Metaphysically, garments mentioned in the Bible symbolize attitudes. "Garments of skins" is the first one mentioned (Gen. 3:21), symbolizing basic and elemental survival instincts. We read of the "gorgeous attire" of certain kings in the Old Testament, symbolizing worldly vanity and love of luxury. We read of the seamless white robe of Jesus (John 19:23), symbolizing pure spiritual understanding. In this parable we read of lack of a wedding garment. A wedding garment symbolizes spiritually correct attitudes of both thought (male) and feeling (female).

Under spiritual law, everything concerning a person is based upon his inner mental and emotional attitudes. Outer behavior is secondary, clever words do not change the law. Attempts at disguise will not work. Either one's attitude is correct (a wedding garment is worn) or it is incorrect (a wedding garment is lacking). Lack of correct attitude is what disqualifies a person from the blessings which are, in potential, available at the time.

Mark 12:13-17

Matt. 22:15-22

Luke 20:19-26 RENDER TO CAESAR

Jesus here is pointing out the difference between realizing the importance of that which is really and eternally important (things that are God's), and things which are of only transitory importance (things that are Caesar's). Both are important, but different in quality and durability. Things that are God's: these are the eternal, the realities. These are the spiritual resources, divine ideas, spiritual faculties. These are the essentials of the inner life of every person. Things that are Caesar's: these are the seeming essentials of outer activities. They come and go; they have only transitory importance.

The things of God are always for the benefit of the whole man and of all mankind. The things of Caesar may benefit certain men, or perhaps only certain parts of certain men, at certain times and only under certain conditions.

Jesus' words tell us to give our concern and do our part in each of these realms, but only in terms of what each realm really demands. To avoid either will cause unnecessary trouble for us. But to mistake one realm for the other will also cause trouble. Jesus clearly indicates we should see each for what it is and "render to" each as good judgment directs.

Luke 20:27-40 JESUS' FINAL WORDS ABOUT MARRIAGE

This discourse contains Jesus' final mention in the Gospels of the subject of marriage; this time connecting His words to the state He calls "the resurrection." This term pertains to a level of consciousness quite a bit higher than the level of ordinary human thinking.

On our present level, marriage as a social, legal, moral, and ethical matter is held to be very, very important. In some cases, important enough to be a matter of life and death. Jesus is being asked a question involving the marriage relationship ON THAT WORLDLY BASIS OF THINKING. But Jesus' understanding is on a much higher level than this, so His answer transcends the narrowness of the question. (NOTE: It was not an honest question anyhow. It was "cooked up" to trap him and get him in trouble.)

Jesus' words are somewhat difficult for ordinary thinking to accept. He indicates that on higher levels of consciousness ("the resurrection") the troublesome questions concerning human relations, especially marital, will no longer be the terribly important things they now appear to be. Although He does not say so specifically, His words do seem to imply that this same idea would include most things now in the category of moral or immoral in matters of human intimacy.

Jesus then goes on with these startling words: "Now he is not God of the dead, but of the living; for ALL LIVE TO HIM." (Luke 20:38) God is one. God is God of all. If God is not the God of the dead, it can only be because there are none such. There are no dead! There are no dead persons. There are corpses that have been buried, but there are no persons buried. Death is simply a coming apart of certain molecular connections in a physical body. The person "lays down" physicality for a time. The corpse is not the person. There are no "dead" whom God is God of. God is God of all, and all are living in God.

Mark 12:28-34 THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT OF ALL

When Jesus is asked to give the GREATEST COMMANDMENT OF ALL, He chooses LOVE. How wonderful! What if He had chosen something else, something more complicated, more difficult? But no, He chooses something we all want in our hearts anyway. We need only love God and love other persons. This is almost "too good to be true." And yet, it is the highest of all Truths.

It is very heartwarming to read that when one of the scribes totally agrees with Jesus about this, Jesus is able to look at him and give him this very beautiful compliment: "You are not far from the kingdom of God." Would not we like to receive that same compliment? Then all we need do is also agree with Jesus that the GREATEST OF ALL COMMANDMENTS is to love God and love other persons. It's that simple!

Matt. 23:1-39 DENUNCIATION OF SCRIBES AND PHARISEES

This is quite possibly the most negative sounding section of the Gospels. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees" is repeated again and again, followed by severe criticisms of what they have been doing. This tone is untypical of Jesus, but the metaphysical meaning is totally valid. Scribes and Pharisees symbolize religious thinking on a very low and useless level. Literalism, harshness, mechanical cause and effect, selfishness, superstition, ignorance: all these characterize the scribe and Pharisee level of religious thinking. This level of religious thought retards human evolution and does not generate the needful kind of energy for continued evolution. This is the main reason why Jesus denounces it so strongly and persistently.

Lesson 12

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. General metaphysical significance of Jesus' "end of the age" discourses.
2. Metaphysical meaning of the parable of judgment day.
3. Symbolism of bread and wine.
4. Metaphysical significance of the last supper (Holy Communion).

II. READINGS

1. Matthew 24-26; Mark 13-14; Luke 7, 21-22; I Corinthians 11:23-26
2. Your Hope of Glory Pages 213-230
3. Atom-Smashing Power of Mind Chapter 19

III. QUESTIONS

1. Is Jesus literally predicting outer disasters and the end of the world? If not, what is He referring to?
2. What is the spiritually correct way to cope with the unexpected?
3. When, where, and what is "judgment day"?
4. What do bread and wine symbolize?
5. How do we "eat the body" and "drink the blood" of Christ?

Lesson 12

Mark 13

Matt. 24 and 25

Luke 21:5-36 THE END OF THE AGE (ESCHATOLOGICAL DISCOURSES)

These portions of the Synoptic Gospels consist of what scholars call the Eschatological Discourses, which means "doctrine of the end." These words form the basis for much of beliefs of fundamentalist Christian groups, as well as for many alarmists and religious zealots. But metaphysical understanding reveals that these discourses are merely a part of the entire body of Truth brought by Jesus. They should be interpreted in context with the remainder of His teachings. When viewed in this light, they are seen not as literal dire predictions of outer physical events and catastrophes for the future. They are seen as symbolic descriptions of the types of changes, upheavals, and rearrangements which will occur as a legitimate part of the over-all pattern of unfoldment and evolution for human beings individually and collectively, and also for the earthly environment.

Charles Fillmore has written his beautiful insight into these portions of the Gospels in the first chapter of his book Jesus Christ Heals:

"Read the whole 24th chapter of Matthew. In it Jesus describes in symbols and facts what is taking place today in all parts of the world. It may be argued that these conditions have been present in every generation, and so they have; but never have so many of the signs stood out so forcibly as now. All this indicates THE END OF A WORLD DISPENSATION, a climax of race development. THE END OF THE WORLD OF MATTER CAME WITH THE DISCOVERY THAT THE ATOM IS ELECTRICAL, and all the things that revolved about that material supposition are COMING TO AN END with it." (p. 20)

Mr. Fillmore's brilliant insight here goes right along with the approach to Jesus' discourses as mentioned in this lesson. Mr. Fillmore's reference to "the end of a world dispensation" pertains to the final stages of an evolutionary cycle and the initial entry into the new cycle. Today, the Zodiac symbols for these evolutionary cycles have become quite well-known and are widely used: Piscean (the current age, now coming to fulfillment) and Aquarian (the new age now being entered). This symbolism would correspond to Old Testament into New Testament; Jehovah worship into God as Spirit worship; eye-for-an-eye law into grace and Truth.

Mark 13:35-37 UNEXPECTED EVENTS

"Watch therefore - for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning - lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Watch." In this statement Jesus is telling us that unexpected events can occur at any time and under any circumstances. "Watch" is best understood in the metaphysical sense, which is to be prepared in consciousness. We are best prepared for unexpected events when we maintain a God-centered consciousness.

Regular prayer is the best method. God should be the center point in our consciousness at all times. When this is the case, any event (expected or unexpected) comes and finds us well prepared. God in our consciousness becomes our protection, our guide, our strength, our all-in-all.

Matt. 25:31-46 THE DAY OF JUDGMENT

Jesus' parable on judgment day is not taken as a parable by most of the fundamentalist churches, but rather it is taken quite literally. This is unfortunate, because Jesus did present it as a parable, and a parable is not a parable if it is taken literally!

Charles Fillmore has given a concise but comprehensive interpretation of a parable in chapter 5 of his book Atom-Smashing Power of Mind. Here are some helpful excerpts from that chapter:

"In the Bible description of the 'day of judgment' the Son of man has always been represented as Jesus Christ, who is to be surrounded by angels and sit on a throne passing judgment after death upon the just and the unjust."

"It is said we are to be judged after death according to deeds done in the body, which are kept on record like books that are balanced; and if the balance is found to be in our favor we go up, and if against us we go down."

"Then today is the day of judgment!"

"We do not judge until we begin to deny and affirm. Judgment commences the moment you accept the truth of your divine sonship."

Who is the king? The center of consciousness, the I AM, and the I AM has power to just the extent you have the courage to assert your power."

"We do not fear anything, for we have separated our sheep from the goats; we have set our true thoughts (sheep) on the right and have denied our error thoughts (goats) any power whatever."

Matt. 26:6-13

Mark 14:3-9

Luke 7:36-50

John 12:1-8 THE ANOINTING

Although the details vary among the accounts (the head of Jesus is anointed in Matthew and Mark, His feet in Luke and John), there are some very important metaphysical insights to be gained from the anointing stories. Dr. Hunt offers this excellent interpretation in "A Study of the New Testament," p. 60. "Seeking metaphysical interpretation for this anointing activity, we readily

recognize the "precious ointment" as a symbol of love. As the story opens, mention is made of the ointment being contained in an alabaster cruse (or flask); and had it remained there, nothing worthwhile would have been accomplished. But the Gospel writers tell how Mary broke open the cruse and poured some of the perfumed ointment upon the head and feet of Jesus. Mary thus released the soothing fragrance and healing qualities of the ointment, imparting a blessing to her Lord, and filling the house with rich perfume. In a somewhat similar way, love abiding in our heart may be designated as "precious" and be highly esteemed, but this is not sufficient. Only as love is actually poured out upon persons and situations does it impart its blessings to those concerned. Love was not meant to be hoarded within the heart. If good is to be accomplished, and if situations are to be transformed, we must break the 'alabaster cruse' and start pouring out this 'precious ointment' of love."

Mark 14:22-25

Matt. 26:26-29

Luke 22:17-20

I Cor. 11:23-26 BREAD AND WINE AT THE LAST SUPPER

This incident, which has become a sacramental rite in most Christian churches, is interpreted metaphysically on the basis of the meaning of the symbols involved:

- (1) CHRIST: The Spirit of God made personal and indwelling each person as the source of his true, eternal identity.
- (2) BODY OF CHRIST: symbolized by bread; the substance of the Christ Presence, perceived and experienced by a person as his own spiritual faculties. Faith, Strength, Judgment, Love, Power, Imagination, Understanding, Will, Order, Zeal, Elimination, Life.
- (3) LIFE (BLOOD) OF CHRIST: symbolized by wine; the essence and vital energies generated by the Christ Spirit; the inner wellspring of individual human life.
- (4) "Take, eat; this is my body." To eat the body of Christ is to consciously accept the components of His body (12 powers) through willing, thinking, and speaking (affirmation).
- (5) "Drink of it all of you; for this is my blood."
To drink the blood of Christ is to consciously live the life of Spirit by expressing the ingredients of the Christ body in daily living.

NOTE: Christ Body is the perfect pattern and source of our true body. Christ blood is the true source of our vital life energies.

Charles Fillmore gives a very concise and highly mystical explanation of the Lord's Supper which appears in his book "The Revealing Word":

"Lord's Supper--(Matt. 26:26-30) Metaphysically, God's covenant with mankind, through His perfect idea, Christ Jesus. This compact was completed through Jesus' breaking the bread and blessing the cup. The bread symbolizes SPIRITUAL SUBSTANCE, or the body. The wine symbolizes the blood of Jesus, or spiritual life.

We eat the body of Jesus by AFFIRMING the one spiritual substance to be the substance of our body and we drink His blood by affirming and realizing our oneness with the one divine, omnipresent life of Spirit."
(p. 124)

Jesus ends this incident with words which become more and more significant as we grow in understanding of the metaphysical meaning of Jesus and His teachings. Although literally He is saying this only to His disciples, metaphysically these words are being addressed to all who willingly follow Him. "I tell you I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new WITH YOU in my Father's kingdom." (Matt. 26:29)

Lesson 13

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. See ADDENDA

II. READINGS

1. John 14-17
2. Your Hope of Glory Pages 231-250

III. QUESTIONS

1. From your own metaphysical understanding, how would you describe the "many mansions" in the Father's house?
2. Did Jesus regard His spiritual power as something uniquely His? What does He say to us about this?
3. How would you describe the kind of peace Jesus offers to share with us?
4. According to the Gospel writer's words about Jesus, was He a product of "this world"? What is another possibility?
5. What aspect of Jesus was strongly expressed in the garden of Gethsemane?

