

THE IMMORTAL

BOOKS I & II

By

J. J. Dewey

Legend has it that John, the author of the Apocolypse, never died and still walks the earth after 2000 years.

These pages have the fascinating story of one man's encounter with a virtual immortal.

THE AUTHOR – J. J. Dewey

Joseph J. Dewey, born Feb 6, 1945, has been a student of philosophy, metaphysics and religion most of his life and has taught numerous classes and seminars on a variety of avant-garde subjects.

In his book, **THE IMMORTAL**, the author draws from many true life experiences to create a novel that presents unique and mystical teachings in a way that captivates the imagination. What is true and what is fiction? That is for the reader to determine.

Since 1998, when this book was first published, Mr. Dewey has taught one of the most active discussion groups on the internet called The Keys of Knowledge. He has published several thousand articles on the web and has written numerous books. Each year readers from around the world gather for a three day symposium to hear Mr. Dewey teach them in person. These are currently available on CDs in MP3 format.

The author currently lives in Boise, Idaho with his wife, who was the inspiration for the main female character in the book.

\$19.95 U.S.

ISBN 0-9665053-0-1



9 780966 505306

THE IMMORTAL

BOOKS I & II

J. J. DEWEY

GREAT AD-VENTURES

P. O. Box 8011
Boise, Idaho 83707

GREAT AD-VENTURES

Great AD-Ventures; P. O. Box 8011; Boise, Idaho 83707

Copyright © 1997 & 1998 by Joseph J. Dewey

All rights reserved, including the right to reproduce this book or portions thereof in any form whatsoever with the following exception for Book I:

The author gives permission to readers to duplicate and circulate Book I of this series in printed or digital form as long as the material therein is credited to the authorship of J. J. Dewey and the copied writings are circulated without charge.

Book II and beyond requires written permission for any duplication or use.

ISBN: 0-9665053-0-1

First Printing: June 1998

Second Printing: April 1999

Third Printing: February 2000

Fourth Printing: October 2000

Fifth Printing: February 2001

Sixth Printing: January 2003

Seventh Printing: November 2003

Eighth Printing: January 2005

Printed in USA

THE IMMORTAL

BOOK I

FOREWORD

"Peter seeing him (John) saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?"

Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me.

"Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"

John 21:21-23

John, the Beloved, the Revelator, an Apostle of Jesus, perhaps the most mysterious man in history, comes alive in this book. Legend has it that John never died and still roams the earth as a teacher.

The contents of this first book and the additional series of books about The Immortal may or may not be true. It is up to the reader to decide. But whatever the opinion rendered, the story and teachings herein are worthy of serious consideration.

THIS MAY BE THE BEST BOOK YOU HAVE EVER READ!

When I finished writing Book I, we wanted to test reader response so we made it available free for a period of time on the Internet. We had our doubts about the number of people who would read it without having a physical copy of the book because the reader would either have to read it on the screen or print it out on his printer and read it from loose sheets of paper.

We were pleasantly surprised at the results. From about 1000 people who downloaded the text about 300 wrote us wildly praising the book. Because it is destined to be controversial we were surprised to receive only one negative letter. Even those who disagreed with the philosophy enjoyed the story.

Here are several responses we received:

Your book was the first one in memory that I could not stop reading until it was done. I just sat in front of the computer & read the whole thing. AD

Every chapter in your book spoke to me of the lessons I have learned over 30+ years of practicing medicine & developing a Complementary Medical approach to healing. W.S., MD

I received the e-mail book and downloaded it ok. As soon as I started to read it I felt a touch of the Spirit of God that dwells within me and knew what you had written was the truth. MM

I just finished reading your book but now I have a hard time believing that all of it was fiction. When is the next book coming out? EF

I've recently finished reading The Immortal - Thank You! I've already told dozens and dozens of people, "If you read only one book this year, consider having it be The Immortal." And everyone that I've spoken with has had as enthusiastic response as I have and eagerly await both the newsletter and next book. Diane

I stared at my computer screen scrolling and reading before I realized I was already on page 60! VFN

These were comments from readers of Book I, but within these pages is also included Book II which we feel will be even more stimulating and provocative. So pick a time when you can have several hours free to read undisturbed, because you will not want to put this one down.

THE IMMORTAL

BOOK I

**THE IMMORTAL
BOOK I
By
J. J. Dewey**

**CHAPTER ONE
Elizabeth**

I have always wanted to be a writer, but never seemed to find the time to carry out my dream. Ironically, this time in my life is the most difficult of all to begin such a project as this, but it is something I must do. I have a story to tell that is difficult to believe so I am writing it as fiction. It is too unbelievable to present as a true story. Nevertheless, I do maintain that the principles taught herein are true and that many readers will have this verified by their hearts and souls.

I'd like to start with John, but that probably wouldn't work. I must tell you about Elizabeth and something about myself before you can begin to understand.

There's not a lot to tell about me. I am average or below average in a number of ways. If there is anything out of the ordinary about me it's probably the fact that I am quite curious in nature. I have thought quite a bit about why things are the way they are. I've always asked myself a lot of unanswerable questions, like: Who or what is God? Is there life after death? What will it be like? What is the purpose of life? Questions - that seem to have no answers.

I met Elizabeth about ten years ago. I was 43 years old and Elizabeth was several years younger. I was just getting my feet

wet in real estate after failing in several business ventures. Both Elizabeth and I had been married previously. But since we got along great together after experiencing difficult relationships with others we both felt like we had finally mastered the art of marriage to the extent we half-heartedly considered giving seminars on the subject.

Leaving my children with my previous wife was one of the most difficult decisions of my life, but the situation was not one of those win-win possibilities. It was lose-lose. The fact that I lost so much in my relationship with my children and they lost in their relationship with me made it all the more important to me that my relationship with Elizabeth would somehow be worth the great sacrifice.

Let's move on here. I know a lot of you have gone through difficult marriages and wish you could have your life with your children to live over again. But there is something else I also know. I know that all of you have the desire within your hearts to meet the love of your life and to fall in love and stay in love. I know that few of you have found the quality of love you are looking for.

Well, this is one area where my life was not exactly average. I found the love of my life. I found even more than I was looking for. I found Elizabeth.

After my divorce I started teaching several classes in the local community adult education programs. It had long been a hobby of mine to study graphology, or how character is revealed through handwriting. Then, after years of dabbling, I became pretty good at it so I volunteered my services.

I thank God every day that I studied handwriting analysis because without it I may not have recognized Elizabeth.

At the end of my first class I had everyone in the class hand in samples of his or her handwriting. Then I proceeded to demonstrate that I was truly accurate by analyzing each of them. Now, this has nothing to do with psychic powers. Instead, it is an analytical way of discerning character.

There were about twenty in the class and I thought that I had analyzed everyone when Elizabeth stood up.

"You haven't analyzed me yet," she said.

"I'm sorry," I said. "Did you hand in a sample?"

"Yes, I did."

I picked up the pile of samples and handed them to her and said: "See if yours is one of these."

She looked through them. "Here it is," she said, handing it to me. "It seemed to have been stuck to another sample."

I looked at the handwriting. I did a double take. Through the years I had not only formulated an image of what I was looking for in the ideal mate, but I had also formulated what my ideal mate's handwriting should look like. After many years and thousands of handwriting samples I finally found one that looked like the image I had conjectured.

I probably embarrassed Elizabeth when I blurted out her qualities. Her handwriting showed that she was very intelligent, passionate: objective, yet caring; focused, yet curious; loving, yet having good common sense.

After telling her about a dozen positive characteristics I put the sample down and took a good look at her. The first thing I noticed was her very attractive almost sparkling face with darting intelligent eyes that seemed to focus with great attention from time to time. There was an honesty in her eyes that revealed her mood at the moment. I have since come to call them smiling eyes because when she is happy the sparkle in her eyes makes her feelings so obvious.

Physically she was about 5'3", light brown hair, great figure and with looks enough to generate an attractive pull in any male.

I somehow felt deep within myself that I would marry her. I tried to momentarily dismiss the feeling, but it stayed with me throughout the week. Then, after the next class, I accosted her and asked her to join me for coffee and the rest is history.

I could easily write a book about our relationship and how it developed, but that is not the grand purpose of this book, as you will soon see. What you need to understand at this time is that we fell as much in love as is possible for us mortals to do. Think of your favorite love story and multiply the emotions times ten and that was us. I felt fulfilled and secure for the first time in my life. It seemed that nothing could go wrong.

Until that fateful day...

I remember the day very clearly. I was in the family room reading a book and Elizabeth was fixing us an evening cup of coffee. The moment came as she was walking down the stairs, bringing my cup to me just as she did each evening.

But this time she fell down the stairs, knocking herself into a semi-conscious state.

I ran to her, holding her as she revived and lifted her up.

"I can't stand up," she said.

"Sure you can, sweetheart. You just had a bad fall. Just rest a minute."

She rested a while, but still could not stand.

I rushed her to the emergency room. The doctor told me that they needed to run some tests.

Finally, after three weeks of testing, we discovered the problem. She had multiple sclerosis. My heart sunk as I asked the doctor how serious it was and how long she had to live.

"It varies with each person," he said. "Some go quickly, others hang on for years. I must warn you, however, it appears that the disease is progressing quickly with your wife. I would guess that she has somewhere around a year or two to live. You never know, though. She could linger on for ten years or more, but you must prepare yourself for the worst.

"Right now she can't even walk. She may get some of her strength back, but then will probably lose it again. It's like moving one step forward and two steps back. Sooner or later the disease gets you.

"The problem now is with her legs, but later it will be other parts of her body. Near the end she'll probably lose her sight, and even her ability to speak and feed herself. I hope you love her a lot because she's going to be very dependent on you."

"I'll be there for her," I said with tears in my eyes. "We'll do whatever it takes. Somehow we'll beat it."

"Just be prepared to deal with it. Don't get your hopes too high. It can be frustrating for both of you. Just be thankful that you have a year or two of sharing left. Many people I deal with have their loved ones taken suddenly and wish they could just have five minutes with them to say good-bye. You have time for a long loving good-bye. I would advise you to make the most of it."

"I appreciate the advice doctor, but don't take our hope away. There has to be a way to beat this."

"I understand your feelings," he said patiently. "But my experience tells me that I must do what I can to prepare you for the real world."

"I see your point," I said, "but I refuse to give up hope no matter what the odds are. I've always believed that all things are possible.

"I'm here to help however I can," the doctor said quietly.

The next year was rather discouraging. The doctor was proven to be entirely correct. Elizabeth got one step better and

two steps worse. She got some strength back in her legs but later lost all strength in her legs plus some of her vision. During that year we tried every medicine, every health food, every herb that had any chance of working, but her health seemed unrelated to anything that we tried. She finally reached a point where she was confined to a wheelchair and was barely able to feed herself because of her shaking limbs. Fortunately, she still had her mental capacities, but the doctor warned me that even that could go next. At this point he told me that she seemed to be deteriorating and could go fairly quickly. She could go in six months or possibly linger on for years.

One night, as we lay in bed together and I held her in my arms, I thought of the years we spent together. In my mind's eye I visualized her being vibrant as she was when we first met and as she is now. I felt very sad. Why did this have to happen to the most wonderful woman I have ever met?

As I contemplated the situation I said a prayer from deep within my heart.

"Why God does something like this happen to such a wonderful person as my wife? You would think you'd have to be a serial killer to deserve such punishment, but Elizabeth has never hurt anyone. Maybe some very minor things, but nothing to deserve such pain. If this is a punishment, it seems unjust and out of proportion.

"Even ministers these days are saying that life is unfair. If You are truly God, then one of Your main attributes should be fairness and justice. Where is fairness and justice in this situation? I ask not for myself, but for the woman I love. Surely there is an answer somewhere, somehow, someplace..."

This was a sort of basic prayer I thought within my heart several times daily ever since Elizabeth became ill. However, on this particular night I said it with great emotion and cried myself to sleep with my thoughts.

That night I fell into a very sound, profound yet peaceful sleep. Then in the morning something quite unusual happened. I was at that point where you are between being asleep and awake. I know there have been several times when I have been at this stage that I was not sure if I was dreaming or not. This was one of those times.

This was the first time I heard the bells; gentle, penetrating, familiar, soft, yet very real bells.