IV. ADDENDA

We have not made a list of MAJOR POINTS for this lesson because of the peculiar nature of the Bible text covered. There are no incidents or actions or symbols involved. This is all straight dialogue spoken by Jesus. We have made a selection of statements from the entire body of His farewell discourses and have simply commented on them.

The teacher may find that this is an excellent opportunity for more extended class discussion, since there is very little instructional material in this lesson.

Lesson 13

John 14, 15, 16, 17 THE GREAT FAREWELL DISCOURSES

These chapters in John are unique in our Bible. They are a monologue, reported by the Gospel writer as spoken by Jesus, from a strange blending of the Divine Christ level and the warmly human level of His consciousness. The words apply both to His immediate followers in a warmly personal way, and to posterity in a very mystical way. These discourses cannot be comprehended if approached as ordinary conversational statements. They are really unclassifiable in any academic sense. They are best handled by simply exposing one's mind and heart to them, without attempt to intellectually "figure out" their meanings. The meanings will reveal themselves with familiarity and repeated exposure to them. They are organic words. They live and grow.

John 14:1-2 "Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms (mansions, KJV) . . ."

The "Father's house" is the totality of all life; perfect, eternal life. "Many rooms or mansions" are the countless phases and degrees of individual consciousness within God's eternal life. These are all our lifetimes constituting the steps in growth and unfoldment in our eternal life.

John 14:6, 7 ". . . I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me."

The Father is our own inner spiritual nature, our true spiritual identity, our innate spiritual perfection. Jesus is the living symbol of spiritual awareness. No person can realize his own innate perfection except by way of growth of spiritual awareness (following Jesus Christ).

John 14:12 ". . . he who believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do. . . ." (SELF EXPLANATORY!)

John 14:19:20 "Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more, but you will see me; because I live, you will live also. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you."

These words are of such poignancy that they seem to strike right into our hearts from the heart of Jesus. They transcend time and space and have living power right here and now for any who will accept them personally.

John 14:27 "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."

Spiritual awareness (Jesus) generates a kind of inner peace which is not to be compared to the "temporary truces" the world sometimes grants. The peace of spiritual awareness is enduring, and it grows and becomes stronger. This is because it is based on eternal Principle and not upon the passing parade of worldly matters. When one is truly experiencing the peace of spiritual awareness, one finally knows that truly, there is nothing to fear.

John 15:11 "These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full!"

Spiritual awareness generates joy. As in the case of peace, the joy of spiritual awareness is different from the type of joy the world can confer. The joy of Spirit does not need an outer cause. It wells up from an inner source. It is not fickle, turning off and on in a random manner. Also, it does not produce nervous excitement. It is a joy that contains its own kind of satisfaction (is full).

John 15:16 ". . . that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it you."

When we ask of the Father in the name of Jesus Christ (spiritual awareness) our requests are bound to be sane. Spiritual awareness is the highest type of sanity! Therefore, when we are praying in the name of Jesus Christ, it is always a safe and sane request. Such requests are always lawful. Such asking is bound to result in receiving.

NOTE: It is a wise practice to always be certain that our prayer requests are solidly connected to divine ideas. What we ask for is that a divine idea becomes manifest, or becomes an experience for ourself or for whomever we pray. If we cannot see the connection between what we want and a bona fide divine idea, we should reconsider the request, and perhaps make some change in our manner of asking, or in for what we are asking.

John 16:12-13 "I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth. . ."

It is fruitless for us to wonder and speculate about the Truth we do not know as yet. The only valid reason we do not yet know certain Truths is simply that we do not need such knowledge at this time. Even if we could gain access to those Truths, we would not comprehend them as such. There is nothing to regret in this.

However, when we really have need of any Truth knowledge, we shall be given it without fail. The main thing for all of us now is to correctly use and share the Truth knowledge we do have.

John 16:28 "I came from the Father and have come into the world; again, I am leaving the world and going to the Father."

Here Jesus gives His followers something of a clue as to His strange relationship with the world into which He had incarnated. Some interpreters say that He did not come from a prior existence IN THIS WORLD, as the rest of humanity does; instead that He came from another dimension, another evolution, which He simply calls "the Father." He clearly says that He is going back to that dimension. In other places He also says that He will await us in that dimension (the Father). Others say that this statement is true of the Christ identity of each person. Either view can provide helpful insights.

John 17 is a long prayer. In orthodox Christian churches it is usually called the Intercessory Prayer. In this prayer Jesus reaches the apotheosis of all that He has been saying in these chapters in the Gospel of John. It is obvious that this prayer, even though addressed to the Father, is really very much for the benefit of His followers (and the future readers of the Gospels). Today, as we read this prayer, it is very easy to feel that Jesus had each one of us in mind as He stated these sublime words. Especially in His closing words: ". . . that the love with which thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them."

Matt. 26:30, 36-46 IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

In this incident we have an illustration of a powerful, "last-ditch" resurgence of the human nature factors in the soul of Jesus. This is expressed in some of His words. Perhaps nowhere else in the Gospels does this strictly human level of Him find such poignant expression. We can clearly see the characteristics of personal consciousness coming out in the following utterances:

- (1) "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. . . ."
- (2) "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. . . ."
- (3) ". . . could you not watch with me one hour?"
- (4) "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, thy will be done."

NOTE: If these statements do not illustrate the Christ aspect of Jesus, they most certainly do illustrate the "son of man" aspect of Him. As such, they help us understand the fears of human personality, or personal ego, in our own "crucifixion experiences." Yet the full transformation of consciousness cannot take place until our human will totally surrenders and can say, "thy will be done."

Matt. 26:47-68 THE BETRAYAL, ARREST, AND TRIAL OF JESUS

The betrayal, arrest, and trial of Jesus had all been clearly outlined by Him long before they actually manifested as events. These events are almost entirely of biographical-historical interest today, and are not really symbolic or of parable form. The actual symbolism in the Gospels resumes during the Crucifixion itself, namely in the seven statements of Jesus from the cross.

Lesson 14

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. Metaphysical meaning of crucifixion.
2. Metaphysical significance of each of Jesus' statements during the crucifixion.

II. READINGS

1. Matthew 27; Mark 15; Luke 23; John 11
2. Your Hope of Glory Pages 251-258
3. Metaphysical Bible Dictionary under heading "Golgotha"

III. QUESTIONS

1. Why should we not view Jesus' crucifixion as a tragedy?
2. What was the nature of the forgiveness Jesus expressed from the cross?
3. Metaphysically, what do the two thieves symbolize? Explain.
4. How did Jesus demonstrate the power of affirmation (and asking) even while on the cross?
5. From your own metaphysical understanding, give an interpretation of the statement, "It is finished."
6. What is the spiritual significance of Jesus' final statement in Luke, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit!"?

Lesson 14

Mark 15:24-37

Matt. 27:35-50

Luke 23:33-46

John 19:18-30 THE CRUCIFIXION

Metaphysically we do not view the crucifixion of Jesus as a tragedy but as a step toward a great victory. And Jesus assured us that the same victory illustrated in His story can be attained by us.

During His crucifixion Jesus gave us seven statements. These statements are contained in scattered form among all four Gospels. In this course we have listed these statements in the same order as used in the writings of Charles Fillmore, and also by Elizabeth Sand Turner in her book Your Hope of Glory.

Each of the seven statements made by Jesus should be considered as a continuation of His teachings and like all His teachings, especially appropriate for us today. They are a unique form of highly condensed metaphysical teaching, almost a kind of verbal "shorthand." But for those "with eyes to see," they contain a significant spiritual meaning.

The crucifixion itself symbolizes a process of crossing out, or eliminating that which is no longer needful for our continued unfoldment. What has fulfilled its purpose in us must be either lifted to a higher level of expression in consciousness, or let go of completely. Jesus' crucifixion illustrates both these meanings.

The seven statements by Jesus from the cross verbalize seven great realizations of Truth which are necessary for our continued spiritual growth and unfoldment.

(1) "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34)

Inner forgiveness is the mightiest of spiritual acts. Without it, nothing in the nature of real spiritual progress can be achieved. Jesus made this the first of His seven statements because of its primary importance.

It is significant that He does not claim to be doing the forgiving. He acknowledges God as the only forgiving power. Human beings would be wise to do the same. We should try to realize that it really is not MY forgiveness, or YOUR forgiveness, but it is the forgiving love of God.

It makes it much easier to forgive when we realize that it is not something personal which I must "cook up" for myself. All I do is consent. I consent to let the forgiving power of God simply be directed through me in behalf of others--others who need such forgiveness.

"For they know not what they do." If people knew, REALLY KNEW what they were doing when doing something wrong, they simply would not go through with it. Behind all offenses there is a lack of understanding. Even a person who thinks he knows what he is doing when he harms another actually does not.

(2) ". . . today you will be with me in Paradise." (Luke 23:43)

What is Paradise? Where is it? Jesus knew, and He told us about it many times in His teachings. Basically, Paradise is a name given to a here-and-now consciousness of oneness with God. Where is oneness with God? It is here. When is oneness with God? It is now.

Jesus spoke these words to one of the thieves being crucified with Him. Charles Fillmore wrote that these two thieves symbolize past and future. Memories of the past can rob us. Anxiety about the future can rob us. But spiritual awareness (Jesus) never robs us, but rather gives us strength and protection.

The thief to whom Jesus spoke represents the future. What does spiritual awareness in us (Jesus) say about our future? Does it tell us to fear it? Does it urge us to protect ourselves from it? No. Spiritual awareness says to our future, "Today you will be with me in Paradise."

In other words, spiritual awareness says we can bring our concern for our future into our here-and-now consciousness of oneness with God. We need not project ourselves into the future, but rather bring all thoughts about the future into "Paradise." Paradise is our oneness with God, and it is here, it is now, it is forever.

(3) "Woman, behold your son! . . . Behold, your mother!" (John 19:26, 27)

These words were spoken to Mary and, according to tradition, to the disciple John. Literally, Mary and John were not mother and son. But Jesus was speaking from a level of the highest understanding concerning the Truth of human relationships. One of the greatest realizations that can come to a person is the realization of his true relationship to every other human being in the human family. Whatever biological ties may exist, the metaphysical ties are stronger and more important. In Spirit we are each others' mother, brother, and sister. To realize this and to accept this will guarantee great steps forward in spiritual unfoldment.

(4) "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34)

Jesus is here once again teaching by making of Himself an example. Notice, this statement is a question. Jesus was probably not asking that question for His own sake, because He knew the Truth that was the real answer. But He spoke the question to show us what is often in our own hearts as we seek to follow Him. The question states a wondering in us as to why we are feeling separated from God. Even when we know better, the feeling may creep over us before we are even fully aware of it. We wonder why we once again feel that God has forsaken us. We ask why. There is nothing very abnormal about this. It happens to the best of persons.

(5) "I thirst." (John 19:28)

This is an affirmation of a need. It is an asking. The statement was immediately followed by the meeting of that need. Jesus was given a sponge soaked with a mixture of vinegar and gall or myrrh, a soothing drink.

Jesus had previously taught, ". . . ask, and you will receive." (John 16:24) Here He gives us an example of practicing what He preached. There are times when a person finds himself in a situation where things look hopeless. During such times he will feel an overpowering "thirsting after righteousness." What should he then do? Jesus said, ". . . ask, and you will receive." "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." (Matt. 5:6) With God, no situation is hopeless, for God is mightier than circumstances. Jesus is the sublime example. He affirms (asks) "I thirst," and He receives His drink.

(6) "It is finished." (John 19:30)

Everything that happens in a person's life is part of a cycle of learning, growing, and unfolding. Each event, each experience, each relationship, each victory, each defeat--all are factors in a great over-all pattern of evolution.

One of the most difficult lessons many persons have to learn is to recognize when something has fulfilled its role in our life and is now to be seen as "finished business." Some persons never seem to learn to recognize that some things are finished. This pertains to other persons, possessions, jobs, pleasures, etc. But it especially pertains to cycles of experience in our learning process in life.

If we have to go through certain difficult or painful experiences, we should try to learn the lessons they contain as quickly as possible. When we feel we have seen the lesson, then it is wise to say as Jesus said, "It is finished." Hold no grudges, nurse no hurt feelings, carry no unhappy memories. If it is finished, let it go. It has done its work. Greater good is now in store, and we let the past bury the past. It is finished.

(7) "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit." (Luke 23:46)

In the beginning--God. In every ending--God. God is our all in all. Jesus had gone through a complete cycle in which He had accomplished exactly what He had come here to do. He had brought that cycle to a climax in the symbolism of the drama of the crucifixion. The words He chooses to verbalize that climax are in the statement which is the apotheosis: "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit."