At the time I heard them I was sure I was hearing real bells,

perhaps ringing somewhere outside my bedroom window, but then I roused myself and rose up in my bed and the sound disappeared. I was not sure if I really heard them or if I was dreaming. Then I settled back into sleep and I heard the bells again. I roused myself and the sound again went silent. Then this process was repeated for a third time.

One experience like this I could have shrugged off, but a three-time repetition got me thinking that there was some significance here.

Then the next morning I heard the bells again.

And again the next morning.

Finally, I felt I had to mention it to Elizabeth. I told her the story and she said, "The only thing I can suggest is that it must be some type of message or sign intended just for you. I was sleeping next to you each of these past three mornings and I heard no bells."

"But if it is some type of message intended just for me, what good is it? I've thought and thought about it and I can't see any hidden meaning in bells ringing."

"Have you heard bells in real life that sound anything like these?" she asked.

"Well, they sound something like Christmas bells and they seem very familiar. Christmas is just a few weeks away. Could it have something to do with that?"

"Who knows?" she shrugged. "Maybe you're just thinking too much about Christmas. How about taking your mind off the bells by doing some grocery shopping for me. Get a pen and I'll give you the list"

CHAPTER TWO

The Mystery of the Bells

Since Elizabeth became ill I did most of our shopping and must admit I got pretty good at it. I clipped coupons, checked for sales, compared store brands with national brands and much more. I got to the point where I somewhat enjoyed shopping and would probably still do most of it even if Elizabeth was healed.

As I drove up to Albertsons supermarket at 16th and State Streets in our fair city of Boise, Idaho I noticed for the first time that Christmas decorations were up and Christmas trees were for sale. I wasn't sure if decorations were just put up or if this was the first time I had noticed. It seemed like Thanksgiving had just ended and it was too early to even think about Christmas. I felt a little like Scrooge as I got out of my car thinking about all the presents I had to buy compared to how few I would receive. I remember thinking as I entered the building how it would be a lot better if Christmas came once every five years...

Then, as I opened the door, all thoughts left me... I heard the bells! They were the same bells I heard in my quasi sleep, but this time I was sure that I was awake and the bells were real. I retreated back out the door and turned around. To my surprise I saw a bell ringer for the Salvation Army!

I was amazed that I did not connect the bells I heard in my sleep with those of the bell ringers. Somehow I did not remember them sounding like the bells I heard in front of me. The sound of these bells seemed to be so pure, sweet and almost holy. Perhaps I had just never listened to them before.

The bell ringer was a good-looking, older man around sixty, clean shaven with dark hair and simply dressed. Some of the bell ringers look like they could have been taken from a homeless

shelter, but this one did not give that impression. He was a far cry from any executive look but also gave the impression that he would never be down and out. If I were to guess his vocation by his looks I would guess that he was a high school teacher or maybe even a real estate salesman like myself.

After looking his direction for about thirty seconds he caught my eye and said: "Merry Christmas."

"Merry Christmas," I said as I retreated back into the store in a state of bewilderment.

As I went through my wife's shopping list I tried to find meaning in it all.

I heard bells on my awakening three days in a row and now I heard the same bells here at the grocery store by a Salvation Army bell ringer. At the time I heard the bells I was thinking like Scrooge about Christmas. Maybe I was being taught some supernatural lesson like in the movie. Perhaps I was being told that I should donate to the poor.

Financially, I was feeling like one of the poor myself, for I had gone heavily into debt and had no extra money because of Elizabeth's illness. Nevertheless, perhaps I was supposed to take my mind off my own concerns and think of others who have problems.

By the time I had finished shopping, I had decided to give the bell ringer a donation on the way out. It wasn't much, but maybe it was what I was supposed to do.

As I passed by the pot I dropped in a five dollar bill. The bell ringer looked me in the eye and said: "Thanks. Have a Merry Christmas."

There was something about the look in his eyes that disturbed me. He seemed to have large eyes with large pupils and the look about him reinforced the idea of a teacher in my mind. There was something about his look that made me feel that he knew things that I did not. I had never felt that way about a stranger before, but that is how I felt about this man.

I got in the car and started driving home and passed another store that appeared to have a bell ringer. I parked again and walked toward the bells and stopped in front of the man. I was stunned. These bells sounded similar, but not exactly like the first bell ringer or those heard in my dream state.

This piqued my curiosity, so for the next couple of hours I drove all over town and visited every bell ringer I could find. Each one of them sounded similar to the second bell ringer. Only the

first bell ringer created a sound like the bells that I remember hearing in my sleep. Then I began to wonder if my mind was playing tricks on me. Maybe I just thought those first bells were like those in my dream state.

Elizabeth was upset that I was gone so long shopping and was worried about me. She quickly calmed down as I explained to her what happened. I ended with, "Maybe it was just my imagination that the first bell ringer sounded like the ones that I heard on waking."

"And maybe it isn't," she said. "Maybe it is a sign of some kind. Perhaps you were just supposed to remember the spirit of Christmas and give what you can afford and that's all there is to it."

"Maybe," I said, not convinced she was right.

I felt unsettled about any explanation we could arrive at about the bells. The next morning, as I lay between wakefulness and sleep, I became even more unsettled as I heard the bells again. This time I heard them resonate for a few seconds after I was fully awake. I knew now that the bells were not from my imagination. I also knew that the message of the bells was not resolved.

After I shared this with Elizabeth she said: "Your guess that you are supposed to have a more giving spirit may be correct. The last time you gave five dollars. That's probably about all we have given to the poor all year. Think about it. That's not much of a donation. I know we don't have much money, but we can do better than that."

"You're right," I said. "This time I will give fifty dollars. That's about all we can afford, but we can give that much."

I took off again to Albertsons at 16th Street and approached the bell ringer again. Again I heard the beautiful sound. They were definitely the same sound that I heard on waking. As I started to appreciate their beauty I felt my whole body and soul was resonating to the vibration of the bells. Somehow they made me feel whole, peaceful, strong, connected... It's difficult to give you the picture, but the effect was definite and strong. I put two twenties and a ten in the pot, looked at the bell ringer and said: "Merry Christmas."

"Your gift is greatly appreciated," said the bell ringer.

I started walking backward, catching the eye of the bell ringer for a few seconds before we disconnected. Again I felt unsettled as I drove home.

After I got home I told Elizabeth: "Giving the fifty dollars was

a good thing to do, but I don't think it was the answer. Suppose that the answer has nothing to do with the bells, Christmas, the spirit of giving, but something else?"

"What else could it be?" she asked.

"Maybe it's got something to do with the man - the bell ringer."

"You said you felt he was different?"

"Yes. He was different...Maybe he knows something."

"If you hear the bells again then maybe you should check him out," she said.

CHAPTER THREE

The Bell Ringer

The next morning I heard the bells again. They continued to ring for several minutes after I was fully awake. This time I decided that I must talk to the bell ringer himself. I felt there was a possibility that he may somehow hold the keys to this mystery.

I drove over to Albertsons again and there he was, faithfully ringing his bell. I felt nervous about approaching him but forced myself onward.

I put a couple dollars in the pot and managed to say "How's it going today?"

"Fine," he replied.

"Has anyone commented that the sound of your bells seems to be different than the other bell ringers in town?"

"Several have commented," he smiled with noticeable pleasure in his eyes. "The reason my bell rings differently is that I have my own bell."

"I didn't know any bell ringers had their own bell."

"I've used this bell for a very long time. Here. Take a look at it." He put it in my hand.

It felt warm, almost tingly to my touch. I peered at it and said, "It looks like there are some ancient hand-carved hieroglyphics on the surface." I looked closer. "This one here is interesting. It looks like a crop circle I remember seeing recently. Do you know what they mean?"

"The meanings are layered and are interpreted in levels. I understand several of the levels," he said.

After he said this I seemed to sense that my suspicion was correct, that there was something hidden about this man. I rang the bell gently against my ear. "It has the most beautiful sound I

have ever heard," I said.

"Yes," said the man, smiling. "It really helps with the donations. Just because of that beautiful sound this location receives over three times the donations of any other in town."

"Interesting," I said. "Has anyone told you they heard your bells in their sleep?"

The man looked visibly shaken. "Not for a long time," he said. "Why do you ask that?"

I told him my experience with the bells.

He smiled and said, "Then you are the one I have been waiting for."

I stared at him wide-eyed. "You've been waiting for me? Why? This is too weird to be true."

"If you think this is strange now, just wait a while. What is your name, my old friend?"

"What do you mean by *old friend*?"

"I'll explain later when you are ready. Now tell me your name."

I figured what harm is there in telling him? "My name is J. J. Dewey. My friends call me Joe."

"So the first J stands for Joe or is it Joseph?"

"On my birth certificate it is Joseph, but as you know almost all Josephs call themselves Joe. Joseph seems a little pious. About the only person who ever calls me that is my wife"

"It is good that you are not pious. Nevertheless, Joseph is a beautiful and ancient name. Do you know what it means?"

"I think I read somewhere that it means *added* or *added upon*."

"Whoever came up with that did not really understand the Hebrew. In ancient days, when a father named his son Joseph he did so with the understanding that his son will have great increase - that whatever good that is in him will be amplified and eventually bring forth an abundance of all the earth has to offer. Joseph of the Bible who was sold into Egypt was the perfect example of this. He increased in knowledge, virtue and eventually became the richest man on the earth."

"Sounds like a good destiny," I said. This man was unusually knowledgeable for a bell ringer.

"Your second initial is J. What does that stand for?"

"John," I said.

"How appropriate! That is also my name. Do you know what this name means?"

"I don't think so."

"This name comes from the Hebrew *Yowchanan*. Any dictionaries that define the word miss the full meaning. Basically, it implies that a man with this name will attract the attention of God to the extent that God will befriend him as an equal. Some say it means *favored of God*, but the meaning is more like *friend of God*."

"So would you say that the apostle John is the great example of this since he was called the *beloved* of Jesus, or perhaps His best friend?" I asked.

John's eyes widened in surprise and he smiled. "He was an example perhaps. I don't know if I would call him a great one."

I pondered what he said. The comment seemed rather strange to me. Of course John the Beloved was a great example, I thought.

He shifted my attention again toward his bell. "See this symbol here," he said, holding up the bell.

I looked and answered, "You mean the two intertwined circles?"

"Yes."

"One has a dot in the middle," I remarked.

"That is my name," said John.

"So this symbol means John?"

"Yes and no," he said. "It identifies me and I am John, but it doesn't necessarily mean John."

"You seem to speak in riddles," I said.

"All teachers do at times," he said, smiling. "Did I hear right that your last name is Dewey?"

"Yes."

"Do you know what that means?"

"I'm not sure."

"The medieval Welsh altered the name of David, or the Greek *Dabeed*, to something like *Dawee* and finally to *Dewey*. Do you know the meaning of David, my old friend?"

I wondered again why he kept calling me old friend but I was too interested in the names to backtrack. "It seems like I remember learning back in Sunday School that it means *beloved*."

"The standard meaning is close here. It means *beloved* as in the sense of a family member or close friend. King David of the Bible was called a man after God's own heart and God had compassion toward David in his weaknesses just as a Father would toward his own son"

"How do you know all of this? You almost sound like you know this from personal experience." This man was really arous-

ing my curiosity.

"That doesn't matter right now," he replied. "The point is that you are blessed with three meaningful ancient names which will help you accomplish your mission."

"Mission?" I asked, startled. I would have walked away at that point if the man had not been so captivating.

"Your full name is strong with meaning. Put together, it goes something like this: *The desires of your heart will be amplified and fulfilled by attracting the attention of God or his servants.* If you use your power of increase for good, you will enter into the Kingdom of God and become part of the family of God."

"It's a good thing I didn't know the meaning of my name earlier - I might have gotten a big head," I laughed.

"You are far from being alone in having a beautiful meaning behind your name. Almost all names have a lot of beauty and meaning in them. It is sad that the ancient science of names and the power of their meaning has been lost to the world. But this loss is temporary. Mankind will soon learn the power of names again."

I studied this wise man closer. "You aren't just a bell ringer, are you? Who are you really?"

John sighed, looked heavenward for a moment and then looked at me. "I guess it's time to tell someone, but I can only tell you if you heard the bells as you were waking from sleep. You did hear them, didn't you?"

"Yes, I heard them loud and clear."