People often wonder, "What is going to happen to me next?" If we will follow the example of Jesus we can know that we can safely place ourselves, our lives, our bodies, our future in God's hands. We are not taking any risks when we do this. God is completely dependable, because God cannot be changed.

When Jesus gives us His example of commending His whole spirit into God's hands He is once again demonstrating His own teachings. God is the answer to everything. God is the meaning behind everything. God is the only "fate" in store for His children. And God is absolute good.

Lesson 15

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. Metaphysical significance of Mary Magdalene's encounter with the resurrected Jesus.
2. Significance of Jesus interpreting Scripture on the road to Emmaus.
3. The appearance of resurrected Jesus to seven disciples at the Sea of Galilee.
4. Significance of Jesus asking Peter three times if he loved Him.
5. Metaphysical significance of Jesus' final words to Peter.
6. Metaphysical and historical significance of the final words of the Gospels.

II. READINGS

1. Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20-21
2. Your Hope of Glory Pages 258-280
3. Metaphysical Bible Dictionary under headings "Resurrection"
"Jesus" (p. 348-350)

III. QUESTIONS

1. What is the metaphysical meaning of the fact that Mary Magdalene does not find Jesus in a tomb, but encounters Him in a garden?
2. How does Jesus illustrate that the Bible is to be interpreted?
3. What is the significance of Jesus' words to "doubting" Thomas?
4. What metaphysical lesson can be found in Jesus' final words to Peter?
5. What indication do we have that there is more left out of the Gospels than is included in them?

Lesson 15

John 20:11-18 APPEARANCE OF JESUS TO MARY MAGDALENE

Mary was anticipating finding a corpse. She, like the disciples, did not really dare to believe that Jesus would be resurrected. A corpse of a beloved friend was their expectancy. Mary looks into the tomb thinking to find a corpse. Instead, she sees two angels who help guide her attention in a different direction. The angels represent thoughts of divine guidance. When Mary turns her attention out of the tomb and into the garden, she encounters the resurrected presence of Jesus. So it is with us, when we are directing the attention of our emotional nature (Mary Magdalene) toward negative thoughts and beliefs (tomb) the best we can hope to find is a "corpse," (memories of what used to be). But when we turn the attention of our emotional nature to the "garden" (realm of living ideas) we can find our newly revived spiritual awareness (resurrected Jesus).

When Jesus says to Mary, "Do not hold me, for I have not yet ascended" (John 20:17), He is illustrating the need to avoid negative emotional attachments at times in life where further spiritual unfoldment is the most important thing. There are times when emotional attachments are the important thing; but there are other times when this is not the case. Jesus indicates that such a time was that time in His experience prior to the Ascension.

Luke 24:13-32 JESUS ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

In this incident Jesus appears to a disciple named Cleopas and another who is not named. The significant thing about this incident is that Jesus communicated what we understand as metaphysical interpretations of Scripture to them, which they seemed to have understood. "And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." (Luke 24:27) Later in the paragraph we read, "And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished out of their sight. They said to each other, 'Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while HE OPENED TO US THE SCRIPTURES?'" (Luke 24:31-32)

It seems quite safe to assume that Jesus was not just quoting the Bible to them. It states quite bluntly that He was INTERPRETING. Taking the Bible literally is not the same as discerning its meaning. So much of the Bible is symbolic and allegorical, and such things need metaphysical interpreting. The correctness of the interpretation depends on the metaphysical correctness of the interpreter. This is what opens people's understanding, in a way that historical facts or literal acceptance of quotations cannot do.

John 20:29 JESUS' WORDS TO DOUBTING THOMAS

After Thomas receives the proof he requires in order to believe in Jesus' resurrected presence, Jesus makes this significant comment to him; "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet believe."

Just as Jesus had earlier transcended the old Mosaic teaching of "an eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth," so He now transcends the old motto of "seeing is believing." The old mechanical cause and effect level of thought belongs to the old, lower evolutionary level. The New Testament level of religious thinking requires belief IN ADVANCE of all divine ideas, all spiritual principles, and complete trust in the guidance of spiritual awareness within (Jesus).

John 21:1-17 JESUS APPEARS TO SEVEN DISCIPLES AT THE SEA OF GALILEE

Seven of Jesus' disciples had spent an entire night fishing, but had caught nothing. At daybreak, the resurrected Jesus appeared on the beach. It should be explained here that in spite of all that He had said to His followers, it seems that none really believed Him that He would be resurrected after three days of burial and rejoin them. He knew they did not believe Him. So here He is, just as He said He would be. Here He was living proof of what He had taught and which they refused to believe. And what are His first words to them in this moment of His great vindication? Let us ponder carefully His OPENING WORDS to them: "Children, have you any fish?"

Does this help give us greater insight into the kind of being this man was? The first thing He expresses after vindication of the fact that He had predicted His own resurrection was concern about whether they had enough to eat or not. Surely this is as divine as anything else He had said or done. The student should paraphrase this question in terms of his own spiritual awareness speaking to his faculties, "Children, have you any DIVINE IDEAS?" The rest of the story illustrates how one "catches" divine ideas - by "fishing" on the RIGHT side of consciousness (boat).

The next divine thing Jesus does is to give Peter a divine opportunity to atone for his three denials. He does this in a very subtle and unique way. Instead of asking Peter if he was sorry for denying Him three times, He simply asks Peter if he loves Him three times. Each time, Peter affirms his love for Jesus. Can we see that this was, in a sense, Jesus giving Peter the golden opportunity to cancel out any possible Karma factors? Three times denial (negative) balanced and cancelled by three times affirming of love. Surely this is another example of the divinely human consciousness that is Jesus.

Mark 16:15-18 LAST WORDS AND ACTS OF THE RISEN LORD

"And he said to them, Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover."

We call special attention to this passage at this time mainly because it is the Gospel basis for the strong resurgence of evangelic and charismatic religious groups who take this passage 100% literally. It is difficult for a metaphysical Truth student to know exactly how to relate to those who insist on only a literal acceptance of every word in the Bible. Each one may find his own way to be at peace about this, and yet not fall into it himself. Metaphysics are the tools of modern Truth students, and Jesus has given us the necessary keys to the "tool box".

"When Peter saw him (another disciple), he said to Jesus, 'Lord, what about this man?' Jesus said to him '. . . what is that to you? Follow me!'" (John 21:21-22)

These words ring true in ears of Truth students today, probably more clearly than they did in Peter's ears back then. We are learning that the guidance of spiritual awareness is for each individual who is willing to follow it. What other persons are doing or not doing must not become so much of our concern that we abandon our own inner guidance. Evolution is now an individual experience, depending on the sincerity of our individual effort. We must learn to keep this uppermost in mind, and not squander our energies on worrying about others and judging them.

In the closing section of the Gospel of John we have these very significant words:

"Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which ARE NOT WRITTEN IN THIS BOOK; but these are written that you may believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name." (John 20:30, 31)

". . . there are also many other things which Jesus did; were everyone of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written." (John 21:25)

"Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. While he blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven." (Luke 24:50, 51)

Possibly no human mind is as yet capable of fully understanding the resurrection and ascension of Jesus. We seem capable of dealing with these events only in terms of religious fervor and intuitive acceptance. Yet, books like the Metaphysical Bible Dictionary and many of Charles Fillmore's writings do help prepare the way for our eventual full understanding of events such as these. A very helpful example, and an appropriate way to complete this course in Gospels Interpretation is a section under the heading "JESUS" from the Metaphysical Bible Dictionary.

"Jesus did not leave the planet, at His ascension; He simply entered the inner spiritual realms. He will become visible to those who "put on Christ" and manifest their incorruptible, undying bodies. Many are conscious of His presence in some degree, but they do not see Him as He is, because they have not brought their faculties of apprehension up to His standard. When we awake in His likeness (Psalm 17:15) then we shall see Him as He is. This does not come about through the soul's leaving the body, but it is accomplished by refining, spiritualizing, and raising both soul and body to higher degrees of power." (p. 349)

REVELATION

INTRODUCTION:

This course of interpretation of the book of Revelation is purely a metaphysical point of view. There is no attempt to deal with the historical aspect of the book. We shall deal with Revelation on the basis of what appears to be the logical place it occupies in the overall metaphysical pattern of the Bible. In general, the pattern is:

- (1) Old Testament--symbolism within historical narrative; allegories in the form of historical stories; other literary forms, some of which contain metaphysical symbolism, but most of which do not.
- (2) Gospels--highly symbolic biographies of Jesus Christ, who is the living embodiment of spiritual awareness in man, made possible by the Truth of Christ within.
- (3) Acts and the Epistles--history and commentaries on Christian church history. Metaphysical symbolism only in a few portions.
- (4) Revelation--symbolic visions, fantasies, and prophecies. This book contains the deepest and most complex symbolism of all the books in the Bible. It describes the continued unfoldment of a soul after an individual has accepted and come into the metaphysical Truth of Jesus Christ.

NOTE: The most important fact to keep in mind when dealing with an interpretation of Revelation is that no matter how fantastic or complex the language of the narrative becomes, it is really always talking about a SINGLE INDIVIDUAL SOUL, which would be any human being who has committed his life to the living of it according to the Truths revealed by Jesus Christ.

Lesson 1

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. General metaphysical significance of Revelation in context with the whole Bible.
2. God is the ONLY ABSOLUTE. All else is relative and conditional.
3. Metaphysical meaning of the church of Ephesus.
4. Praise for the church.
5. Criticism for the church.
6. Promise of reward for overcoming that which is criticized.

II. READINGS

1. Rev. 1:1-1:7
2. Metaphysical Bible Dictionary: "Ephesus"
3. Be Ye Transformed Pages 198-210

III. QUESTIONS

1. What is the only Absolute, only Infinite, only Ultimate? Explain.
2. Metaphysically, what does the church of Ephesus stand for in human nature?
3. Give a general summary of praise given to the church.
4. Give a general summary of criticism given to the church.
5. Give a general summary of the reward for overcoming to be given.

Lesson 1

Rev. 1:1

The true inspiration of this book is revealed in the opening words. "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show" The reality of the presence of Jesus Christ, and the reality of the Christ Spirit in every man, is the main theme which runs through this book and permeates the whole narrative. The writer states that "God gave him" (Jesus Christ) these revelations, which indicates that the words are, in a sense, being dictated to him directly through the Christ-Mind from universal God-Mind.

Rev. 1:8

"'I am the Alpha and the Omega,' says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." Here we have another biblical basis for one of our most frequently used Unity affirmations: THERE IS ONE PRESENCE AND ONE POWER IN THE UNIVERSE AND IN MY LIFE, GOD, THE GOOD OMNIPOTENT.

In the Absolute, God is all there really ever was, is now, and ever will be. But this is true only in the Absolute. Human beings are related to the Absolute, but they are not absolutes. Only God is that. People are evolving souls, growing units of universal consciousness with spiritual natures and identities. God is the Infinite, the Absolute.

Rev. 1:19, 20

The author is instructed by the Christ Mind to write seven letters which will be dictated to him by the Christ Mind. These letters are for seven churches in Asia Minor.

These seven churches symbolize seven great centers of energy and intelligence within our individuality. They are called "churches" because they constitute factors and processes in our overall spiritual unfoldment. They are components of our method of worshipping God. They are all good and very useful. But none is, as yet, perfect. Each has the potential of becoming more perfect, mostly through the overcoming of certain shortcomings that exist within them.

The name of each church is given at the beginning of each letter. The metaphysical interpretations of those names are all based (in this course) on material found in the Metaphysical Bible Dictionary.

Rev. 2:1-7 LETTER TO THE CHURCH OF EPHESUS

The word Ephesus means: "desirable; appealing." Metaphysically, it represents our desire nature, and our interpretation of our desire as it pertains to our worship of God. This first of the seven churches represents one of the first things which coming into Truth quickens for us: desire and appeal.

Knowledge of Truth causes a greater desire in us for more knowledge of God and Truth. This growing desire for more of God and His good has become a "church" of worship within our souls, which Revelation names as Ephesus.

Knowledge of Truth has also quickened our awareness of our power of appeal and, consequently, our willingness to ask. We are becoming less reluctant to ask for whatever we deem desirable or useful in our lives. We are less reluctant to ask God on behalf of others. We know the Source, and we are gaining faith in the willingness of that Source to give of its treasures. We are learning to no longer hesitate to appeal to it through prayer, affirmation, and giving thanks in advance. Our church of Ephesus is the symbol of our desire for more of God and His good and, also, our willingness to appeal to God as the omnipresent Source of our good.

Rev. 2:2-3 "I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear evil men but have tested those who call themselves apostles but are not, and found them to be false; I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary. . . ."