John shut his eyes for a few seconds as if he was reading a page from a book within his head. He opened them and said: "Yes. You did really hear them. I do not doubt you. This is a great day. Would you like to get a cup of coffee at Denny's when I finish my shift? It's only a few minutes away"

I didn't know if this guy was for real or not - *probably not*, I thought - but, like I said, I'm a very curious person. I replied, "I don't know why I find your words so fascinating. Yes, I would really like to talk more..."

CHAPTER FOUR

The First Communion

Drinking coffee at Denny's seemed to be a strange situation to have the greatest spiritual experience of my life, but that was where it happened.

After we received our coffee and exchanged several pleasantries about the Christmas season, I had to show my curiosity. "I'm full of questions. I want to know the meaning of the bells, who you are and what you mean by mission."

"One at a time," he smiled. "What do you want to know first?"

"Do you know why I heard the bells?"

"The bells were tuned to your vibration and I was calling for you. The spiritual law is that I could not come to you, but you had to respond and come to me. You heard the bells and came to me as I anticipated. That is all I will tell you right now."

"Well, I'll take any morsel I can get right now. Can you tell me who you are? Obviously, you're more than a bell ringer and I think more than any ordinary man..."

"If I just tell you outright you will not believe me," he said.

"Hold your right hand up and let your fingertips touch mine."

I felt kind of weird doing this. I looked around and saw we were fairly secluded in a corner so I thought *what the heck* and put my fingertips next to his.

"Now look at me steady in the eyes," he said.

It seemed a strange thing to do, but everything about this man and events leading up to our encounter seemed strange, so I thought I had nothing to lose and looked him in the eyes as we touched fingertips. At first nothing seemed to happen.

"Keep looking," he said, "and free your mind from all thoughts."

As I cooperated with him I felt my mind begin to drift. I thought we were having a Vulcan mind melding, for I sensed a merging of our two souls in a way difficult to explain.

He pulled away his fingers and asked: "Now you tell me... Who am I?"

I drew back in a start and exclaimed: "I know who you are. You're John!"

He smiled and said, "You've known all along my name is John."

"But you're not just any John. You are *the John!*"

"And which John is that?"

"You are John, the fisherman, the son of Zebedee, the apostle... the Beloved... How do I know this?"

"I transferred some of my memories to you. Do you believe them?"

"You're right. If you told me outright I might have thought you were a crackpot, but seeing your memories makes it hard to deny. A part of me believes what I received but another part says this is impossible. My mind has to make sense of all this. I have to ask a couple of more questions."

"Ask away."

"Two thousand years have passed since the days of the apostles. This means that either you are now an angel sent back to the earth or are a resurrected being... Or perhaps I am just dreaming all this."

"It is none of those things," he said.

"But what else could it be?" I asked.

"There is one more possibility that you missed. A hint is given in the Bible." He then reached into a bag he carried with him and pulled out a very old looking Bible. He found a passage, pointed to it and said: "Here. Read this... Verses 22 and 23 in the twenty-first chapter of John."

I picked up his Bible and looked at it. The print was very old. It seemed to be a King James translation, but the type was an old Roman style. "I suppose this is the very first King James Bible published," I said half joking.

He glanced back somewhat serious and said, "Not quite. The first edition was bulky and not practical to carry around. This is a later but still very old edition."

"Of course," I said, humoring myself. "Now which verses was it you wanted me to read?"

"Twenty-two and twenty-three. Keep in mind Jesus and Pe-

ter were talking about the apostle John, who you now remember to be me.”

I paused and read the verses: *Peter seeing him (John) saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me.*

Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?”

“I remember this scripture,” I said. “It is very mysterious. It seems to leave it up in the air as to whether John will die or not. I remember reading several legends that he was boiled in oil and still survived.”

“That’s not a legend. I was boiled in oil. In addition to that I have been crucified, tortured, stabbed, hung and shot several times.”

“So, you went through all that and you never died?” I asked, amazed.

“Notice the careful wording of the scripture. It indicates that the will of Jesus is that I tarry until he comes again, yet he did not say that I shall not die. I have died several times, but was revived again and healed by God... something like the experience of Lazarus except when I was revived I was able to choose the age I was to be. I usually pick the early twenties.”

“But now you look like you’re around sixty. Is that the age you picked this time?”

“No, my friend. The last time I died I was revived looking about the age of twenty-one. That was back in 1944. Since that time I have been aging normally. My body presently has an age of about 71 years of age.”

“You look good for seventy-one,” I remarked with a smile.

“I’ve learned to take reasonable care of my body and have learned to overcome sickness. I have not been ill for about 1500 years, and even then I was careless and poisoned by an enemy, so I was not ill for normal reasons.”

“So, how did you die in 1944?”

“I was hung with piano wire by a wayward brother.”

“He must have been wayward all right. Who was this person?”

“Adolph Hitler.”

“Hitler!” I exclaimed. After a moment of absorbing the mo-

ment I asked, "So were you in a concentration camp or something?"

"No." He paused a moment and continued, "I lived among the Germans and assisted in an attempt to overthrow the Nazis from within."

My eyes widened. "I remember reading about a rebellion against Hitler lead by a one-eyed, three-fingered man."

"That man was Claus Schenk Von Staufenberg who made a very brave effort to remove Hitler from power. I was there working with and encouraging the little band of conspirators, but not everything a disciple does succeeds. After Staufenberg failed in his attempt to kill Hitler everyone who even smelled like they didn't like Hitler was killed. I was unable to escape and was one of those rounded up and hung with piano wire because they couldn't find any regular rope."

"So, do you experience pain when you are killed?"

"When I am injured I feel what anyone else would feel, but have learned to neutralize discomfort by detaching myself from it."

"So when you die, and are revived, do you have the full memory of your past?"

"When I am revived I lose a lot of my memories, but then through contemplation I have learned to retrieve the important ones. That is an advantage I have over others, if you want to call it that. I have a memory that goes back 2000 years. If I were to write the story of my full life it would take many volumes."

"So, what have you been doing the past 50 years?"

"It's a long story, but I will give you a skeleton outline. After I was revived I saw that the next major threat was the Soviet Union and have spent most of my time there. I am not allowed to be a major player, however. My mission is to work with and inspire and teach people who can change the world in a positive direction. Therefore, in Russia I worked with those who sought freedom and democracy and encouraged them to forge ahead. The Christ told me that my work helped in the preparation for the falling of Communism and the Berlin Wall.

"I also traveled to China and worked with the Christ to inspire the students at Tianamen Square, but as I told you, not everything I do succeeds immediately. Even though the attempt at democracy in China failed, we planted seeds that will materialize in the next attempt.

"We now are living in a time of great opportunity. The au-

thority and tyranny that ruled Communism in the Soviet Union has basically come to an end. We still have China and Third World nations who will have nuclear weapons to worry about, but I saw a window of opportunity where I could take some time off and offer some pure spiritual teachings to the world. I have been looking forward to this for lifetimes. I just hope you are ready for what I have to give you, my friend.”

“I’ve always been interested in philosophy,” I said, “and the spiritual side of life. If you want to teach me, I’m a sponge waiting to be filled. I’m curious about one thing though. Why did you pick me?”

“Christ selected you. He tuned my bells to your vibration and sent me to Boise to send you the call.”

“The call?”

“Yes. Before any great work is accomplished, there must first be a free will response to a spiritual call of some kind. You had to make a free will response to the bells you heard and seek me out as I sought you out. The disciple must meet the Teacher half way.”

“So, this mission you have for me... Is that also based on my free will?”

“Of course. You can accept or reject it. Few disciples, however, reject a teaching mission. Instead, the problem is that most of them wind up messing it up by seeking glory for themselves instead of passing it along the chain that links us to the One God.”

“And what is this chain?”

“Whenever true knowledge comes to the earth it comes through a chain of souls that are linked to the One Great Life. If you accept your mission, you are linked to me, I am linked to Christ, and Christ is linked to the entity he called *Father* in the New Testament. The Father is linked to God with such oneness that He is one with God and is God in every way that the average man can conceive. Any links higher than the Eternal Father are so far beyond us that it is futile for the average person to think about them.”

“You mean there are lives higher than Jesus or the Father of Jesus?”

“It does not do a lot of good going into detail about this now, for it will offend some people as truth always does. I have been killed a number of times just because I was seen as a heretic.”

John continued, “I will say this one thing. Imagine the consciousness of just one cell in your body. Next imagine the con-

sciousness of all your cells put together, which consciousness is your own. The gap in consciousness between you and a cell is so great that communication on an individual basis is not practical. Yet, if you have a problem with your foot, which is composed of billions of cells, you will pay attention to healing it and in the process benefit not only the foot as a whole, but also the billions of individual cells within it.

“The One God governs over a large universe and right now this sector is a sore foot. You and I are cells that are working in conjunction with many other cells to heal the foot. That is all I will tell you about this at present. We must press on to your mission for I’m not sure how long I have with you.”

“Why aren’t you sure?”

“If a world crisis surfaces I may be called away from you.”

“OK. I’ll try to not distract you.” I said. I was amazed at myself for being so believing for I am usually fairly skeptical of outlandish or unusual claims. But the reason I could not seem to question the validity of this man was that he seemed so familiar, like an old friend, and I could not deny the memories he planted in my mind. I had to ask, “What is my mission?”

“The first part of your mission is to teach the Keys.”

“What are the Keys?”

“There are Twelve Keys of Knowledge, Twelve Keys of Understanding and Twelve Keys of Eternal Life. I am to teach them to you and you will teach them to others.”

“Are you sure you’ve got the right guy?” I asked. “I’ve done a little teaching, but I’m no Moses.”

“Moses didn’t think he was a great teacher either, but he did OK.”

“Well, I would refuse to teach anything that doesn’t make sense to me,” I said.

“That is exactly the quality we are looking for in a student,” he said.

“I’ll tell you what,” I said. “Give me some of your teachings, I’ll think them over and we’ll go from there.”

“At least you are willing to start the process,” said John, “but I can only give you the keys one at a time.”

“Well, I guess it wouldn’t hurt to learn a couple of them and then if they make sense I could continue.”

“A logical conclusion,” stated John.

“So, when do we start?” I asked.

“How about now?” said John.

“Right now? I’m afraid I’m not prepared. I don’t even have anything with me to write on.”

“This is not your standard method of teaching,” he said. “You do not need any paper.”

“What do I need then?”

“You need to use your understanding as you never have before...”

I was silent for a long 15 seconds in anticipation.

CHAPTER FIVE

Hints and the First Key

I gathered my forces and inquired, "So, how do we go about doing this?"

"If I were to just tell you the keys your understanding of them would be quite limited and you would not appreciate the depth of knowledge that lies behind them. Instead, we will use what is called the *Intuitive Principle*. I will give you pieces of information, or hints, and you contemplate where they are leading you and give me your intuitive feedback. Then I give you more hints until you come to an understanding of the principle. Sometimes that understanding comes gradually and other times it comes instantly in a flash of light."

"So, are you going to give me a hint now?"

"Yes. Your first hint is the question: WHO OR WHAT ARE YOU? Or if you put it in the first person you ask WHO OR WHAT AM I? Each time you are given a hint you are allowed to ask enough questions to get the direction of the hint settled in your mind so your intuition can foment. Do you have anything you want to ask?"

"I might as well take a stab at the answer. It seems easy enough. I am a human being."

"That is the definition of your physical presence, but the term *human being* is just a vibrating term that tells you nothing of what you are. Think again. WHO OR WHAT ARE YOU?"

Obviously, John was not going to let me off easy here so I reflected for a moment and replied, "If I recall correctly the scriptures tell us that we are supposed to be sons of God. Is that what we are?"

"It is true that you are a human being. You are also a son of

God as the scriptures teach. But just saying you are human or a son of God, Godlike or angelic means little. It is just an expression of words with little meaning to most. Let me ask you again... WHO OR WHAT ARE YOU, really?"

This sounded easy at first, but I was beginning to get the idea that this may be harder than I thought. I thought a moment of every teaching I could think of about whom I was and then responded. "Some say I am Spirit or Soul. Is that who I am?"

"And what is Spirit or Soul?" said John.

"Well, I guess it is me without my body. Perhaps that which continues after death."

"If I were to tell you that you are Spirit does that tell you anything about who or what you are?"

"Well, yes. I guess so."

"What does it tell you?"

"It tells me that I... that I'm.... that I'm, well, some type of spirit essence.."

"Didn't you learn in Basic English that you are not supposed to define a word with the word you are defining? You do not define red by saying it is red. You do not define spirit by saying it is spirit. Now let me repeat. If I say you are Spirit, what does it tell you?"

I was about to define Spirit by using the word *Spirit* again, but caught myself and thought a moment. "I guess if I am Spirit then I am not physical."

John then reached toward me and grabbed my wrist. "But I can feel your physical self. So are you really Spirit?"

"Well, I guess am a physical being with a spirit."

"Let me explain something that you must remember throughout this course. I will always speak to you precisely. I did not say that you have a spirit, but I asked you what it would mean if you were Spirit?"

"I guess it would mean that I am not physical."

"Progress at last!" said John. "But if you are not physical, then what is left?"

I thought a moment. "Spirit, I suppose."

John sighed. "Again I ask, what is Spirit?"

"I'm not exactly sure... Perhaps life, essence, vibration. It is what we are when we are not physical."

"But if you are Spirit it is also what you are when you are physical. If you are Spirit then you are always Spirit. Do you think you alter between being Spirit and not being Spirit?"

"I guess not."

"You now have food for thought. Think about this question for the next week. We will then meet in seven days and review your thoughts and give you more direction. Please repeat the question for me again."

"What is Spirit?"

"No, my friend. That followed the question. If you are to get the correct answer you must contemplate the correct question. What is the question?"

"Who am I?"

"Not quite. Think again. What is the question? Remember what I said about exact wording."

"Was it *What am I?*"

"Think again."

I thought back to the beginning. "Was it *WHO OR WHAT AM I?*"

"That is correct, my friend. Now contemplate that exact wording and the direction of our conversation during this next week. Make notes of what comes to your mind no matter how out of place or ridiculous the thoughts may seem. Also, keep this thought in mind as we progress. Sometimes the hints will help you discover the direction you are not supposed to go, or wrong answers, so eventually only the way of truth is left."

"Interesting," I nodded in appreciation.

"Now let me ask again. If I were to tell you that you are Spirit, does that tell you anything about who or what you are?"

"I guess in reality it doesn't tell me a whole lot."

"You are correct. Even if the statement is true it means very little to you or anyone else in your present state of understanding. When and if you get the first principle you will at least have some understanding along with it."

"Fascinating." I felt like Spock on Star Trek observing an advanced alien race.

"Time is about up. I should be on my way."

"John. I have one more question."

"Yes..."

"Can I share what I have learned with my wife?"

"If you are successful you will share your knowledge with the world. Because the destiny of male and female is to become one, you should share all things with your trusted wife. But do not tell anyone else of your experience until the time is right or you will be cut off from further teachings. Here, let me get the tab."

“It seems strange to have John the Apostle buy me coffee. I would have thought someone of your status would just materialize what you need.”

“How little do you realize the correct use of power, my friend. When in the world of man interacting with man, I must be as a man just as you are. You will learn more about power later.” He shook my hand. “Good-bye for now.”

“Where and when will I see you again?”

“I am working as a bell ringer seven days a week at Albertsons supermarket. I am easy to find. Come back in seven days, next Thursday, and we will continue class.”

“OK. Sure,” I said as I watched him pay for coffee and walk out the door. I half expected to blink my eyes and watch him disappear as he walked down the sidewalk, but he did not. He just looked like a normal older person strolling down the walk until he was out of sight.

CHAPTER SIX

The Beginning of Knowledge

After taking a few minutes to explain why I was late getting home I told Elizabeth the details of my conversations with John.

"I don't know.." she said. "It sounds pretty hard to believe. I think sometimes you are a little too eager to believe some of the weird stuff you get into. I mean - look at it from my point of view. One moment this man was just a bell ringer for the Salvation Army and the next minute he has you believing he's the Apostle John from the time of Christ. You told me not to tell anyone about this. You don't have to worry about that. I'm afraid if I did that they would put you away. Then I'd have nobody to take care of me during my last few months on this earth."

"I know it sounds crazy," I said, shaking my head, "and there is no way he could have convinced me in so short of time, but when he put his hand next to mine and looked at me it was like he and I were one person. For an instant I saw his thoughts, his purity and his memories from the days of Jesus. There was something so real about it that it is impossible to describe. After the thought transfer I am more positive that he is the Apostle John than I am sure of being here in this house at this moment. It sounds crazy, but you've got to trust me on this."

"I trust you more than anyone I know, but you sometimes make mistakes and your judgment is not always perfect. I trust your sincerity one hundred per cent, but you are not infallible."

"But you know I've never lied to you. I'm telling you John put his thoughts and some of his memories in my mind as clear as day."

"But I wasn't there. Maybe he's some master hypnotist of some kind, with perhaps an evil design."

"I can't blame you for doubting. I probably would too if you came home telling me a story like this."

"I'm not saying that your story about John is not true. I'm just not convinced. I'll tell you what would convince me though."

"What's that?"

"Do you remember reading in the New Testament that Jesus gave his disciples the same power to do miracles that he did? If I remember right they did some of the same amazing healings that Jesus did."

"You're right. I even have some of John's memories planted in me of some great miracles that are not even in the Bible. I have the recollection of John walking on water, and another time of putting out a great fire by his word and saving many lives... Then again he brought back a friend from the dead even as Jesus did with Lazarus."

Elizabeth's eyes brightened. "So, he should have no problem healing me then, should he?"

"I know he could. He spoke about the correct use of power, though, as if I did not understand it. Maybe healing you is something he is not allowed to do for some reason. During World War II he was strung up with piano wire and unable to save himself."

"But on other occasions he was able to use the power of God to help."

"Yes. That's true. I just don't want to get our hopes up here, but you're right. We may just have the greatest miracle man walking the earth right here in our midst. He may not only hold the keys of knowledge, but he may hold the keys to you being whole again."

"There's only one way to find out. You've got to ask him. If he heals me then I'll know for sure that he is the apostle."

"Well, I don't think I'd be struck down for asking. It's worth a try, but he told me to come back in a week to continue the lesson."

"Did he tell you that you couldn't talk to him for a week?"

"No."

"Since the man drank coffee at Denny's, he probably also eats. Why don't you go see him tomorrow and invite him over for dinner? We could ask him then."

"It's worth a try," I said.

That night I was lucky if I got two hours sleep. I had never felt such restless anticipation.

The next morning I took a little shopping trip. Sure enough, there he was, ringing his bell near the entrance of Albertsons. As

I approached our eyes met. He smiled a brief fatherly smile at me.

"I had to come to the store to get a couple of things," I said. It wasn't really a lie. There were a couple of things I needed.

John's countenance became more serious. "I suppose you have to do all the shopping since your wife is unable to."

"How did you know about my wife?"

"Not only did I give you some of my memories, but I caught a glimpse at some of yours. You love your wife very much, don't you?"

"Yes. Very much."

"I was in your situation almost two thousand years ago. My wife became deathly ill and I had to watch her waste away. There was nothing I could do. It still bothers me, even after all this time."

"You mean you performed all those miracles and you couldn't heal your own wife?" I felt a sinking feeling that he may not be able to help Elizabeth.

"Yes. Through me God healed hundreds of people I didn't even know, but the woman I loved was beyond my power."

"It almost sounds like God is cruel," I said bitterly.

"Not really," John said with understanding and empathy. "There is always love if we see the big picture. All pain and all illness exists to either guide or teach us. If we do not learn the lesson from the disease then the disease will either continue or change form until we die. Even though my wife was a great lady, she was also stubborn. She was unable to accept the change necessary to be healed. In some ways I think I suffered more than she did."

"I know the feeling," I said softly.

"Many of the people that Jesus and the disciples healed got their illnesses back because they did not make the necessary corrections in their lives. Some of these people turned into our enemies and sought our lives. Others were permanently healed and were faithful to the end."

John paused and looked at me with great earnestness: "You've come to ask me to heal your wife, haven't you?"

I was amazed by his perception, but then replied, "Yes. Is it possible? She is supposed to be incurable."

"Remember what the Master said. *All things are possible.*"

"Will you do it then?"

"I will let you know what I can do after I meet her. I sense she wants to meet me, to know if I am for real."

"She asked me to invite you over for dinner. How about tonight?"

"Can you pick me up here about six?"

"I'll be here."

John was waiting for me at six. After getting in the car I said, "You know I have a million questions for you."

"That is a good sign," he said. "The asking of questions is the beginning of knowledge. You'd be surprised how many people would have no questions even if God himself were to appear to them."

"You're kidding! If a source of knowledge like you is available, then you would think the average guy would be spilling over, asking all kinds of things."

"Many people are afraid of the truth, even among those who claim to be seekers and teachers. When you come face to face with undeniable truth, you must either conform to it or live your life as a hypocrite. Because people resist change they resist truth. That is why few people have more than two or three questions they would ask, even if they knew for sure they could get correct answers."

"I must not be average. I must have hundreds of questions!"

"That's the way it is. You are either afraid of truth and do not want to know more than your comfort zone will allow, or you are open to truth and change and your range of inquiry is infinite."

"Since it is good that I have questions, will you answer them?"

"You can ask anything you want. I will either answer your questions or I will not. It is that simple. Some things you are meant to discover on your own. Others are hidden from you for a purpose. Certain other mysteries you are meant to discover at a certain time and in a certain place."

"Let's start with this. You do eat, don't you, since you're coming to dinner?"

"Yes," John laughed. "I live each rejuvenated life as an ordinary mortal. I am as dependent on food as you are."

"Are you a vegetarian or do you live on a special diet?"

"In ideal circumstances I would be a vegetarian but right now I try to eat a common sense diet. I do what is necessary to keep my vehicle strong and vital."

"Your vehicle?"

"Yes. I was referring to my body."

"Ah, well, since the Bible says you were a fisherman I thought we would serve you salmon. Does that sound OK?"

“Salmon is good,” he smiled.

As we walked in the house Elizabeth was waiting in her wheelchair in the dining room. “So this must be the mystery man.” She had a friendly, yet skeptical look in her eye.

John met her hand with a shake and said: “And you are Elizabeth - a woman of grace, strength and beauty. Do I look familiar to you?”

Elizabeth looked puzzled: “I’m not sure. Why?”

“As we talk, it will seem to you that you know me.” He looked toward the kitchen. “Is there anything I can do to help with the meal?”

“Can you make a salad?” I asked.

“My specialty,” he said proudly.

“Good. I’ll put you to work while I sizzle the salmon steaks.”

CHAPTER SEVEN

Questions

As John and I were preparing dinner, Elizabeth was sitting in her wheelchair at the dining room table. I sensed that she was uncomfortable with the idea that we were having company and that she was unable to do anything to help. She was getting to the point that if she got any worse she would have to have someone stay with her all the time. She was still insisting that I go out and work my normal schedule and that she could take care of herself, but I was beginning to feel uneasy about her.

I looked her direction. "Sweetie...Do you have any questions you want to ask John?"

"You guys go ahead and finish putting the meal on and I'll let John have it then."

I looked at John. "Do you drink wine?"

"A little now and then."

"How about some Gewurztraminer? It's our favorite for special occasions."

"You have good taste."

"I was a little nervous in offering it to you. After all, your contemporary, John the Baptist, was supposed to eat nothing but locusts and honey."

"But when he was in prison he ate whatever they gave him. Every food, every element in the universe is good and beneficial if taken in the right portions, in the right combinations, and bad when the limit is crossed. Quinine is a good example. It has been added in minute amounts to drinks for many years, but is deadly if any substantial amount were taken.

"Research now shows that moderate amounts of alcohol have a beneficial effect on the heart. Even cigarettes if taken in small

doses, like just two or three a week, could have a beneficial stimulation to the system for some. The trouble with them is that very few people have the self control to limit their intake on these and other habit-forming substances.”

“How about pot? How is that beneficial?”

“Pot, as you call it, is a medicine and should be administered by a knowledgeable healer. It should not be used on a regular basis without the advice of a physician or spiritual teacher. Overuse can have the negative effect of weakening the power of the will and delaying the correct use of the energy centers in the head. Extreme overuse can cause physical and other problems.”

“Interesting,” I said. John and I took the food to the table. “Looks like we are about ready to dine. Elizabeth tells me that I make the best salmon steaks there are.”

“Looks as good as anything the French can dream up,” John said. “And salmon is very good for Elizabeth’s diet.”

“Let me propose a toast,” I said as I raised my glass. “May the truth always prevail.”