Here is the Christ Mind's praise for our church of Ephesus. Our desire for good has caused us to become God's workers. Almost all this work is inner work. We find we do not become exhausted in such work, but are learning to take delight in it. We may not work so much on outer THINGS any more, but rather on our inner thoughts, feelings, and attitudes. We are accomplishing good improvement, and we are becoming less inclined to boast about it.

We are also becoming more patient. Patience is a sure sign of growing spiritual consciousness. Patience is not a self-created accomplishment so much as it is a result, a reward which comes to our soul after making certain inner efforts to become willing to change; to become more conscious of Truth and the good.

"And how you cannot bear evil men" indicates that since we have acknowledged our growing desire for more of God and Truth, we are no longer willing to continue to repeat experiences of useless, unnecessary suffering. The word "evil" refers to any human attempt to negate any divine idea. Misguided attempts are the cause of useless, unnecessary suffering. The fact that we no longer want to continue attempts to negate divine ideas or have useless suffering gives testimony to the growth and improvement we have made in consciousness. We are desiring only Truth and good in our lives and in the lives of others. This is the great accomplishment of the church of Ephesus in us.

Rev. 2:4 "'But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.'"

"A weakness in our desire nature is called to our attention in these words. God is the first love our church of Ephesus responded to. If our desire nature had not made the decision to love God first and foremost, we probably would not have come into the life of Truth. We would have found

many other things to do with our lives instead. But we have entered the way, the Truth, and the life revealed to us through Jesus Christ. This means that our desire nature had to have at some point acknowledged God as our first love. But human desire nature still has the tendency to wander. It becomes fickle. There are yet times when we believe we love other things rather than God. We forget our love for Truth. When this happens, desire can degenerate into covetousness. We become inwardly confused and unhappy. This is because we are not putting our love of God first. Our church of Ephesus has "left its first love."

Rev. 2:7 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God."

To "eat of the tree of life" means to derive a type of nourishment and some benefit from everything we experience in life, and from all that we observe in life. This is possible for any person who keeps the love of God in first place in his desire nature.

If a person does not really care about Truth, never thinks much about the love of God, is indifferent toward developing spiritual understanding, such a person does not know how to eat of the tree of life. In fact, quite often the opposite happens to him. Life eats him! In other words, life experiences and difficulties do not have a nourishing or beneficial effect upon him. They take a great deal out of him. This person becomes easily discouraged, exhausted, worn out. This is a form of unnecessary suffering. Life should not wear a person out. It should nourish him, educate him, benefit him. And this is exactly how life will become for one who loves God uppermost in his desire nature. He gains the secret of eternal nourishment. He learns to extract the good in every life effort, every life experience. He is literally "eating of the tree of life."

For such a person, what to many persons is simply ordinary life, becomes a new quality of life. Such a person begins to perceive that his life is really taking place in what the Christ Mind refers to as "in the paradise of God." Paradise is wherever God is, and love of God establishes His presence within us at all times, under all circumstances.

Lesson 2

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. Metaphysical meaning of the church of Smyrna.
2. Praise for the church.
3. Criticism for the church.
4. Promise of reward for overcoming that which is criticized.

II. READINGS

1. Rev. 2:7-2:11
2. Metaphysical Bible Dictionary: "Smyrna"
3. Be Ye Transformed Page 210

III. QUESTIONS

1. Metaphysically, what does the church of Smyrna stand for in human nature?
2. Give a general summary of praise given to the church.
3. Give a general summary of criticism given to the church.
4. Give a general summary of the reward for overcoming to be given.

Lesson 2

Rev. 2:8 LETTER TO THE CHURCH OF SMYRNA

The word Smyrna means "flowing; distilling; spiritous." Metaphysically, Smyrna stands for spiritual substance. The church of Smyrna symbolizes a person's consciousness of substance.

What is substance? The word is used differently in Unity from the way it is used in conventional science. In science, the word pertains to matter. In Unity, the word refers to spiritual energy which is not material, but is the basis for all possibilities of material form. Substance is the basis for supply and prosperity, and a consciousness of substance generates true prosperity for a person.

The definition of the word Smyrna ("flowing; distilling; spiritous") actually somewhat describes the nature of substance. In a sense, it is "flowing" all about us and within us at all times. It is the invisible, intangible reality of energy, containing all potential of form. It is not material but is the essence out of which all material is "distilled."

Charles Fillmore taught that substance responds to man's thought of it. Man's consciousness causes substance to produce effects from itself into the realm which man experiences as three-dimensional form. These forms are then used by us and become our supply and our prosperity.

In its primary state, substance is spiritual, and it is pure and "good." It is also unlimited and omnipresent. It responds to any human being who is willing to become aware of it and who thinks about it in the right way.

Rev. 2:9 "'I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich) . . .'"

Every human being is completely rich as far as substance is concerned. Whether or not a person realizes it, his very existence is immersed in the substance of God's good, and is permeated by it. Lack, poverty, or failure in a person's life are the effects of ignorance, indifference, or unbelief toward spiritual substance. The person may not in any way be guilty of any wrongdoing in this respect, but spiritual substance can only await his awakening before it can flow through his consciousness and enrich his life.

The Christ Mind knows the struggle of the human mind in the face of lack or poverty. It says, "I know your tribulation and your poverty." But it immediately adds these words, "but you are RICH." This means that whatever our past experience of lack may have been, and whatever current challenge we may be facing of a poverty nature, a prosperity consciousness can, and will, be quickened in us if we will take the right steps. We can do this by activating the church of Smyrna within us by giving our belief and willingness to the divine idea of God's spiritual substance within us and all around us at all times.

What is a prosperity consciousness? Primarily it is something developed in the mind of a person who has learned to depend on God as his true source of supply. We must have faith in God as Creator and Source of all good. When we do, spiritual substance will see to it that forms of good are always available in abundance to us. Our consciousness has the power to cause a "flowing" and "distilling" process to occur in the very substance of our lives, and the result is that we have all sufficiency in all things, with much to spare and to share. This is the true prosperity consciousness, symbolized as the church of Smyrna.

Rev. 2:9 "I know . . . the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan."

"Jews" stand for thoughts and feelings turned toward spiritual Truth. "Satan" stands for erroneous thoughts and negative emotions. The highly symbolic words in verse nine pertain to some of the false beliefs and negative attitudes which are still active in our thinking about prosperity. Some of these false beliefs may outwardly appear to be helpful to our progress in prosperity consciousness (they say they are Jews) but are actually harmful to our prosperity consciousness (and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan). These erroneous beliefs may wear some clever disguises and be deceiving many persons, but knowledge of Truth reveals them to be errors, and they must be cast out of our prosperity thinking. Some examples of them are:

- (1) It is possible for me to get my good at another's expense.
- (2) There is the danger that another might get his good at my expense.
- (3) The only way to experience prosperity is to possess many things, and the more things, the better.
- (4) If a certain channel of supply in life is taken away, that means that a person's source of good has been taken away.
- (5) One must never give more than he can expect to get back quickly in return.

Rev. 2:11 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who conquers shall not be hurt by the second death."

How do we overcome false beliefs which promise us much but which really only spoil our prosperity consciousness? We can begin by making the effort to base all our thinking about prosperity on the divine idea of substance. God's substance is for everyone. Next, rely on God, trust in God. Speak words of thanksgiving for the prospering power of God's substance in our lives. Give thanks that all the ideas in Divine Mind are ours to receive and use and share. These ideas will then go to work for us and cause to come forth that which will constitute our rightful supply and prosperity.

We should always remember that the most powerful action we can take as human beings as far as prosperity is concerned is to cooperate with the great law of giving and receiving. Giving is so very, very important where true prosperity is concerned. Share generously. Pay bills cheerfully. Accept gifts happily. Be grateful for bargains, enjoy finding them, but treat the business of bargaining very lightly.

Then there is the matter of borrowing and lending. These, too, come under the law governing prosperity. If we loan to another person, we should do so with the feeling that we were giving him something. This does not mean that we do not allow him to pay us back. But it does have to do with our attitude about loaning. If we are the borrower, then we should make the effort to put ourselves in the place of the one from whom we borrow. This keeps borrowing and lending squarely within the laws of spiritual prosperity, and all will be well.

The final words of the letter to the church of Smyrna are, "He who conquers shall not be hurt by the second death." Metaphysically, the "first death" refers to something leaving a past form of existence prior to assuming its next form of existence. "Second death" refers to when something leaves its current form of existence prior to assuming its future form of existence.

For example, when a baby is born, that soul has, in a sense, "died" to the state of existence it was in before it assumed its place in physical birth. From our perspective, its "first death" was to its prenatal state.

The life form of an acorn "dies" to its acorn existence in order to proceed into its oak tree form of existence. If some fine furniture is to be made out of that oak wood, then the life form of "oak tree" will "die" in order to proceed into the fine furniture form of its existence.

The word "death", as often used in the Bible, does not mean cessation of life but, rather, a change in the state of existence of certain life forms. In earthly life, this is occurring all the time. Forms come, forms change, forms go, new forms are evolved. The problem for many human beings is that many of us are still being "hurt" by the "second death" of a number of things.

The promise in this letter is "He who conquers shall not be hurt by the second death." This means that when we are established in a true prosperity consciousness, based upon spiritual understanding of God's laws and God's substance, the comings and goings of outer forms of things will no longer hurt us. We do not feel damaged or cheated when certain forms of things change or are removed. When we really understand that God's spiritual substance fills every part of our lives, every moment of our lives, then we never feel separated from the true Source of our good.

Lesson 3

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. Metaphysical meaning of the church of Pergamum.
2. Praise for the church.
3. Criticism for the church.
4. Promise of reward for overcoming that which is criticized.

II. READINGS

1. Rev. 2:12-2:17
2. Metaphysical Bible Dictionary: "Pergamum"
3. Be Ye Transformed Pages 211, 212

III. QUESTIONS

1. Metaphysically, what does the church of Pergamum stand for in human nature?
2. Give a general summary of praise given to the church.
3. Give a general summary of criticism given to the church.
4. Give a general summary of the reward for overcoming to be given.

Lesson 3

Rev. 2:12 LETTER TO THE CHURCH OF PERGAMUM

Pergamum means "strongly united; closely knit." The Metaphysical Bible Dictionary gives the metaphysical meaning of the church of Pergamum as "intellectual nature." More specifically, it stands for the cooperation of our intellect in the whole process of spiritual unfoldment.

Rev. 2:13 "'I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is; you hold fast my name and you did not deny my faith. . . .'"

This is praise given to our intellect. Our intellect is "holding fast" to our commitment to Spirit even though "Satan's throne" is located within it. Satan is the biblical symbol of negative thinking and erroneous beliefs. Satan's throne represents that matrix for all human error and negativity. It is located in the human intellect. The Christ Mind praises our intellect for "holding fast" in spite of the fact that so much negativity and error are going on within it!

When we consider that "Satan's throne" is right within our intellect at this time, we cannot help but wonder how we have managed to keep ourselves as faithful and loyal to Truth as we have.

But praiseworthy as it is, our intellect is in need of further improvement when it comes to cooperating with the process of spiritual unfoldment.

Rev. 2:14 "'But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam. . . eat food sacrificed to idols and practice immorality.'"

These things mentioned are symbolic references to very common faults and shortcomings still active in the intellects of human beings who are otherwise committed to Spirit and to Truth. It is not necessary to be too specific about what these errors actually are, but in general they are:

- (1) Superstitious and negative types of religious thinking.
- (2) Materialistic greed and worship of personalities.
- (3) Connecting our sense of I Am to negative emotions.

Rev. 2:17 "'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone which no one knows except him who receives it.'"

First, how do we overcome and correct the faults and shortcomings in our intellectual nature where spiritual unfoldment is concerned? Nothing is more helpful than the Unity method of correct use of denial and affirmation. The intellect is thus being trained to "feed" on divine ideas instead of "food sacrificed to idols." This also trains our intellect to connect our sense of I AM only to divine ideas instead of erroneous beliefs and negative emotions. Charles Fillmore taught that the correct use of denial and affirmation would eventually "spiritualize the whole intellect."

The first part of the reward promised for this particular overcoming is: "I will give some of the hidden manna." This refers to the discovery of an entirely new source of energy and nourishment. This source is not a visible, tangible "something" out in the world. It is a "hidden" source, which means that it is within. It is simply the higher levels of our own being.

The nourishment derived from these higher levels of being within us is more than physical. It nourishes the soul first, then the body. It benefits the whole man. There is no waste matter; nothing needs to be eliminated following its assimilation by us. In the Gospels, Jesus alludes to this very thing when He says to His disciples, "I have food to eat of which you do not know." (John 4:32) This "hidden manna" is the vital life, substance, and energy of Spirit, directly assimilated into our entire being. Other symbolic terms that refer to this are "bread from heaven," "body of Christ," "blood of Christ."