“A great toast,” John replied, smiling “That is not the first time I have heard you propose it, nor will it be the last.” He saw a question mark in my eyes. “Don’t ask me to explain that remark yet...May the truth always prevail,” he said.

John and I drank deeply. I always filled Elizabeth’s wine-glass about half full so she could drink with her shaking hands. Still, she spilled a couple of drops. “Excuse me,” she said, wiping herself with a napkin.

“No problem,” said John. “Didn’t you promise to interrogate me?”

“Yes, I do have some questions.”

“This may be somewhat of a special occasion.” John interrupted. “This is the first time I have opened myself up to questions with knowledge of my identity on the table for several hundred years.”

Elizabeth set her fork down and wiped her mouth. “So, you really think you are John the Beloved? Tell me in your own words who you are. This is such a fantastic claim I want to hear it from your own mouth.”

John leaned forward and looked at Elizabeth thoughtfully. “The Beloved was a term originated by one of my students and for some reason it stuck and I was called the *disciple that Jesus loved* in the final edition of the Gospel of John. I did not feel at the time that I deserved any such title. In many ways, back then I was

somewhat immature and fell short as a disciple of the Master. All of us betrayed Him in some degree. Someday I will tell you why Jesus chose me to wander the earth until He comes again. In a way, it has been a great honor, and has had many rewards, yet in another way it has been very difficult.”

“What do you mean you all betrayed Him in some degree?” asked Elizabeth. “I thought you were all holy men.”

“Jesus was the only holy man among us and even that was not obvious until one looked below the surface. The disciples were much more ordinary than any of the churches would ever want you to believe. The twelve apostles were not much more out of the ordinary than a group of salesmen at a convention. The only thing we had in common was a desire to learn the deeper mysteries. We were also attracted to the power Jesus had and wanted Him to share it with us, but our motives were not entirely pure.

“At one point we let jealousy overcome us and accused Jesus of being a glory seeker. We told him that He needed to let us do and take credit for some of the miracles so He would be forced to stay humble. Now I see on reflection that it was we who needed to be humbled. He was just doing the job He came to do and it attracted attention. At the time we felt like we deserved attention just as much as Jesus did and we wanted our share.”

“Well, if you are the Apostle and this is true, why are you telling us? I would think you would want to keep anything negative about your history under your hat.” Elizabeth said matter-of-factly.

“That was our basic attitude when we related the story of the gospel to students that was finally written down in permanent form. We were somewhat defensive when the story of how we deserted Jesus on the night of his arrest kept surfacing. None of the eleven remaining apostles wanted that to go in a permanent record, but the truth was out about it shortly after the resurrection and there was no suppressing it. Peter suffered the most, however, because Jesus actually predicted he would deny him three times before the cock would crow. Many ignorant people thought he did not deserve to be a leader because of this act and some who were jealous of his position even crowed like a rooster when he walked by to remind him of his mistake. Peter suffered great pain because of his error yet he also performed the greatest of miracles among us.

John continued, “To answer your question *why do I reveal*

my past weakness? For two reasons. Joseph will write about our conversations, and in this round I must reveal the truth about the humanity of the little group who followed the Master. In the past we tried to portray ourselves as greater than we were. Secondly, I want you to realize that I am just a human being like yourselves. I have many answers, but not all the answers. I have some power available, but not all power. I would rather give you more than you expect rather than less.”

I asked John if he wanted more salmon and he happily accepted. My interest in John increased by the minute.

“So, how would you rate yourself now?” Elizabeth asked. “Have you made some progress?”

“I appreciate that question. Yes, I have made a lot of progress. Back in those days I was like a kid in a candy store. Now I’m more like the father who had too much candy as a kid deciding how much candy my own child should have. My perspective and judgment is much improved. Even so, I cannot just blurt out the few mysteries of the universe that I know. Higher knowledge cannot just be poured into you like placing data into a computer. To be fully understood it must be verified through a person’s own soul.

“And what is the difference between lower and higher knowledge?” Elizabeth asked

“Lower knowledge deals with facts and can be used as soon as it is memorized, like how to spell certain words or the multiplication tables. Seven times seven is forty-nine. As soon as anyone memorizes this he can use it in the practical world.

“Higher knowledge deals with principles and requires a certain attuning with the spiritual self to be able to apply it. For instance, anyone can learn how to write down musical notes, but to compose a beautiful and original melody requires an attuning with music itself. Anyone can memorize a scale of notes but only the person who is in tune with music can come close to understanding the principle behind music and write original scores.

“So the first key which is WHO OR WHAT AM I? cannot just be told to us,” Elizabeth concluded.

“That is correct. You must tune into it to understand the meaning. My job is to merely guide you in the right direction. I am like the person coaching the songwriter. I could say to such a person: *That doesn’t even sound like music. Try again; or, that sounds beautiful and stirs my soul. Keep on writing.* I will know within myself when you have reached the required level of understanding.”

“Interesting,” said Elizabeth. (I was just sitting back relaxing and enjoying Elizabeth giving John an interrogation.) “Now I have some real questions for you,” she mused.

“Ask on,” John replied, obviously pleased with Elizabeth’s curiosity.

Elizabeth reached into the pocket of her skirt and pulled out a list. “Here they are:

“One: What is the meaning of life? Two: Where did we come from? Why are we here and where are we going? Three: How much of the Bible is really true? Four: Is there a true church? And if there is, which one is it? Five: Is there reincarnation? Six: Is Christ really coming again? If so, when? Seven: When did the universe begin and when will it end? Eight: Who or what is God and why is He not doing something constructive on the earth today? It looks to me like He doesn’t care much about starving children, for instance. Nine: Does this earth have any future awaiting it or is there going to be some dark apocalypse where life as we know it will cease to exist? Ten: Why does God allow suffering, disease and untimely death? What father would let his children suffer as some of us have to? If God is really a loving God it just doesn’t make sense. Take me, for instance. I know I’m not perfect, but there are a lot of rapists and murderers out there who are in much better physical shape than I am. Why am I punished and not them?”

John smiled. “That’s an impressive list of questions. Did you think them up yourself?” he asked.

“My husband and I thought them up last night when we sort of brainstormed.”

“For several reasons I will only give you so much at a time. I will take one question from you tonight. Pick the one that means the most to you.”

“I think you know which one that is,” Elizabeth said evenly.

“That could be.” John said. “Nevertheless, you must clearly state your question.”

“Why is that?” she protested.

“There is a principle governing the transmission of higher principles. Have you heard the statement by Jesus in the Bible where he says: *Ask and you shall receive?*”

“I believe so.”

“If you want to know any mystery, you must ask and know what you are asking. The one being asked must know what is being asked, and the one who is asking must be willing to receive

if the answer is given.”

“And if I reject the answer?”

“Then it will be as if the question was never asked,” John replied.

“I’m not sure if you are really John the Beloved, but at least you are unusual... How do I know if I am ready for the answer?”

“When you are ready to consider anything, no matter how crazy it sounds,” said John.

“So the answer to number ten could be that God is really a spoiled cosmic brat who is torturing us like a kid who sticks pins in bees and pulls wings off flies?”

“You never know,” John said wryly.

“OK. I will not guarantee I am ready, but here’s the question. It’s number ten.”

“Articulate the question,” said John.

“OK. I’ll repeat it.” Elizabeth shifted in her wheelchair. “Why does God allow suffering, disease and untimely death? Why do some innocent children die? Why do some of us suffer with painful disease and others who deserve to suffer seem to be vibrant and healthy?”

“I’ll answer at least part of your question,” said John “In particular, you want to know why you suffer with such a dread disease when you have been basically a good person and do not deserve such pain. You wonder why your life will seemingly be cut short while other people can gracefully grow old with their partners. Is that what you want to know?”

“Basically, yes.”

“I will give you a partial answer now and more later when you have additional pieces to the puzzle. Can you accept this?”

“I suppose so. Go ahead. Show me what you’ve got.”

I smiled at Elizabeth’s spunkiness and looked at John with great anticipation for the answer.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Answer

John took a breath, leaned back in his chair, and said: “By the way, that’s about the best salmon I’ve had in a thousand years. Good wine too. Reminds me of some good German ones back in the 30’s. I appreciate your hospitality.”

“Thanks. That means a lot coming from you,” I beamed.

“Now on to the question,” said John. “The question Elizabeth asked is not usually of great concern for a person who is healthy, active and gliding along in life. But sooner or later every soul in his or her progress reaches some type of life crisis or problem and looks to the skies at some invisible being and demands: *Why me God???* Or it may be *Why my wife?* or *Why my child?* or *Why my parents?* He wants to know why this suffering seems to single him out and not others who seem to richly deserve it. He hears that God is love, but if He is loving, then why would He allow this?”

John paused a moment then continued: “If and when you finish the 36 principles the answer to this will be fairly clear in your mind. For instance, when you understand who and what God is, it will be a great help, but for now we will stick to the basics.”

“There are great truths hidden in some of the maxims of this world. For instance you have heard the phrase *no pain, no gain?*”

We both nodded.

“This statement is as good as scripture. Do you think there has ever been an Olympic champion who got where he was without a great deal of pain? How about a successful businessperson, an inventor, a great actor? They have all had to go through painful experiences or make painful sacrifices. But in the end the pain produced gain.

“Now an interesting point here is that these successful individuals volunteered for the pain because they had faith the pain would produce gain. The runner painfully pushes his body because he believes it will result in a stronger body and eventually the joy of accomplishment and victory.

“Let us imagine that various parts of your body had their own life and consciousness. See your lungs as one entity, your heart as another, your muscles still another and your brain as a fourth entity. You are the whole person and are in charge of the general decision making as to what is good for the whole. Let us say that the brain wants to read a book, the muscles want to sleep because they are tired, the lungs want some fresh air and the heart wants some romance. The problem is they cannot do all of these things - they can only do one of them. Who gets to decide? If the brain decides all the time the whole body will spend all of its time reading and will never get fresh air for the lungs. If the heart forces the body to spend all free time in romance then the brain will be bored to death. It is fortunate that decision making is turned over to you - the whole person running the body. You make decisions for the body by taking the whole into consideration. Your decisions may not be perfect, but they are much better for the whole than if power were turned over to a part.”

“So are you saying that I am a part of a greater whole and that this greater whole is making me suffer for some greater benefit of something greater than myself?” Elizabeth. asked

“That is part of the answer,” John nodded. “Now to visualize more clearly, let us suppose that you decide that you are going to be a champion long distance runner. When you start your training no one of these four lives I mentioned will be happy. During running practice the brain will have too much blood rushing through it to even be able to think. The lungs will feel like they are on fire and ready to explode. The muscles will ache and feel as if they cannot go on, and the heart will pump like crazy thinking it is being tortured. All these little lives are shouting out the question, *Why is this happening to us? What is the purpose of it all?*

“Then comes the time months later that the body is in perfect tune and ready for the competition. What do these little lives feel about being pushed now? The brain notices that it gets more oxygen and thinks and functions much better. The lungs are happy they have to breathe about half the frequency as they used to and breathing is much easier. The muscles are aware that the weight of the body seems much lighter and they no longer need so much

rest. Finally, the heart, like the lungs, seems to be able to rest more and does not have to beat as often or with as much effort as it used to. In the end they all think the same thought: *We've been through a lot of pain, and we didn't like it at the time, but now life seems easier, fuller and more rewarding.*

"Now," said John, moving his chair closer to the table, "we'll move this analogy closer to home. It may seem to us that we are the highest lives in the universe and that what we do only affects ourselves. But it does not. Each of us has invisible links to family, friends, city, state and every other life on this planet and even the universe. These are all various higher bodies in which we interact and produce effect. We are linked to these other lives through the Holy Spirit who is the final judge as to circumstances that will be brought into play which will benefit the whole."

Elizabeth wheeled back from the table, "So, you are telling me that the Spirit of God decided to make me ill to benefit the whole in some way?" Elizabeth asked angrily. "Well, I don't think my illness is benefiting anyone or anything. In fact, it is keeping me from doing many good things I have always wanted to do." She looked ready to leave the room.

"It may seem that way," John replied softly and patiently. "But for greater understanding, you must realize that there are two of you who are undergoing a painful experience here. In some ways your husband suffers more pain than you do. When a loved one is suffering through what appears to be no fault of his own and you can do nothing about it, that helplessness is very painful. Believe me, I know. I was in Joseph's situation long ago."

After a long pause Elizabeth sighed, her eyes slightly tearful, "You're probably right. He also has to work much harder than he used to in able to take care of everything. Now I even have him doing housework. Believe me, that is proof he loves me. Then I probably bring him additional pain by complaining too much..."

"You don't complain as much when you are ill as others do when they are well," I assured her.

"Actually," said John, "the analogy so far applies more to Joseph than it does to you. Like the story of the four little lives, Joseph, through no fault of his own, found himself married to a person with an incurable disease. He is like all of us to some degree or another. We find ourselves in situations that we had seemingly little if any power in creating, and once there we just have to deal with it the best we can. Like the brain, he had to

forego pleasant studies. Like the lungs, he had to work harder to supply oxygen or money to keep everything running smooth. Like the muscles, he had to be more active and take on a larger load. Like the heart, he had to put romance on the back burner and concentrate on just keeping your relationship alive by pumping harder to keep life-giving energy circulating between the both of you. Later, just like the four little lives, Joseph will find that he has more freedom, power and strength than he ever had before.”

“That’s all very interesting,” said Elizabeth, shaking her head, “but I’m still in the dark as to why I have to suffer this disease. Don’t tell me that it is just so my husband can have a growing experience.”

“Not at all,” John replied. “However, that may be part of the reason the Spirit sent a charge of energy that caused Joseph to fall in love with you and marry you. But the benefits of your disease for Joseph are merely side benefits that we all pick up on the road of life if we handle our situations correctly as they come up.”

“You’ve gone all around my question but haven’t answered me yet. Why don’t you just blurt it out and tell me,” Elizabeth pleaded, her voice shaking.

John looked into Elizabeth’s eyes and replied softly and slowly, “Whenever you meet a true spiritual teacher worth his salt he will rarely answer you outright. Instead, he circles around the core thought so when the answer is finally manifested it will be understood. Now that is what I am about to do. Why do bad things, such as your illness, happen to good people?”

“As I said before, you are a part of a greater whole that is joined together by the Holy Spirit. Each person in an individual life has one major lesson he is supposed to learn, one ability or talent he is to develop and one quality he is supposed to enhance. This triangle of learning is never easy and is always a struggle. For instance, if a certain person was born with the natural ability to play the piano the lesson would generally not be directly connected with it because internally this is something that is already mastered. Instead, the piano may be a distraction to tempt him away from his real lesson, which may be in an opposite direction such as heavy construction. If he is driven by his soul to become a famous musician the lesson could be connected with the fame and not the talent itself.”

Elizabeth interrupted, “From the time I was young I had a gift for drawing. I never took any classes, but I could draw most anything in moments and it would look great. Just as I was think-

ing of developing this talent more fully I got this disease. Now my hands shake too much to be able to draw.”

“This ability that you naturally had was your temptress to lead you astray from your true calling to improve yourself and to be more useful to the whole, thus becoming a whole-ly (holy) person.”

“So what am I supposed to learn?” Elizabeth asked.

“As I said, the thing you are supposed to learn is something you are usually not very talented in and naturally resist to some degree. When the degree of resistance becomes too great and you are not hearing or seeing the messages that the Spirit is sending you, then the message must be sent more strongly. If it is resisted again you may be sent a life-threatening illness such as yours which forces you to look upward and shout out *why me God?*”

“I’ve done that before,” said Elizabeth. “So what am I resisting?”

“Think,” John suggested. “Think of situations you may not like that seem to keep repeating themselves, forcing you to do or work at something you don’t particularly want to do.”

“I know what mine is,” I spoke up. “I’ve always enjoyed doing creative things, especially writing of all types and I’ve always been forced into situations where I have no time for creative endeavors and always wind up doing something in sales or business to make the money I need. I used to hate sales and business, but now I’m becoming good at it. I appreciate business and sales talent as much or more than I do an artist.”

“And that is why you are healthy,” said John. “You eventually gave in to the forces pushing you toward your lesson and are making progress. As long as you are making progress in your lesson your soul does not have to send you great pain to move you ahead.”

“So what is Elizabeth resisting?” I asked again.

“She must examine the experiences of her life, look within, touch bases with the *still, small voice*, find out what she has avoided doing, and do it.”

“How will I know when I have found it?”

“It will feel very right and good when you finally yield to it,” said John.

“So what is the lesson of her disease?” I asked.

“Every disease is a teacher,” said John. You must look at the disease, see where it is located and the effect it is having in

order to discern its lesson. For instance, heart disease must be trying to teach us something connected with the heart. The heart is the seat of spiritual love. If it is time for you to learn the value and expression of love - which is an octave higher than passionate love or possessive love - and you resist, then the heart becomes weak as a message to you that your expression of love is weaker than it should be."

"But I've had some friends with heart problems and they seemed like pretty nice people," Elizabeth exclaimed. "On the other hand, I've known some cruel people who seem to not know what love is at all, yet have healthy hearts. How do you explain that?"

"The cruel people you mention are not yet ready to learn about spiritual love so their souls do not even attempt to teach them by bringing them pain in that direction. Maybe the cruel person needs to start with a simpler lesson. Perhaps he is just supposed to learn the value of giving and receiving affection. Maybe he is suffering through tremendous pain and rejection because he is not getting any affection from anyone. Maybe this rejection just about drives him crazy until finally he yields and gives in to it. For him that is a big step, but for us we wonder why anyone would have a problem with it."

"So what's the lesson of cancer?" I asked, becoming even more interested.

"Ah, cancer," said John. "Many great souls have died of this, one of the most painful of all teachers.

"All disease falls into two categories. First is congestion. This is caused by holding in too much, such as in suppression or denial. The second is inflammation. This is caused by not holding in enough and releasing more energy than you take in. Cancer is caused by congestion. The person holds in or suppresses energy or feelings that need to be released, and this holding in produces a growth which is symbolic of the unreleased desire or feeling.

"Let us suppose that you see yourself as a nice person and find yourself in contact with a rough individual who hurts your feelings. You have three choices. First, you can hurt his feelings right back; second, you can release your hurt by telling that person how he made you feel; or third, you can be a nice person and avoid conflict by pretending that everything is OK.

"This third alternative that many take is by far the worst choice. First, it encourages the rude person to continue in his behavior, and second, it is a deception that the Spirit of Truth will not allow

to forever remain in an evolving soul. People think the most frequent lie is *The check is in the mail*. But in reality it is the communication which says: *I'm fine. You did not hurt me*, which is the biggest lie.

"Lesser souls are allowed to lie and get away with it. Like children they get away with certain things because of their lack of understanding. But when a person reaches a certain stage of progression, this greatest lie is no longer tolerated and the lesson must be learned.

"Cancer is caused by many types of suppression. Hurt feelings, as I said, is a big one, denial of feeling is another, and lack of sexual fulfillment due to lack of communication, miscommunication or guilt is another. All involve deception of some type."

"You're circling around the answer again," said Elizabeth. "I can see that this method of teaching does have the effect of stimulating interest. Now I'm more curious than ever about what you will say about my illness."

"That is as it should be," John smiled. "Every disease has both physical and spiritual ingredients affecting the problem. For instance, people think that contact with germs produce certain illnesses, yet two people can inhale the same germs and one can get sick and the other one not be affected. Perhaps the one who did not become ill was in better physical shape, but more often than not he was in more harmony with his soul in that area where the disease has a lesson to teach.

"Multiple Sclerosis was very rare before a hundred years ago and even today rarely occurs in the less civilized societies. Part of the reason for this is our overprocessed and depleted foods. Another is the chemicals and poisons that civilization is currently exposed to. You have heard the theory that mercury fillings can bring on MS and there is a grain of truth to this, but Joseph has more mercury in his mouth than you have, yet is unaffected. The difference lies in the spiritual reason.

"The seat of the problem lies in the brain and the nervous system. In MS there is a loss of a fatty protective layer between the brain and the nerves, causing a malfunction or loss of communication between the brain and the all-important nervous system.

"Spiritually, our nervous system needs a certain amount of protection from our thoughts, brain activity and our fears, which our brains and feelings tend to amplify."

"MS is basically caused by failure to correctly direct thoughts

and fears into their right place. The patient must realize that unchecked fears and thoughts can run rampant and destroy the protective layer over the nerves. When unchecked thoughts and fears interact directly on the nervous system a physical correspondence can take place and the person can become ill.”

“So I did not get MS because I somehow do not let my thoughts and fears affect my nervous system?” I asked.

“You create the protection you need by shifting your attention from destructive thoughts and fears. This shifting of attention gives your nervous system its needed rest. On the other hand, Elizabeth suppresses unwanted thoughts and fears. This gives her the appearance of resting the nerves, but its effect is opposite. Instead, she has another deception producing a destructive effect. By deceiving herself and pretending certain thoughts and fears do not exist, a dangerous situation is created and we have another disease of congestion as a result.”

“So what thoughts and fears do I pretend do not exist?” asked Elizabeth, leaning forward.

“Unfortunately, it would not be right for me to fully explain that to you at this time. I can teach you around a principle, but you must do a certain amount of soul searching yourself or you will be denied a great growing experience.” He paused a moment and said: “Here, let me touch your forehead.”

John reached across the table and touched her forehead with the fingertips of his right hand. “Let the energy flow for a moment” he said, closing his eyes. He took a long, slow breath, and exhaled softly and evenly.

We were all silent for a short time.

“There,” said John. “You will feel stronger for a few days. I do this for you to give you faith that you can be healed.”

“I do feel stronger!” Elizabeth said, obviously surprised. She looked at John with great emotion in her eyes. “If you are really John the Beloved, can you just heal me like people were healed by Jesus?”

John paused in thought of his past. “Many healings were permitted at that time because it was extremely important as a witness to the Son of God. The good that resulted outweighed the bad, but there were some problems for those who were healed who were not ready. It is also very important that you be healed so you can help Joseph with the work he has to do, but the problem is that you will need the benefits of the knowledge and ability gained from the healing to fulfill your own mission correctly.”

“Does this mean I can be healed?” she asked eagerly.

“Definitely, but both you and your husband must do your part. You are in a race against time. You must achieve healing while your brain-body interactions are still intact, or it could be too late. If you and Joseph can solve the first three keys of knowledge before this happens you will be healed. On the other hand, you may be healed early through correct action, thought and faith.”

“Doesn’t telling her something like that increase fears and unwanted thoughts?” I asked. “Won’t such stress make things worse?”

“If handled correctly it will force her to deal with her thoughts and fears so she will learn to put them in their right place,” John answered, standing up to leave. “This is as far as we can go now. It has been a pleasure.”

As I was opening the door for John to leave I asked, “How did you know I have more mercury fillings than Elizabeth?”

“You will find out at the right time,” he smiled.

“Let me drive you home,” I offered.

“That’s all right. It’s a nice night for a walk.”

“But it must be five miles to wherever you live.”

“It doesn’t matter. Walking and arranging your thoughts is a very healthy thing.” As he walked into the night he reminded me of Kane in the Kung Fu series. This time I thought he did disappear in the distance, but I wasn’t sure. After all it was fairly dark.

CHAPTER NINE

Who Are We, Really?

I shut the door behind me and walked over to Elizabeth. "What do you think?" I asked.

"He's interesting," she said. I could see from the light in her eyes - something I haven't seen in a long while - that hope had returned.

"Do you think he's for real?" I asked carefully.

"I don't know for sure. Something about him is very convincing."

"A scripture about Jesus comes to my mind," I said, clearing off the table. "It says *He taught as one having authority, not one of the scribes*. John seems to teach with an authority or knowledge behind what he says unlike any teacher I have ever heard."

"It goes beyond that," added Elizabeth. "I definitely felt something when he touched me. I swear I think I can stand up." She nudged forward in her chair. "Take my hand," she commanded.

"You aren't going to try to get up are you?" I said walking toward her.

"I feel like I can stand. Pull me up," she insisted.

"I don't know," I said giving her a fairly limp hand.

She grabbed and pulled. Her pull made me pull back until she was standing upright.

"I don't believe it!" I exclaimed. "You haven't stood in months."

"I think I can walk!" she exclaimed as she took a step. Then she took another, letting go of my hand. Next she walked slowly across the room and rested against the wall. She radiated like an Olympic winner at the finish line.

"It's a miracle," I shouted.