The second part of the reward promised is, ". . . and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone which no one knows except him who receives it." This refers to a new and higher realization of I AM. In the past, when most of us said, "I am," we were usually thinking of only our current opinions of ourselves. Greater realization of I AM is much more than an opinion of one's self, it is more of an awareness of our Real Self. Our Real Self is so much greater than any opinion we can ever have of ourself. It requires our reaching a higher level of consciousness within ourselves to even bear facing a realization of our Real Self. This is the "white stone" mentioned. In this "white stone," or purified state of consciousness, we learn our "new name," an entirely new realization of our true I AM.

Lesson 4

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. Metaphysical meaning of the church of Thyatira.
2. Praise for the church.
3. Criticism for the church.
4. Promise of reward for overcoming that which is criticized.

II. READINGS

1. Rev. 2:18-2:29
2. Metaphysical Bible Dictionary: "Thyatira"
3. Be Ye Transformed Pages 212, 213

III. QUESTIONS

1. Metaphysically, what does the church of Thyatira stand for in human nature?
2. Give a general summary of praise given to the church.
3. Give a general summary of criticism given to the church.
4. Give a general summary of the reward for overcoming to be given.

Lesson 4

Rev. 2:18 LETTER TO THE CHURCH OF THYATIRA

Thyatira means "rushing headlong; burning incense." The Metaphysical Bible Dictionary gives the metaphysical meaning of this church as: "Zeal is the central thought represented by this church; it is also connected with power and faith." (p. 654) We can think of the church of Thyatira as the zeal center within us in connection with our spiritual unfoldment. Zeal is the quality which makes us enthusiastic and interested in all that aids our growth in consciousness. It enables us to remain enthusiastic and interested in life itself. Without it we would be entirely passive, subjective, and mechanical. With it we are always able to be motivated and inspired.

Rev. 2:19 "'I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first.'"

We notice that in the wording of this praise, the first thing mentioned is "works," and the last thing mentioned is also "works," followed by, "and that your latter works exceed the first." In other words, progressively greater works. This is true progress. Zeal is the quality most involved in gaining progress. If the zeal center (church of Thyatira) was not active in us, our lives would be in danger of becoming treadmills of tedious and pointless activity. Spiritual unfoldment would be impeded seriously. But zeal prevents this from happening.

Rev. 2:20 "'But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman JEZEBEL. . . .'"

The word Jezebel means, among other things, "licentious; adulterous; uncontrolled." Metaphysically she stands for negative emotions. Negative emotions can be very hard to control but unless they are, they can do great damage. As an actual character, Jezebel was evidently a seductive but extremely dangerous person. Metaphysically this also seems true about what she symbolizes. Few persons can resist their allure. But to succumb to them always brings painful results.

Why is there something so strangely attractive to us in negative emotions? Possibly one reason is that they always promise us the pleasure of a kind of excitement. We are attracted to excitement, even negative excitement. But negative excitement is so often followed by depression. That is often the penalty for succumbing to Jezebel (negative emotions).

Rev. 2:22 "'Behold, I will throw her on a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her doings.'"

The type of adultery mentioned here consists of connecting our sense of I AM to any negative emotions. Negative emotions come into all persons at various times. But no great harm is done if they simply come to a person. But great harm will be done if a person places his sense of I AM into them. This is the "sin" of adultery. To "repent of this sin" simply means to disconnect your sense of I AM from whatever negative emotion it had been connected to. Once we begin to seriously practice refusing to connect our sense of I AM to any negative emotions that come to us, we are on the way to perfect self-control and spiritual dominion and mastery.

Rev. 2:26-28 "He who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, I will give him power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron . . . and I will give him the morning star."

This reward symbolizes perfect self-control; non-negative self discipline. There is no guilt or regret connected with this kind of self-control and discipline. The "morning star" is a symbol of divine guidance. Divine guidance being followed with zeal, self-control, and self-discipline helps us to become what we are designed to become: MASTERS OF EXISTENCE!

Lesson 5

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. Metaphysical meaning of the church of Sardis.
2. Praise for the church.
3. Criticism for the church.
4. Promise of reward for overcoming that which is criticized.

II. READINGS

1. Rev. 3:1-3:6
2. Metaphysical Bible Dictionary: "Sardis"
3. Be Ye Transformed Pages 213-215

III. QUESTIONS

1. Metaphysically, what does the church of Sardis stand for in human nature?
2. Give a general summary of praise given to the church.
3. Give a general summary of criticism given to the church.
4. Give a general summary of the reward for overcoming to be given.

Lesson 5

Rev. 3:1 LETTER TO THE CHURCH OF SARDIS

The word Sardis means "precious gem; prince of joy." Metaphysically, it stands for our inner center of joyous power and dominion; our true awareness of our spiritual individuality.

Rev. 3:1, 2 "' . . . I know your works; you have the name of being alive, and you are dead. Awake, and strengthen what remains and is on the point of death, for I have not found your works perfect in the sight of my God.'"

These are very strange words, mixing praise and criticism within one statement. They indicate and the Christ Mind judges that we have been using our individual power and dominion in an only slightly satisfactory way. It is a church in us that is alive and, yet, is also "dead." This is a paradox but, nevertheless, it is true.

We have been taught since we came into Truth that, as children of God, we have spiritual power, dominion, and authority as individuals. Jesus told us that the same power that was in Him is also in us and that we should follow Him in using that power as we see the need for it. We are free to follow Divine Guidance in expressing our individuality. And we have done so. But to what degree? This letter indicates that it has been to very little degree. It indicates that our individual power and dominion is remaining dormant for the most part. This inference is contained in the words, "and you are dead."

What can be causing this? What factors may be holding back our full expression of the power and dominion that is ours? There appear to be at least two possible reasons:

- (1) Many of us have the tendency to wait to use our spiritual power until some very big issue comes up in our lives. There is the tendency to think that spiritual power should only be called forth to handle great, important problems or events. But if we wait for the big, big challenges to come up before we exercise our spiritual power and dominion, we may have too long to wait. Stagnation and inertia may set in, and we will become weak.

The solution? We can use our spiritual power and dominion in the so-called little things of life. Everyday problems, common troubles, any healing need we become aware of, ordinary misunderstandings, in fact, all the little details of life are valid opportunities for us to call forth and use our individual power and dominion.

- (2) The second reason why our inner spiritual power may seem to become depleted (go dead) is that we tend to externalize too much of it when we do use it. That is, we sometimes become more concerned with outer accomplishments than we are in inner soul growth. The wisest and most productive use of our power and dominion is on our inner self, our own thinking, emotions, attitudes, reactions. Power used here causes an INCREASE OF POWER, not a depletion.

Rev. 3:5 "He who conquers shall be clad thus in white garments, and I will not blot his name out of the book of life; I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels."

The first part of this promise mentions the reward of being "clad thus in white garments." "White garments" is a symbol of two things: clean feeling about one's self, and a pure, non-negative attitude connected with self-control. This type of self-control is not the grim and determined type of negative self-control. Rather it is a matter of thinking, feeling, and doing only what your Real Self knows to be best. The motive is desire for the highest good of all. This type of self-control gives us a truly "clean" feeling (white garments).

The second part of the promise is, "I will not blot his name out of the book of life; I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels." To be "blotted out of the book of life" means to have a feeling of being useless in God's world. It is also a feeling of suffering a loss of individuality.

When we overcome these negative feelings by affirming the Truth of our oneness with the Father, our sense of individuality is restored, and the false belief in our uselessness is eliminated. Instead of thinking of ourselves as "blots" in the book of life, we know that our "names" are fully written out in the book of life.

Earlier, in the Gospels, Jesus states this same idea when He says to the returning seventy, ". . . rejoice that your names are written in heaven." (Luke 10:20) Your name written in heaven refers to knowing your true identity and your right place within life.

Lesson 6

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. Metaphysical meaning of the church of Philadelphia.
2. Praise for the church.
3. Criticism for the church.
4. Promise of reward for overcoming that which is criticized.

II. READINGS

1. Rev. 3:7-3:13
2. Metaphysical Bible Dictionary: "Philadelphia"
3. Be Ye Transformed Pages 215, 216

III. QUESTIONS

1. Metaphysically, what does the church of Philadelphia stand for in human nature?
2. Give a general summary of praise given to the church.
3. Give a general summary of criticism given to the church.
4. Give a general summary of the reward for overcoming to be given.

Lesson 6

Rev. 3:7 LETTER TO THE CHURCH OF PHILADELPHIA

The word Philadelphia means "brotherly love." Metaphysically, it is the center of the human expression of love. As a divine idea, there is only one love. The church of Philadelphia does not stand for the divine idea of love, but for the many modes of human expression of love. In human nature, the current realization and expression of love as commonly practiced is quite limited and imperfect (in comparison to what it might be). For this reason, very little praise for this church is contained in this letter. It simply states: "'I know your works." (Rev. 3:8)

But this abrupt statement is immediately followed by words of wonderful reassurance: "' . . . I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut; I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.'" (Rev. 3:8)

These words tell us something about our human love nature which we are glad to hear. Even though most human beings are not at present accomplishing things through love which could and should be accomplished, nevertheless, a genuine desire to do so is present in most persons. The Christ Mind recognizes this. Most people want to be more loving. Most people have good intentions about giving and receiving love in right ways. Most people would rather be kind than unkind. No one seems to be perfect in any of this as yet. But we want to be! And that is what counts in Spirit. So the Christ Mind has made this wonderful provision for us: "'Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. . . .'"

What this means is the Christ Power has established ETERNAL OPPORTUNITY for our human love nature. Never will we be deprived of love in our lives. We need not fear that we will be deprived of opportunities to give and receive love. We need never worry that the time will come when we will not be loved or will not have anyone to love. This shall not happen. This is a promise of the Christ Mind. It has decreed to our human love nature (church of Philadelphia) that one open door has been set before it (eternal opportunities to love) and that nothing in the outer can take this away from it (no one can shut it).

NOTE: There is a lovely affirmation one may use to help keep this realization alive in consciousness: I AM A RADIATING CENTER OF DIVINE LOVE: MIGHTY TO ATTRACT MY GOOD AND TO RADIATE GOOD TO OTHERS.

But like most aspects of human nature at its present level of development, there is a shortcoming. In our human love nature, this shortcoming is pointed out in words very similar to those found in the letter to the church in Smyrna.

Rev. 3:9 "'Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie. . . .'"

Once again, as in the case of the church of Smyrna (prosperity thinking), we have the danger of the presence of thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and attitudes which claim to be helping the development of our love nature (they say they are Jews) but are actually hindering the correct expression of our Love nature (are not Jews, but are of the synagogue of Satan).

It is a sad fact that although humanity values love very highly, considering it the most beautiful of all spiritual qualities, there are still many mistaken beliefs, attitudes, and actions in regard to expressing it, especially in the give-and-take among human beings. Some of these errors have become so widely accepted that it becomes difficult to change them. But once they are detected as errors in our thinking, change is then very possible. Among them we might list:

- (1) In a human love relationship, it is necessary to have certain negative emotions, such as possessiveness, passion, jealousy, and exaggerated sentimentality.
- (2) The belief that someone or something can take love away from us.
- (3) The notion that love is something which can only come to us from without. This is a reversal of Truth, and it causes many wrong connections and wrong priorities in our thinking. Love can be experienced by us as we radiate it from within.
- (4) The belief that we should evaluate the love that is in our lives by comparing it with the love which seems to be in other persons' lives. The Truth is that love should be felt as AN INDIVIDUALLY PRECIOUS THING, with no need to make comparisons with what another has.
- (5) The tendency to love only those who first give us pleasure or who serve our self interests. (Jesus had some interesting things to say about this. Read Matt. 5:43-48.)

Rev. 3:12 "'Him who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God; never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem which comes from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.'"

This promise symbolically describes the attainment of a state of true inner peace, poise, and stability. This most satisfying of all possible inner states is gained by overcoming most of the erroneous beliefs and attitudes concerning human love and following a more spiritually correct pattern in expressing human love.

"I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God" symbolizes the attainment of a realization of strength and peace (pillar).

"Never shall he go out of it" symbolizes becoming no longer a creature of emotional moods, whims, and one who is prone to "fall out" of love without warning.

"I will write on him the name of my God" refers to the name of the human concept of God, which is I AM. (I AM is not really the name of God, but rather names the human concept of or human perception of God.)

"'. . . and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem. . . .'"
The word Jerusalem means "habitation of peace." To have the name of God (I AM) and the name of the city of my God (habitation of peace) written upon a person, symbolizes the gaining by that person of a new realization that: I AM THE HABITATION OF GOD'S PEACE, AND MY HEART IS THE ABODE OF GOD'S PERFECT LOVE.

Lesson 7

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. Metaphysical meaning of the church of Laodicea.
2. Praise for the church.
3. Criticism for the church.
4. Promise of reward for overcoming that which is criticized.