"John said I would have increased strength for a couple days,"

Elizabeth cautioned, walking back and forth slowly across the room. "Since this is temporary, I think we should go for a walk while I have the strength."

"Do you think you can?"

"There's one way to find out," she said. "Get our coats and let's breathe some fresh air."

Sometimes there was no way of saying no to Elizabeth. I had to at least humor her. I got the coats. "Why are you so determined to take a walk?" I asked.

"There was something in John's voice as he was leaving. Remember what he said - something like walking helps you to arrange your thoughts. He said something about putting my thoughts and fears in their right place so they would no longer be destructive."

Then Elizabeth took my arm and walked out the door and down the steps with a strength and determination that amazed me. Soon, we were walking down the street at a brisker pace than I had thought possible. "Let's head toward the foothills where we used to go," she suggested in a childlike voice.

I couldn't discourage her at this point. We lived only a few blocks from some beautiful foothills that we haven't been able to explore since the illness. We headed toward them and to my pleasant surprise Elizabeth seemed to have the strength to continue.

"It's so good to be able to walk again," she breathed in deeply. "I have never felt so good in my life. Even the air feels like it is charged with life."

"Just think of all the walks we could have taken together but didn't," I said. "You know I've never thought of it before, but I can see how walks can take your mind off your troubles. Just look at the beauty of this place! How can a person be fearful or worrisome while walking through them?"

"I think I can see how John was right," said Elizabeth. "For several years before my illness, and perhaps even more so after my illness, I have had my attention on my problems and my fears. Even when I seemed to be taking it easy my concerns were still there gnawing at me. If my brain has needed a rest I can see how it didn't get it. On the other hand, it seems as if your brain doesn't get any rest either."

"You can't always tell what is going on inside by looking or even living with someone," I replied. "I think I am successful at keeping unwanted fears and thoughts from affecting me continu-

ously. Even when I have little time or am under a lot of pressure, I set aside periods of time where my undesirable thoughts and fears are diverted. They are not suppressed, but sort of like in hibernation." Then it was like a light was turned on in my head. "Perhaps it would be more accurate to say it's like I have created a place for them and have put them there. That's kind of the way John put it, isn't it?"

"Yes," she nodded. "He said something about sending our thoughts and fears to their right place. That's a little the way I feel now, like my unwanted thoughts and fears are in storage behind some locked doors somewhere. Right now, while we are walking through these beautiful hills they have no power over me. This is the first time since my illness I can remember feeling this way."

"Maybe this means that you are healed," I said hopefully. It was too good to be true, I thought, but miracles do happen.

"I don't know. John said I would have added strength for a few days. It's like some other will besides my own is keeping those symbolic doors locked and making me safe for a period of time. He said I could be healed if we solved the first three keys. Maybe we should take this quiz program of his seriously. You said something about the importance of getting the question right. Tell me the exact wording again." We sat down on some rocks to rest.

"It was not just WHO AM I? but WHO OR WHAT AM I?"

"And what answers did you give him that he said were not correct?"

"He didn't quite say they were not correct but implied that my answers didn't mean anything. Apparently there's some core answer I'm supposed to come up with."

"Tell me the answers you gave him that were not it."

"First I said I was a human being."

"Well, when I look at your office I sometimes wonder about that," she smiled.

"You are feeling better, aren't you?" I quipped

"What else did you say?"

"I said a spirit, a soul, a son of God. None of these were it."

"Well, you would think our essence would be some type of spirit or spiritual. Why did he say this was not it?"

"He said that saying I am spirit does not mean anything. He asked me to define spirit and I couldn't say anything intelligent."

"So he wants you to say something definite about who you are, and if you do not know what spirit is, it means nothing to say

you are spirit?"

"I think it's something like that," I answered.

"Have you done any more thinking about who or what you are?"

"Some."

"What have you come up with?"

"Not much. How about you? Can you come up with anything?"

"Well. I always find it's good to just rattle off whatever comes to mind, make a list and see if anything makes any sense."

"I've pretty much rattled off my list," I said. "Let's go through your list, perhaps from a woman's perspective."

"Smart man. Turn it over to a woman when you reach an impasse."

"OK. Let's see what you've got."

"WHO or WHAT AM I? Let's see." Elizabeth stood up and we started walking again. "In addition to what you've said I could add that I am my thoughts, my feelings, my personality... I am what I look like. I am female. Did you know that many women define who they are by their home? That the home is an extension of themselves?"

"I think you mentioned it to me. Your list sounds as good as mine. Somehow I don't think we have the answer though. Let's write our thoughts down when we get home and I'll present them to John in our next session."

"I guess that's about all we can do."

"There's one more thing I think I will do."

"What's that?" she asked.

"I'm going to have breakfast with Wayne tomorrow. He's been a good friend for years and an amateur philosopher. I think I will ask him the question."

Elizabeth glanced at me anxiously. "Didn't you say John told you not to tell anyone about this yet?"

"He told me not to tell anyone about him. He didn't put any restrictions on how I can come up with the answers."

"Well, don't do anything to screw this up," she said, squeezing my arm. "He said if we master the first three principles I will be healed."

"John said to listen to his exact words and his exact words did not forbid me from tossing this by Wayne."

"We haven't done that great so far. Maybe Wayne will give us an idea or two."

The next morning I met Wayne at our favorite cafe. Wayne was an old friend about my age who had his own business. He ran a yard care business and did a little of everything for his customers - pruning, mowing, pest control and so on. He looked like a regular homespun guy and usually wore a cowboy hat. You would never think by looking at him that he spent any time thinking about the meaning of life. But he loved to get together with me for breakfast at least once a week and just talk about philosophy, religion, the new age, politics, meaning of life or whatever. We both had respect for each other as two thinkers who looked a little deeper into the meaning of things than the average person. This morning I was hoping he would be at his philosophical best.

"How's your week been?" I asked him as the waitress seated us.

"You don't want to know," he said with a painful expression on his face.

Even though Wayne was a great philosopher he had not quite perfected the art of distilling his intelligence to the point of running his business smoothly. It seemed like every time we got together he had a horror story of some costly action one of his employees took. Several months ago one ran off with about \$10,000 worth of tools just a couple days after Wayne bailed him out of jail. Just last week one of them showed up on his doorstep with his wife and kids because they were evicted. The reason? He spent his rent money on drugs. Wayne was beside himself on that one.

Even though I felt bad that my good friend had so many business problems I was always curious about what happened this time. I could never just let it slide. "OK Wayne. Tell me the story."

"I drew Skip a diagram - a map of the yard so there would be no mistake. Last time he told me that I wasn't clear enough, so this time I drew him a damn map!" Wayne almost spit out.

"Wasn't Skip the one who pruned the wrong tree of some fussy customer?" I asked.

"Yep. He promised it wouldn't happen again as long as I was clear with him so I drew him a diagram of the yard with an X marking the spot where the birch tree was located. The instructions were simple. Take out the birch tree where X marks the spot."

"And he took out the tree from somewhere else?" I guessed.

Wayne shook his head and gritted his teeth. "The stupid son of a bitch took out a birch tree from the east side of the lawn, not the west side where I had the X."

“So there were birch trees on both sides of the lawn?”

“Yes, but I had the X marked on the West side.”

“If your diagram was not clearly marked maybe he looked at it upside down and thought east was west.” Good old Wayne doesn’t get mad when I analyze his problems like Elizabeth does sometimes.

“That’s what he claims, but only an idiot would have read the map that way. I had the roses marked on the West side by the correct birch. That was just one of the ways he should have chosen the right tree.”

I thought to myself that I might have turned the map upside down had I been an employee, but my friend was aggravated enough without me adding fuel to the fire. “So what’s the owner going to do?” I asked.

“We had to go back and take out the right tree for free and plant him three new trees and he still isn’t happy. He’s talking about taking us to court, but I think he just wants to blackmail us for all he can get. The last time I talked to him he said that if we mowed his lawn for free for all of next year he may not take legal action. I felt like telling him to take a hike, but I suppose we’ll wind up mowing his lawn. That damn Skip! You’d think a guy could read a diagram.”

“Maybe next time you ought to actually show him the right tree in person,” I offered gingerly.

“I don’t have time to hold everyone’s hand,” Wayne said, shaking his head.

Then at least you’d better mark East, West, North and South on your diagrams.”

“Hell, that wouldn’t do any good. Some of these guys don’t know which way is up, let alone where West is.” Wayne took a big gulp of water.

This conversation seemed to end where it does each week. Wayne had a major problem with one of his guys and there was no way to prevent it and there is no way to prevent it from reoccurring. I was glad I was not asking him for business advice. Philosophy yes, Wayne was as good as anyone I knew, but business did not seem to be his talent. Nevertheless, I did admire him for keeping at it despite all the setbacks. He did seem to be getting a little more savvy in the real world.

“I have a philosophical question for you,” I said, changing the subject.

“Anything to get my mind off my guys,” he said. “I told you I

didn't want to talk about my problems."

"OK. Here's the situation." I bent forward and asked in softer tones so as not to be overheard. "Let's say that you have a vision and God appears to you."

"What does he or she look like?" Wayne asked with a smirk.

"It doesn't matter. Just suppose God appears to you and offers you a deal."

"What kind of deal?" Wayne seemed to be shifting his attention from his problems to his philosophical mode.

I thought carefully. I couldn't tell him about John. "Let's say that God tells you that if you can answer one simple question He will give you three wishes."

"I could use three wishes. I would take a stab at it. Why not? What's the question?"

"Here's the question: WHO OR WHAT ARE YOU?" Now here is what the answer is not. It is not a human being, a son of God, a spirit or soul. So if God says that none of these common answers are correct, what could it be?"

"This is an odd line of questioning for you," Wayne said, looking at me suspiciously. "Are you sure you didn't get hit on the head and see the Big Guy?"

"No. Nothing like that." I tried to sound nonchalant, but I didn't know whether or not Wayne guessed something was up. "Just been doing some thinking. I want your serious answer here. How would you answer the question?"

"OK. I'll play along. Not son of God, not human, not spirit, not soul. Well, Jesus said something interesting about who we are that is in none of those categories."

"That might be helpful. What did he say?"

"He said we are gods."

"That sounds like Mormon teachings." I've studied quite a bit about different religious teachings and so has Wayne.

"Yes, the Mormons have a slant in that direction, but in addition to them there are billions of people on earth with some type of belief that man is a god of some sort. Most of the Christians believe this doctrine is heresy however."

"But you are telling me that Jesus actually said it in the Bible? How does the actual wording go?"

Wayne took a sip of coffee and leaned forward. "I remember clearly three words he said. *It was Ye are gods.*"

"Jesus called us Gods?" I asked in hushed tones. I remember the Bible calling us Sons of God, but Gods? Do you remem-

ber where that scripture is?"

"I'm pretty sure it's in the gospel of John."

"John?" I sputtered, spilling several drops of coffee on my lap.

"Careful there," Wayne grinned. "Are you sure you didn't have some vision or something? You look pale." He looked carefully at my face.

"Here lately I'm not sure of anything," I said lamely. "You really think Jesus said that in the book of John?"

"Like I said, I'm pretty sure. John the Beloved himself recorded that. He was definitely the best New Testament author. Keep in mind though that most Christians don't think he was seriously telling us we are gods."

"So, what do you think? Do you think we're gods?"

"Look at it this way," said Wayne. "God is supposed to be everywhere, right?"

"That's what they say."

"You occupy some of that space they call everywhere, don't you?"

"Yes."

"So, is God in the space you occupy?"

"If He is everywhere, then the answer is yes."

"That means that God is in you."

"Yes again."

"So would God be in your heart, brain, liver and even your cells?"

"Well, they are all part of everywhere. If God is omnipresent then I guess He would be in every atom of my body." I was catching on to Wayne's reasoning.

"So if God is in every atom of your body you are made of God. It follows then that you are God. If it's in you through and through, then it's you."

"So, do you think that is true? Do you really think we are Gods?"

"Hell, I don't know," Wayne said, leaning back in his seat. "I'm not even one hundred percent sure that there is a God. Sometimes I'm not even sure I am here on earth. Maybe everything is just a great dream and when we wake up there's nothing there. Or maybe when we wake up we are in some place that makes sense. Better yet, maybe we'll wake up on a south sea island full of beautiful girls to take care of our every need." Wayne grinned at this thought. Poor guy hadn't had a girlfriend in a long time.