II. READINGS

1. Rev. 3:14-3:22
2. Metaphysical Bible Dictionary: "Laodicea"
3. Be Ye Transformed Pages 217, 218

III. QUESTIONS

1. Metaphysically, what does the church of Laodicea stand for in human nature?
2. Give a general summary of praise given to the church.
3. Give a general summary of criticism given to the church.
4. Give a general summary of the reward for overcoming to be given.

Lesson 7

Rev. 3:14 LETTER TO THE CHURCH OF LAODICEA

The word Laodicea means "judgment of the people." Metaphysically, it stands for human judgment. Judgment is our faculty of discerning, evaluating, and making decisions. It is not surprising that the Christ Mind has very little praise to give this church in its present state. All that is said to it is, "I know your works. . . ." Even though this is but scant praise, at least it is something. It indicates that at least we are "working" to develop better judgment. There is obviously much that is still wrong in our human judgments, but at least the Christ Mind is aware that we are working to improve it.

Rev. 3:15, 16 "' . . . You are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue you out of my mouth.'"

The lukewarm state so criticized by the Christ Mind symbolizes human reluctance to make decisions of either yea, yea, or nay, nay. It pertains to the fear many persons have to avail themselves of opportunities for choice and freedom of choice. It also includes the strange sort of reluctance some people have toward the fact that they are free to decide where to connect their sense of I AM. Too often we wait until someone or something outside ourselves tells us how to discern, what evaluation to make, and what decision we should make. This keeps our judgment faculty (church of Laodicea) in a non-creative (lukewarm) state. The Christ Mind indicates that for purposes of further spiritual unfoldment, this is unsatisfactory.

Rev. 3:17 "'For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing; not knowing you are that wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.'"

This criticism of the Christ Mind toward human judgment refers to the fallacy of believing that our human judgment does not need further improvement ("I am rich. . . I need nothing") or that it is in any way fallible. No matter how good our judgment may seem to be, human judgment is always in need of improvement. In our human judgments, we need constant light from higher levels of being. That higher level is the Christ Mind, which needs to enter into our human judgment. The Christ Mind is always willing to do this. It is symbolized in these words:

Rev. 3:20 "'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.'"

If we want the illumination of divine guidance in our decision making, we need but acknowledge our willingness and ask for that guidance. If we open our minds and hearts to it, it will enter.

Rev. 3:21 "'He who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.'"

In Bible symbolism, a throne stands for a state of using good judgment. We are told here by the Christ Mind that if we want to sit on the throne (attain a high state of good judgment) we should remember that at any time we are discerning, evaluating, or making decisions, we should first take time to ask for the light of Christ to enter our judgment faculty (church of Laodicea) and work through us to illumine and guide us. If we do so, the Christ Mind will not fail us.

Lesson 8

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. Metaphysical significance of God designated as ONE.
2. Metaphysical meaning of the twenty-four elders.
3. Metaphysical meaning of the four beasts around the throne.
4. Metaphysical meaning of the four horsemen.

II. READINGS

1. Rev. 4:1-6:8
2. Be Ye Transformed Pages 219-226

III. QUESTIONS

1. From your own metaphysical understanding, explain the statement, "ONE seated on the throne."
2. List the four beasts and tell what each stands for in human nature.
3. What does the book with the seven seals stand for?
4. Why is only the Lamb worthy to open the seven seals of the book?
5. List the four horsemen and tell what each stands for.

Lesson 8

Rev. 4:2 "At once I was in the spirit, and lo, a throne stood in heaven, with ONE seated on the throne!"

Here is the great symbol which describes the sense of the presence of God. It is ONE. Just ONE. Not one this, or one that, but ONE itself! This requires metaphysical thinking for comprehension. God is ONE but not in the sense of one object, one person, or one being. God is ONE in the true meaning of oneness itself (some persons refer to this as "Allness," but that is not quite the same thing; almost, but not quite.) God is not like the numerical digit 1, because in arithmetic the digit 1 can be followed by 2, 3, etc. This is not so of God. God is ONE without anything coming before or after.

Rev. 4:3 "And he who sat there appeared like jasper and carnelian, and round the throne was a rainbow that looked like an emerald."

The author equates the God presence with precious jewels and a rainbow. What distinguishes precious jewels and rainbows is their relationship to light. Precious jewels and rainbows have the appearances they have because of the effects of light. Without the radiance of light, we could not perceive the preciousness of jewels nor the beauty of a rainbow. Equating this idea with the description of the God presence, we are able to perceive God's presence only as there is light in our consciousness. Light is the biblical symbol of living intelligence and spiritual awareness.

Rev. 4:4 "Round the throne were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clad in white garments, with golden crowns upon their heads."

Metaphysically the twenty-four elders symbolize the twelve powers functioning in a manner which seems to double their effectiveness. When we are in a strong sense of awareness of God's presence, our twelve powers have a powerful beneficial action on our own inner nature, and outwardly into our life conditions and affairs. This two-fold direction of their benefits is symbolized in the number twenty-four.

Also, when our twelve powers are being utilized in worshipping God, they become imbued with pure power ("clad in white garments"), and they increase greatly in value to our spiritual unfoldment (wore crowns of gold). Also, they find expression through us in a very stable and mature manner (elders).

Rev. 4:6 ". . . and before the throne there is as it were a sea of glass, like crystal. And round the throne on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind. . . ."

To be "before the throne" means to be in a high state of good judgment. When we are using good judgment, there extends into our future an unlimited area of pure potentialities of good. This is the symbolism of the sea of glass and crystal. The sea stands for unlimited possibilities. Glass and crystal stand for purity.

"Eyes in front and behind" refers to the powers of foresight and hindsight. These are possessed by the four beasts mentioned. The four beasts in Rev. 4:7 represent the four main aspects of human nature. They are:

- (1) "like a lion"--physicality, the physical aspect of man, the physical body.
- (2) "like an ox"--subjective and emotional nature of man, the emotional or astral body.
- (3) "With the face of a man"--mental or intellectual nature of man, mental body.
- (4) "like a flying eagle"--inspirational and intuitive nature of man, etheric body.

Rev. 5 THE BOOK WITH SEVEN SEALS

This chapter introduces us to the book sealed with seven seals. There is consternation in heaven because no man was yet able to lift the seals and open the book to read it. We are told that only the Lamb is found worthy to take the book and open the seals.

The book symbolizes full self-understanding and self-mastery. The seals on the book represent barriers to the process of self-understanding. Most people are not yet capable of gaining full insight into themselves because of the presence of certain mental and emotional "blocks" (seals).

The Lamb represents the gentle, kind, and forgiving nature of our Christ Self. Christ is totally harmless; all powerful, but harmless. Only through this attitude, symbolized as the Lamb, can any person gain the insights necessary to full self-understanding (open the seals).

Rev. 6 OPENING THE SEVEN SEALS

The opening of the seven seals by the Lamb symbolizes the gaining of insights leading to full self-understanding and self-discipline. Each seal that is opened represents the gaining of another step of insight into the inner workings of our own human nature.

Rev. 6:2 "And I saw, and behold, a white horse, and its rider had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer."

The white horse and rider stand for our spiritual aspirations, based upon our understanding of Truth, motivated by our commitment to Spirit. This comes first, and it overcomes all obstacles (went out to conquer).

Rev. 6:4 "And out came another horse, bright red; its rider was permitted to take peace from the earth, so that man should slay one another; and he was given a great sword."

The red horse and rider stand for our human tendency toward violence. Red is the color that symbolizes passion, and violence is one of the most common expressions of passion. This is still a quite active tendency in human nature. All wars among nations are a collective manifestation of this individual trait.

Rev. 6:5-6 ". . . and I saw, and behold, a black horse, and its rider had a balance in his hand; and I heard what seemed to be a voice . . . saying 'A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; but do not harm oil and wine!'"

The black horse and rider stand for the human tendency toward materialist greed and anxiety. When we read the words which the voice speaks in regard to this black horse and rider, we have a perfect illustration of this tendency. Materialistic greed and anxiety always make a fuss about possessions and profits. It is significant that black is the most opaque of colors, and materialistic anxiety is the most opaque of emotions in human nature.

Rev. 6:8 "And I saw, and behold, a pale horse, and its rider's name was Death, and Hades followed him; and they were given power over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by wild beasts of the earth."

The pale horse and rider stand for the habit of fear in general (pale), and also the belief in the inevitability of death (pale). Fear and belief in death are causing a drain of substance and vitality from our natures (pale). Death is the most misunderstood phenomenon in human experience. Until the Truth concerning it is perceived, mankind will continue to fear it. What we fear, we believe in. What we believe in, we hold in mind. What we hold in mind manifests after its kind.

Lesson 9

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. Metaphysical meaning of the souls under the altar.
2. Metaphysical significance of the earthquake under the 6th seal.
3. Metaphysical significance of "God will wipe away every tear."
4. Metaphysical significance of SILENCE under the 7th seal.
5. Implications of afflictions and earthly suffering in general.

II. READINGS

1. Rev. 6:9-9:21
2. Be Ye Transformed Pages 226-236

III. QUESTIONS

1. Metaphysically, what do the souls under the altar stand for in human nature?
2. What does the earthquake under the 6th seal symbolize?
3. What is the metaphysical symbolism of the number 144,000?
4. From your own metaphysical understanding, comment upon the fact that SILENCE is under the 7th seal.
5. Should we try to justify and explain earthly suffering? If not, what should we attempt to do about it?

Lesson 9

Rev. 6:9-10 "When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne; they cried out with a loud voice, 'O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before thou wilt judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell upon the earth?'"

The vision under the fifth seal symbolizes something which occupies a large part in the subconsciousness of most persons: old disappointments and unhappy memories of being mistreated. These memories in us want to be assured that God's law of divine justice works. They want to be released from our subconscious (under the altar).

Rev. 6:11 "Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been."

These words spoken to those under the altar constitute the assurance from the Christ Mind that God's law of divine compensation (justice) is always working, no matter how things may outwardly seem. All shall receive justice and right compensation under divine law. No good effort remains unrewarded. No unjust treatment remains uncompensated for. Even unhappy memories can be transformed into useful experience.

Rev. 6:12 "When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake. . . ."

The imagery of this sixth vision is so complex that it seems to defy point-by-point analysis. But, in general, it symbolically describes the continuation of the process of God's law of divine justice and compensation being fulfilled.

Many of our greatest rewards and compensations start out as seeming chaos and confusion (earthquake). But often, in reality, things are not shaking apart and getting worse, but they are shaking into new relationships in order to get better. Many of the "earthquakes" in our lives are really preludes for blessings, preludes to success.

Rev. 7:2-4 "Then I saw another angel ascend from the rising of the sun, with the seal of the living God. . . .saying, 'Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God upon their foreheads.' And I heard the number of the sealed, a hundred and forty-four thousand sealed, out of every tribe of the sons of Israel."

The twelve tribes of Israel symbolize the twelve spiritual faculties of man. The "seal of God" symbolizes the identity of a divine idea. The twelve faculties originate as divine ideas--144,000 is twelve times twelve, followed by three zeros. Zeros always symbolize "unlimited or unspecified." Here we have reference to the perfected human consciousness, which would be the twelve faculties combined and blended and integrated so that they, in a sense, "multiply one another to an unlimited degree (144,000)."

Rev. 7:13-17 "Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, 'Who are these, clothed in white robes, and whence have they come?' I said to him, 'Sir, you know.' And he said to me, 'These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night within his temple; and he who sits upon the throne will shelter them with his presence. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more. . . .For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living waters; and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.'"

The great majority of human tears are shed over regrets, guilts, and hurt feelings. Countless tears have been, and are still being shed for these causes. As a person grows in spiritual understanding, he begins to realize more and more that such tears are not as necessary as he once thought they were. He finds fewer occasions for tears. And when he comes into the fullness of understanding of the meaning of Christ within, he ceases further tears. In this manner it can be said that "God will wipe away every tear."

Rev. 8:1 "When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour."

This is the culmination of the opening of the seven seals. This final step in the process of self-discovery is the realization of the meaning of becoming inwardly still and silent.

Knowing how to enter the true silence is usually one of the final things a person learns to do in his efforts to attain self-understanding and self-mastery. The ability to become inwardly still and silent is a mark of real attainment in development of spiritual consciousness. Silence begins with the quieting of all inner mechanical talking. It is a conscious, willing merging of self with the great SILENT principle of Being.

All ideas and principles are, "in the beginning," silence or light. But in order to be brought into expression and become manifest, they are brought into the realm of vibration, which is the realm formed by the power of the Word. The power of the Word produces expressions and manifestations of silent ideas and principles. But all ideas and principles originate and reside in the silence.

AFFLICTIONS UPON THE EARTH

Rev. 8:7 Hail and fire, mixed with blood, fall upon earth and burn much of its vegetation.

Rev. 8:8 A third of the seas turn into blood.

Rev. 8:10-11 A star called Wormwood falls into the waters of the earth and turns the waters bitter.

Rev. 8:12 Much of the earth is enveloped in total darkness.

Rev. 9:3-6 A plague of stinging locusts torments mankind for five months.

Rev. 9:17 An army of monstrous creatures riding fire-breathing horses ride over the earth, killing a third of its inhabitants.

These strange and disturbing visions symbolize the various aspects of what we view as earthly suffering in general. No explanation is given as to why these afflictions occur. No justification is offered. It is a mystery. It just seems to happen.

The same appears to be the case concerning earthly suffering in general. For most persons, there is not a satisfactory explanation as to WHY we suffer. There are explanations as to what causes suffering, and what kind of suffering is endured, but no real answer as to WHY. There seems no real justification for much of it. To most people, earthly suffering, on the whole, is a big mystery with no logical explanation. Like the afflictions in chapters eight and nine of Revelation, it just seems to happen.

NOTE: It is important to realize that when the word "WHY?" is used in connection with questioning earthly suffering, it does not mean the same as, "How did it happen?" or "What caused it?" The word WHY is asking for a "good reason" or a "useful justification."

There are some further details concerning these visions of earthly suffering which are interesting to note:

- (1) They are all temporary disasters. None affect the earth permanently. This is true of all general suffering. It is always temporary. Suffering may be a part of a cycle within a person's life, but it does not become all of a person's life. A person's life is eternal, but nothing that occurs as a part of a person's life is eternal. Events and conditions are always temporary, including all forms of suffering.

- (2) These visions describe only part of the Earth and its inhabitants to be afflicted at any given time. This fact symbolizes an important metaphysical point. Only a certain part of a person's being can suffer; not one's entire being. And only a portion of one's existence can be afflicted at any given time; not one's whole life. This may seem scant comfort, but at least it offers some comfort. Forms of earthly suffering, such as pain, disappointment, depression, anxiety, grief, lack, etc.; even though these hurt part of the man (1/3 of the earth), they do not and cannot harm the whole man. The Real Self of a person is always higher and greater than any part of himself that is suffering. And, eventually, new good can be brought forth even from suffering.

Lesson 10

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. Metaphysical meaning of the little scroll that tastes sweet but becomes "bitter in the stomach."
2. The primary purpose for metaphysical Bible interpretation.
3. Metaphysical meaning of the two witnesses.
4. The metaphysical meaning of the refusal of the two witnesses to remain dead after they were killed.

II. READINGS

1. Rev. 10:1-11:19
2. Be Ye Transformed Pages 236-239

III. QUESTIONS

1. Why is what the little scroll stands for "sweet as honey in the mouth" but "bitter in the stomach?"
2. What should be our primary goal in our study of Truth, and especially in metaphysical Bible interpretation?
3. What do the two witnesses stand for in human nature?
4. How are the two witnesses sometimes killed? Why do they refuse to stay dead?

Lesson 10

Rev. 10:8-10 "Then the voice which I had heard from heaven spoke to me again, saying, 'Go, take the scroll which is open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land.' So I went to the angel and told him to give me the little scroll; and he said to me, 'Take it and eat; it will be bitter to your stomach, but sweet as honey in your mouth.' And I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and ate it; it was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it my stomach was made bitter."

The little scroll stands for the letter and the theory of metaphysical Truth teachings. In the form of a body of knowledge which can be learned, it is symbolized as a scroll in an angel's hand, which can be "eaten." In this form (knowledge of letter of Truth) it makes a sweet impression on our minds.

But knowledge of Truth must become digested into consciousness (in the stomach) in order to be put to work in one's life. It is here that the bitterness can be felt. Just learning the knowledge about spiritual healing can be a "sweet" experience. Needing a healing is a bitter thing. And using Truth to attain healing can sometimes prove to be rather a bitter effort. The same is true concerning forgiveness, letting go, non-resistance, etc.

NOTE: It comes as somewhat of a pleasant surprise to many Truth students to eventually learn that it is not good for life to be all sweet. As one advances in spiritual understanding, he realizes that "bitterness" is just as valid and useful a part of life experience as "sweetness" is.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

After dealing with the interpretation of Revelation up to this point, a student might understandably get a bit weary with so much reference to difficulties and suffering. At this point it might be well to remind ourselves that the book of Revelation is a symbolic book, highly symbolic. It deals with the continued growth and unfoldment of our souls AFTER WE HAVE COME INTO THE WAY OF TRUTH AS REVEALED BY JESUS CHRIST. What this strange book has to tell us is that there are certain things a person can learn, accept, and understand ONLY AFTER he or she has made a serious commitment to Spirit.

For a time, most souls go through cycles of existence in which the goal of all their efforts is simply to get what they think they want, and avoid as much trouble and pain as is humanly possible. This can be the goal of life for many persons. Some may spend whole lifetimes never growing beyond this goal.

But some persons grow beyond this point and begin to see that self-seeking and finding ease and pleasure are not the highest goals to seek in life. Many Truth students come to realize that SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING is the most worthwhile of all goals. Then the direction of that person's life begins to turn away from certain past preoccupations and grows into new realizations.

In studying metaphysical Bible interpretation, we are attempting to learn and understand Truth which will take us out of many of the old habits and limitations of mechanical existence. While we know that the nature of life, the essence of life, and the purpose of life are GOOD, we also reconcile ourselves to the fact that there are many factors yet within life which we still react to as NOT GOOD. And it is to help us receive more light on certain of these factors that our Bible, and especially the book of Revelation, so often deals with difficult or unpleasant subjects.

Rev. 11:3-12 THE TWO WITNESSES

This section deals with the "two witnesses" who are killed by "the beast that ascends from the bottomless pit." They are dead for three and a half days, but come back to life and go "up to heaven in a cloud."

The meaning of the two witnesses has to be something which illustrates of character of bearing witness, or giving testimony to something concerning the Christ within. Yet they also have to be something that can be temporarily killed or suppressed in us by uprisings of negativity (beast ascending from the bottomless pit). Yet they are things which always spring back to life again in us.

Two things about the human soul which seem to fit into this symbolism would certainly be:

- (1) Good intentions.
- (2) Compassionate attitudes.

These two factors in consciousness, when alive and working, bear witness for us and give testimony for us that we are serious in our commitment to Spirit, and to our faith in God. But when sudden uprisings of negativity (beast) come from that mysterious, unexplainable "somewhere" (bottomless pit), very often these two factors in us become its first victims. Our good intentions and our compassionate attitudes go "dead."

But they refuse to stay dead! "But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet. . . . Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, 'Come up hither!' And in the sight of their foes they went up to heaven in a cloud."
(Rev. 11:11-12)

Good intentions that are based on knowledge of Truth never die. Also, compassionate attitudes that are based on knowledge of Truth never die. Negativeness that seems to come from nowhere may seem to wipe them out for a while, but they always return to life. As they return to life in us, they always become stronger. And they also resume a larger and more important place in our lives.

Lesson 11

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. Symbolism of the beast and the bottomless pit.
2. The contradictory nature of the beast.
3. The metaphysical idea of "pangs of birth" or "travail."
4. The metaphysical meaning of the birth of a new male child.
5. Symbolism of the number 666.
6. The self-destructive nature of error and evil.

II. READINGS

1. Rev. 11:1-16:21
2. Be Ye Transformed Pages 240-253

III. QUESTIONS

1. Metaphysically, what does the beast stand for?
2. Give a metaphysical commentary on a "bottomless pit."
3. How are the "pangs of birth" or "travail" different from ordinary suffering?
4. What is the metaphysical meaning of the birth of a new male child?
5. What is the significance of the number 666?
6. What is the one point all metaphysical schools of thought agree upon in regard to error and evil?

Lesson 11

Rev. 11:7 (and elsewhere) THE BEAST AND THE BOTTOMLESS PIT

Who and what is this "beast that ascends from the bottomless pit?" What is it that temporarily kills our two witnesses and causes so much anguish and harm? The beast of Revelation is the metaphysical symbol of negativeness and violence still in existence in human nature.

Where does this negativity come from? In Revelation, it is symbolized as a "bottomless pit."

- (1) There is NO BOTTOM to it, which means there is no basis of reality to it.
- (2) It is an ENDLESS HOLE, which means there is no real substance to it. Figuratively speaking, it is "nothing" coming from "nowhere." Yet it does manifest; it has its terminus point at three dimensional existence on Earth. The paradox is that it has no starting point, but it has an ending point, which is the realm of outer appearance.
- (3) Perhaps a summing up could be: The bottomless pit symbolizes the enigma of unreality brought into an appearance of reality, of nothingness being cast into a mold of somethingness. It is an age-old mystery. And the mystery is not solved by simply saying, "It doesn't exist." The beast does exist, but not for much longer!

The beast in Revelation stands for generalized evil or error in human experience. It is the greatest mystery and most infuriating paradox in human thinking. No one has ever been able to explain it. Some have tried to "explain it away" by simply claiming that "there ain't no such thing." But intelligence knows better. It exists. Our greatest authority on things metaphysical and Spiritual is Jesus Christ. Jesus only goes so far as to say this about "the devil": "a liar and the father of lies." (John 8:44) Jesus does not say that it does not exist. He says that it exists as a lie which produces other lies.

Further on in Revelation, there are additional references to this paradox:

Rev. 17:8 "The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is to ascend from the bottomless pit and go to perdition. . . it was and is not and is yet to come."

Rev. 17:11 "As for the beast that was and is not, it is. . . and it goes to perdition."

All this strange, seeming double-talk is actually illustrating one of the most subtle and difficult ideas for human thinking to comprehend. Evil, error, sin, and negativity (beast) come out of unreality (bottomless pit) and eventually must go back into ineffectiveness (perdition). It is the energy generated by the mind of man which gives temporary form to evil for a time (beast that was), but this is not permanent (yet is NOT). Therefore, even when negativity is being formed into temporary existence, it is a part of the process what will take it back into the nothingness from whence it came.

NOTE: It is very important to remember that all we are dealing with here TAKES PLACE IN MAN'S CONSCIOUSNESS!

Rev. 12:1-2 "And a great portent appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; she was with child and she cried out in her pangs of birth ("travailing in birth" KJV), in anguish for delivery."

Here we are presented with the idea of "pangs of birth" or "travail," which refers to the experience of productive or useful suffering. The woman stands for our illumined feeling nature that is committed to things spiritual. The child she is to deliver refers to our bringing forth a higher, finer development of our own nature. To successfully become a finer and better person often originates with a feeling of "travail" or useful suffering. This is never agonizing, nor is it ever unbearable. It is of short duration, and it resolves into the most rewarding of all human accomplishments, THE NEW BIRTH, or "becoming a better human being."

Rev. 12:4 ". . . And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bear a child, that he might devour her child when she brought it forth."

The habits of negativity and violence in human nature constantly appear as threats to our efforts at self-improvement and spiritual unfoldment. Each new birth shortens the days of the "ascendency of the beast," so it assumes the role of enemy toward our own self-improvement.

Rev. 12:5-6 ". . .she brought forth a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne, and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which to be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days."

Once our new birth process begins, it will continue. Error and negativity may try to interfere, but they cannot prevail. Divine law gives our feeling nature protection and strength to enable us to continue this great process of self-evolution into higher consciousness. The woman (our feeling nature) gives birth to the male child (improved self) and is under the laws of divine guidance and divine protection throughout and after the event.

Rev. 13:4 ". . . who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?"

Error and negativity can assume a bewildering number and variety of shapes and forms in our human experience. We often tend to evaluate the seriousness of an error by the form it assumes. But this leads to many false conclusions. Error is simply error. Negativity is simply negativity.

Regardless of the form it assumes, or the numbers involved in its appearances, it is always OVERCOME BY TRUTH THINKING. Error thinking believes in "safety in numbers," but Truth thinking realizes that all safety and strength lie in ONE source of help, which is God.

The "beast worshippers" represent a strange tendency in human nature. Human thinking can become strongly impressed and influenced by the vast number of appearances of error and negativity in the world. So much so that, in a sense, a person may begin to "worship" it, for the reason that he may believe that it is dangerous not to. Large numbers in outer appearances have a wide-spread hypnotic effect on people.

Rev. 13:18 "This calls for wisdom: let him who has understanding reckon the number of this beast, for it is a human number, its number is six hundred and sixty-six." (666)

Error is symbolized by the number 666. Six is twelve divided. Twelve is the number symbolizing wholeness and completeness in the true sense of the word. (As contrasted to the number seven, which symbolizes completeness only on the manifest plane.) Six--half of twelve. Six--half whole, not whole, un-whole, unholy.

All sin, error, evil, and negativity are the result of lack of true understanding, with or without the accompaniment of malice or violence. Sin and evil are words which refer to ANY HUMAN ATTEMPT TO NEGATE ANY DIVINE IDEAS.

Six, repeated three times, could symbolize repeated attempts to negate the meaning of twelve, the number symbolizing spiritual wholeness or rightness. (12)

Rev. 14:1 "Then I looked, and lo, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads."

This sentence refers to the "redeemed" part of our human nature. The meaning of 144,000 is directly the REVERSE of 666.

(1) 12--The twelve divine ideas implanted in the soul of man.

The twelve spiritual faculties or powers.

The wholeness and perfection with man's soul.

Man's spiritual nature.

(2) 12 X 12--The twelve powers combined with one another to expand and (144) multiply the effectiveness of each in a perfect pattern of wholeness.

The spiritual nature of man expressing fully through the soul.

NOTE: Zeros following a number (any number of zeros) always symbolize unlimited but unspecified expression. 144,000 stands for our twelve powers combined with and multiplied by one another, giving expression to our spiritual potential in an unspecified and unlimited number of ways.

Rev. 14:9-11 "And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, 'If any one worships the beast and its image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also shall drink the wine of God's wrath, poured unmixed into the cup of his anger, and he shall be tormented with fire and sulphur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up for ever and ever; and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name.'"

In these verses, we have a classic example of the violent imagery of much of Revelation. It is in regard to that in us which has "the mark of the beast." This refers to all tendencies in our human nature to cling to error, sin, violence, and negativity. These simply cannot be allowed to remain in us indefinitely. They will always be detected and eventually cleansed from us (shall have no rest day or night). The detecting of error is called "tormenting," and its dissolving and elimination are called "burning." This great, beneficial purification process within us is described as going on "forever and ever." It is part of eternal law.

NOTE: It is in passages such as this that taking the Bible literally may cause a person's metaphysical understanding to go "haywire." If this passage were talking about actual human beings going through an almost indescribable torment, we have a barbaric return to the Old God of revenge and cruelty. Revelation is not about such a concept of God. It is a metaphysical-symbolic vision of the eventual neutralizing and eliminating of sin and error from human nature.

Rev. 16:16 "And they assembled them at the place which is called in the Hebrew Armageddon."

This is the only time the name Armageddon is mentioned in the Bible. It is not listed at all in the Metaphysical Bible Dictionary. Yet, for some reason, it has assumed a place of tremendous importance in certain religious groups in our world today.

Metaphysically, Armageddon appears to stand for that place in consciousness where there is a struggle between our negative impulses and our faithfulness to Truth thinking. There is nothing unusual about this struggle, but it does occur daily in most persons.

Lesson 12

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. Metaphysical meanings of Babylon and Jezebel.
2. Metaphysical significance of the bewailing of the kings of the earth over Babylon's destruction.
3. Reappearance of the white horse and rider.
4. Metaphysical significance of Satan bound a thousand years, then loosed again.
5. The dominance of the number twelve in all the descriptions of the new heaven and new Earth.

II. READINGS

1. Rev. 17:1-22:21
2. Be Ye Transformed Pages 253-285

III. QUESTIONS

1. What is the meaning of Babylon as a metaphysical symbol? What does it have in common with the symbolism of Jezebel?
2. What is the metaphysical meaning of the bewailing of the kings of the earth over the destruction of Babylon?
3. Metaphysically, what do the white horse and rider stand for in human nature?
4. What idea is symbolized as Satan bound for a thousand years, and then loosed again for awhile?
5. In the many descriptions of details concerning the heavenly city of the new Jerusalem, why does the number twelve dominate?
6. From your own metaphysical understanding, give a commentary on the twelve kinds of fruit on the tree of life in the new Jerusalem.

Lesson 12

Rev. 17:1-18:24 DOWNFALL OF BABYLON

These chapters deal in very fanciful imagery with the "heyday" and downfall of Babylon. The metaphysical significance of this is hinted at in Rev. 17:5: ". . . and on her forehead was written a name of MYSTERY: 'BABYLON THE GREAT, MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF EARTH'S ABOMINATIONS.'"

The city of Babylon has almost the same metaphysical meaning as the character Jezebel. Both represent negative emotions. The word Babylon means "confusion; chaos; vanity; nothingness." These definitions describe our negative emotions, just as the meaning of Jezebel did.

Chapter seventeen describes Babylon as seductive, dangerous, harmful, and abominable. The same might be said for negative emotions in general. The "fornications" committed with her by the "kings of the earth" refer to those times when, in our human thinking, we have placed our sense of I AM into our negative emotions (fornication).

The downfall of Babylon described in chapter eighteen symbolizes the Truth that our negative emotional states (Babylon) and the results of those states (her fruits) must eventually come to an end. The products of negative emotions (abomination) shall be reduced to nothingness (ashes). Just as the physical planet (Earth) in Revelation shall be cleansed of the abominable city of Babylon, so shall our metaphysical planet (soul) be cleansed of abominable negative emotions.

Rev. 18:9 "And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and were wanton with her, will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning."

What is the significance of the fact that the kings of the Earth and the merchants bewail and lament the destruction of Babylon? Their laments began after an angel announced, ". . . Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great . . . !" (Rev. 18:2) This means that all negative emotional states must fail to survive. They may have a great "heyday" in us while they last, but they cannot last. Every negative emotion carries its own seed of destruction, which is working even when it seems to have power over a person.

But what about the wailing and weeping by the kings of the Earth and the merchants? The "kings of the earth" and "merchants" stand for those parts of our human nature which still hold to the belief that there are desirable and worthwhile things to hold on to in negative emotions. These parts of our minds still believe that there is a serious loss when a negative emotion is given up or taken away. There is still something in human nature which prizes negativity and is reluctant to abandon it.

NOTE: At one time, on the evolutionary ladder, it is probable that what we now experience as negative emotions were primitive levels of certain survival instincts. As such, they had validity and usefulness. But with the continuing of the evolution of consciousness, they have long served their old purpose and are no longer needed. They have now fulfilled their old role and are redundant and dangerous. Their energies need to be converted into more positive and useful forms in keeping with current evolutionary demands. When this is done within a person, it is called "redemption."

Rev. 19 This chapter mentions the forthcoming marriage of the Lamb and his bride, which is fulfilled in the finale of Revelation.

Rev. 19:11 "Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True"

This is the reappearance of the white horse and rider mentioned earlier in the book, but this time the rider is named specifically (in chapter six he was not named). He is given the name Faithful and True. When we remember that in chapter six, his meaning was given as our spiritual aspirations and our commitment to Spirit, this makes it quite appropriate that he be named Faithful and True. Faith and Truth in our consciousness are the origins of our spiritual aspirations and our willingness to commit our lives to things spiritual.

Rev. 20:2-3 "And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years were ended. After that he must be loosed for a little while."

Rev. 20:7 "And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be loosed from his prison."

"Thousand," or any number of zeros following a number, is always the biblical numerical symbol designating unlimited or unspecified. This is a constant. In these statements, the author is referring through the symbolism to the fact that in our human existences, we seem always to have alternating and contrasting cycles and phases of events and experiences. The actual length of time of any cycle is unspecified (000) and may vary quite widely. But a cycle of activity of any sort is referred to as lasting a "thousand years," which does not mean 1,000 years of literal time, but simply as an unspecified period of time.

Satan bound a thousand years is symbolic of periods in our lives when negativity is not dominating our mental and emotional states. We enjoy a blessed sense of freedom, and we learn and grow quite rapidly during these periods.

But it seems that after each of these good cycles, the "ancient serpent" of negative impulse is let out again "for a little while." This is merely a description of the type of fluctuation between positive and negative energy expressions, quite typical of all human nature and its pattern of evolution. THERE IS NOTHING ALARMING OR ABNORMAL ABOUT THIS EXPERIENCE OF FLUCTUATING BETWEEN POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE.

Rev. 20:10 ". . . and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

Rev. 20:14 "Then DEATH and HADES (hell, KJV) were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death. . . ."

Rev. 20:15 ". . . and if any one's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

These statements symbolize the processes within the soul of a person who has learned to control the lower, negative, Satanic factors in consciousness. Such a person gives top priority to expressions of his higher, Christlike levels of consciousness. Such a soul is designated by the author as "he who shares in the first resurrection." (Rev. 20:6)

In this soul, the drastic fluctuations between positive and negative subside. In this soul, there is more of the expressing of the twelve faculties in harmonious integration (the WHOLE consciousness). There is also a definite and permanent ability to distinguish between Truth and error. All error will be rejected and let go, consigned to a dissolving and purifying process carried out by spiritual judgment and spiritual elimination (lake of fire).

It is significant that the first two items to go into this final dissolving and purifying process are: "DEATH and HELL were thrown into the lake of fire." Death first; then Hell. Hell or Hades stands for useless, unnecessary suffering. And the concept of death now held in the minds of the majority of mankind is completely erroneous. It shall be done away with, along with hell. The lake of fire is not a symbol of punishment but of cleansing and elimination. Its fires are the reducing of negative forms of mental and emotional energy into the basic purity and harmless substance (ashes).

Then comes the next blessing. ". . . and if any one's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire." This means doing away with anything that is not a real, legitimate, or useful part of life (not found written in the book of life). This means anything that is harmful, erroneous, useless for further progress, such as sickness, unhappiness, anxiety, fear, loneliness, boredom, hopelessness, hatred, hurt feelings, etc. These are not things "written into our book of life by the Christ Mind," so they shall be dissolved into elemental substance by the purifying processes of Spirit (lake of fire; fire of God).

Rev. 21, 22 A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH

Since these chapters conclude the book of Revelation, they constitute the climax of the Bible narrative as a whole. These chapters present a very special challenge to both serious students and casual readers, because they symbolically describe something which probably few persons, if any, have as yet experienced; a state of inner and outer well-being based upon a totally integrated consciousness of Truth.

Outwardly and literally these chapters consist of details about the new city of Jerusalem which comes down from heaven. Everything about the city is connected with the number twelve. The word Jerusalem means "habitation of peace." Metaphysically, it stands for an illumined spiritual consciousness. Such a consciousness produces total well-being, inwardly and outwardly, for the one who has attained it.

The number twelve is used lavishly in both chapters. In every descriptive detail concerning the new city we find the number twelve, the numerical symbol of wholeness and perfection:

- (1) 12 gates.
- (2) 12 angels at the gates.
- (3) 12 foundations for the walls.
- (4) 12 names of apostles written in the foundations.
- (5) 12,000 stadia (furlongs, KJV) the measurement of the city.
- (6) 144 (12 X 12) cubits as the measurement of the wall.
- (7) 12 precious jewels on the foundations of the walls.
- (8) 12 pearls as gates.
- (9) 12 kinds of fruit on the tree of life.

The number twelve, as used in these final pages of Revelation, stands for inner and outer wholeness and perfection--perfect in expression as well as in being. Until in the final chapters, the number twelve has been used in the Bible in connection with POTENTIAL perfection, possibility of perfection. Here it is being used as perfection in actualization and expression. This is something that is probably beyond the comprehension of human thinking as it exists today. We can probably only grasp it intuitively.

The climactic use of the symbolism of twelve is found in the twelve kinds of fruit on the tree of life. (Rev. 22:2) The tree of life in Revelation is in contrast to the tree of life in Genesis. The Genesis tree of life is guarded by a cherubim with a flaming sword. This is to keep imperfect human nature (Adam after the "fall") from gaining immortal life while in that imperfect state of consciousness. Such an eternal existence would be terrible for the one experiencing it.

The tree of life in Revelation is freely offered to all who are eligible to approach it. These are persons who have earned the New Jerusalem consciousness (full spiritual illumination). While the tree of life in Genesis provides eternal existence in limited material consciousness, the tree of life in Revelation provides unlimited eternal life in spiritual consciousness.

The twelve kinds of fruit on the tree symbolize the true inner realization of the nature and character of our twelve spiritual faculties. True eternal life is the harmonized and integrated awareness of and expression of the twelve powers of man as revealed by Jesus Christ:

- | | |
|--------------|-------------------|
| (1) Faith | (7) Imagination |
| (2) Love | (8) Understanding |
| (3) Judgment | (9) Zeal |
| (4) Order | (10) Will |
| (5) Strength | (11) Elimination |
| (6) Power | (12) Life |

Before Revelation ends, there are two very curious verses which might be taken in a number of ways. We shall not attempt to interpret them in this course, since it is not clear as to why they appear.

Rev. 22:18-19 "I warn every one who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if any one adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if any one takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book."

Although we promised not to attempt to interpret these statements, one cannot help but speculate as to whether or not the writer might have been expressing some personal consternation over the fact that at the time of his writing there were no COPYRIGHT LAWS!

But now, the very beautiful and appropriate ending of the book of Revelation and, therefore, the closing blessing from the Bible: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with all the saints. Amen." (Rev. 22:21)