“Very interesting thinking, but that scripture you mentioned interests me the most. I’m going to look it up when I get home,” I said excitedly. “I faintly remember reading it, but never thought of it in the context that we could actually be gods.” I couldn’t wait to get home!

“Don’t take it too seriously and expect me to worship you,” Wayne smiled.

I cut our conversation short and sped home and started re-searching the book of John. Finally I found the scripture in chapter ten:

John 10:34 Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?

John 10:35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken;

John 10:36 Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?

After a little research I realized that the “law” that Jesus mentioned was the book of Psalms. Jesus seemed to be saying that those who received the law of God or scriptures were called gods. Just maybe...maybe that was the answer. We are more than human. We are gods. I will admit however, it seemed odd to think of myself as a god, but apparently the answer that John wanted was not just your standard Sunday school formula.

I took the Bible in my hand and found Elizabeth in the family room. “Sweetie. I think I may have the answer.”

She looked up. “Don’t tell me Wayne came up with something for you?”

“Actually, he did. It’s a bit off the wall, but it just may be what we’re looking for.”

“OK. Let me have it.”

“We are gods!” I exclaimed. I could hardly contain my excitement.

She didn’t look impressed. “Wayne would come up with something like that,” she said, looking back down at the book in her lap.

“Wayne didn’t really think of it. Look here in the Bible.” I moved toward her. “Jesus said it. If Jesus said it then that’s got to be who we are.”

“Let me read it for myself,” Elizabeth said, taking the Bible out of my hands. She read the whole chapter.

“I remember this scripture” she said after a while. “I was

having an argument with a Mormon once and he quoted this and told me that our destiny was to be gods. I was a little rattled and called the Bible Answer Man on a radio station.”

“What did he say?” I asked curiously. I didn’t know she called radio stations about philosophical questions.

“He said we misread the scripture, that the original Psalm was making fun of man because of his frailties. It is a little bit like one person putting down another by saying, *You think you’re hot stuff don’t you?* The one guy doesn’t really think the other is hot stuff. He’s just making fun.”

“So, this scripture is explained away with the idea that God is making fun of us?”

“That’s basically what most people I have talked to seem to think.”

“Let me have that Bible again,” I said. I carefully read over Psalms eighty-two and John chapter ten. “I don’t know. I’ve read it over carefully and I think Jesus was really saying that we are gods. “Look,” I said, kneeling beside her. “He used the statement as a defense for saying He was the Son of God. In other words, if those who received the law are gods, then why make a big deal out of a statement from Jesus that He is the Son of God?”

Elizabeth looked up at me and smiled. “You realize, don’t you, that there is one way to find out.

It dawned on me. “Yes. Yes,” I said, “we can ask a man who knew Jesus personally. In fact, he’s the man who wrote the scripture!” I laughed. This was unreal!

“He should be working at his bell ringing job right now,” said Elizabeth. “Why don’t you go ask him?”

CHAPTER TEN

The Dream

I drove over to Albertsons to seek out John again and ask him the two thousand year-old question.

I drove around the corner and saw the now-familiar sight of the bell ringer. I parked, got out of the car and headed toward him. "John!" I said.

The bell ringer turned. It was not the same bells, nor was it the same John.

"Where's John?" I asked.

"Who's John?" replied the man, a fairly scruffy-looking guy about twenty years younger than John.

"He's the guy who was working here before you."

"Oh, that guy. I'm not sure. He had to go out of town."

"When will he be back?"

"I don't know. People come and go at this job. Chances are he'll never be back."

"Is there anyone who would know?"

"You might check with the regional office."

I went home and made several phone calls and finally found someone who remembered John. He had basically the same story: John was out of town for an indefinite period and wasn't sure when he would be back. He said he hoped John would come back soon because he was their best fund-raiser.

This was an event I never expected. Even though I had only known John a few days it already seemed as if he was an old friend who would always be there when I needed him. It was almost as if he was a genie who belonged to me... as if he had not yet granted my three wishes and had no right to take any time off

until I had my way with him.

“Damn!” I said to Elizabeth when I returned home. “John is gone and they don’t know when he will be back.”

“Do you know where he lives?”

“You know, I never even thought to ask him. Who knows? Maybe he’s just sitting in some small apartment in the North End watching TV and drinking a beer.” John was certainly a man of surprises.

“But didn’t they say he was out of town? If he is a real apostle I don’t think he would lie.”

“Well, maybe he hasn’t left yet. Maybe if we knew where he lived we could catch him before he left.”

“Didn’t he say he would give you more hints in a week? A week from your first encounter is next Thursday. If he is truly a man of his word he will be back by then.”

“That’s five days away. I wanted to talk to him today. I can’t believe it. I feel more restless about seeing John again than I did about you when we fell in love. I never thought that could happen with another woman let alone a man.” My heart ached with disappointment.

I realized I had made a statement that may have hurt Elizabeth and turned to her. “I’m sorry. You know you’re the most important person in my life. It’s just that I felt such spiritual love and power coming from John. It seemed so familiar and so good and now it’s gone.”

“I know,” Elizabeth reassured me. “I probably would be upset too, but I feel the same way. As soon as you said he was gone I also felt a void and that extra strength that came through him is fading. I don’t think I can get up again.”

I didn’t want to see her get weak again. I grabbed her hand hoping she could keep her strength until she was healed. “Here. Let me pull you up. You must keep faith in yourself that you can be well.”

I pulled on her, but she was unable to stand more than a few seconds. She was very shaky and unable to walk. I helped her back into her wheelchair. I noticed a tear falling down her cheek as she said, “It was good to feel well for a day, but I’m losing strength fast. I think I’ll soon be back to my normal weak self.”

“John said that this short-term miracle was to give you faith that you can be healed. Even though it is passing maybe we should be thankful that we had the opportunity to see that miracles are still possible.”

"Perhaps," she said. "But instead of faith I feel afraid. I'm afraid that we will never see John again. I don't know why. I feel kind of a sinking feeling."

"I feel the same feeling," I agreed. "For some reason I feel a great void of energy. I hope nothing has happened to him."

"If anyone can take care of himself I'm sure a two thousand year-old man can," said Elizabeth.

"It's probably just us. We'll just have to live this next week with the belief that we will see him again no later than Thursday."

"You're right," said Elizabeth. "We will have to do everything possible to solve the first key. We need to at least show him that we have made the greatest possible effort."

"Yes, but I think I've done about all I can do at this point. The best that I can come up with is that we must be gods like Jesus said in the scripture."

"There is one other person you can call. Why don't you call your friend Lance in California and run by him the same question as you did Wayne?"

Yes, I thought. It would be interesting to get Lance's input. We had a long history together. We were business partners for a while and shared many good times together. We had also spent countless hours talking philosophy together. He moved to Los Angeles several years ago after he got thoroughly ingrained in the New Age movement. He has researched numerous groups and studied their philosophy. It's quite possible that he has come up with some interesting interpretations to John's first key.

"That's a good idea," I said to Elizabeth. "It wouldn't hurt to get his opinion. I don't think there is any New Age group that he hasn't looked into."

Late that evening I finally caught Lance in. "How are things in the big city?" I asked.

"Exciting things are happening," he said. "Too bad you aren't here. I'm giving a seminar this weekend. You ought to come down some time and check out what I'm doing."

"Maybe after Elizabeth gets better," I said.

"How's she doing?" he said.

"She's having her ups and downs," I replied.

"Give her my best," he said. "Guess what my seminar is on."

"Knowing you, it could be anything."

"I call it *Ye are Gods: A Synthesis of the New Age and the Bible.*"

I almost dropped the phone. "What made you pick that topic?"

I asked.

“Well, as you know, just about all the New Agers down here think man is some type of god who has forgotten who he is... that we just have to remember.”

“Is that what you think?” I asked hopefully.

“Yes, the idea is basically true. But what’s interesting is that I have been running into these religious types lately who’ve been quoting the Bible at me right and left. They say the idea that man can become a god is Lucifer’s first great lie. These guys really got under my skin so I started studying the Bible again to see if it was as backward as these guys make it sound. And guess what I found?”

“I’m sure it’s interesting,” I quipped.

“Interesting? Listen, the Bible teaches out the ying yang that humans are really gods.”

“You mean like the Mormons teach?”

“Not really. The Mormons are in kindergarten on this and seem to be embarrassed to talk about this doctrine anymore. The Bible doesn’t tell us that we are going to be gods in some far off future, but that we are gods in the here and now - very similar to many New Age teachings. The thing that gets me is that most New Agers think anyone who believes in the Bible or studies it is back in the Stone Age. And Bible believers think that New Agers are worshippers of the devil himself. My studies reveal a harmony between the New Age philosophies and the Bible and no one seems to see it, so I thought I would give some lectures on the subject and see how much interest is out there.”

“So if someone asked you who or what we are, would you answer that we are gods?”

“That’s what Jesus said in the Good Book. That’s also what every teacher that’s into the New Age or philosophy around here thinks,” he said.

I reflected a moment. “What if God himself appeared to you and told you that was the wrong answer and that you were supposed to guess again. What would you say?”

“I never thought about it being the wrong answer. It makes too much sense,” he replied confidently.

“But just suppose it was wrong. Is there anything else you would guess?”

“What else could it be?” he asked. “In the beginning there was only God and He created the universe out of Himself. That means you are made out of God and you are a part of God. If you

are one with the God consciousness, then you are God just as much as Jesus was. After all, He even said in the Book of John that we are supposed to be one with God just as He was.”

“You’re right. John did say that.”

“Yes. Of all the writers of the scriptures, I think John was the greatest.”

“I’ll tell John that the next time I see him,” I quipped.

“Funny,” Lance said, not suspecting the truth behind my humor. “What did you call for anyway?”

“To ask you a question, but you already answered it.”

“That’s the way it happens when you’re in tune with the universe, buddy” he said, sounding very pleased with himself.

We spent a few more minutes talking about family, friends and business ideas before we said our good-byes. He ended it with his favorite phrase, “Have a powerful day!” I related the conversation to Elizabeth.

“This sounds like the first insight,” said Elizabeth.

“What do you mean first insight?” I asked.

“I thought you read the Celestine Prophecy. This book talks about insights that will transform humanity. The first one says that we are to pay attention to coincidences, that they will lead us to paths we are to follow.”

“Yes, I do remember reading that now. It is a pretty fantastic coincidence that both Wayne and Lance had the same answer. It’s especially interesting that Lance answered my question even before I asked it. Do you think that is some kind of sign?”

“It sounds like it could be.”

“Let’s suppose it is a sign then. That means we’re supposed to think in the direction of us being gods. If I tell John the answer is that I am a god or God, could that be enough or are we supposed to think deeper?”

“Who knows?” Elizabeth shrugged. “The question I have is that if I am a god, why can’t I snap my fingers and just make myself well?”

“Good question. But from what I’ve read about it in New Age books, the reason is that we are basically gods who have forgotten we are gods. Because we have all power as gods and we believe we are frail humans, this belief makes us frail humans. When we drop this false belief then the god within us will be revealed.”

“So, all I have to do is drop my false belief and I can have power to heal myself?”

“That’s the basic teaching of the present-day gurus.”

“It sounds too simple.”

“It does,” I agreed, “but simple things are often the truest.”

That evening when I went to bed I felt very restless. I felt a vacuum ever since I learned that John was out of town, but as I lay on my bed that night I felt even more depleted of energy. I felt as if I was fading in and out of reality. Finally I fell asleep and had an unusual dream. Now, in my experience some dreams are just dreams, but every now and then one comes along that seems very real and you think there must be a reality behind it. This was one of those dreams.

I found myself in a room surrounded by these floating evil-looking entities. Their faces were contorted and snarling at me as if they wanted to do me harm. I looked for a way of escape and found a door. I ran through the door and found a saintly-looking man in a rocking chair looking at me with a benevolent look on his face. I turned around and noticed that the evil spirits did not follow me into the room and it seemed that the kindly man was somehow protecting me from them.

I walked toward the man and asked, “Who are you?”

He looked back at me and I heard an authoritative voice projected toward me which said, “This is my beloved apostle - John.”

I looked at the benevolent-looking man with a start. He looked nothing like my bell-ringing friend who I thought was the apostle John. This man had long sandy hair, a beard, and of fairly heavy build. John was fairly thin, no beard and black hair with touches of white. John’s complexion was also darker than this man. This person in front of me was definitely a different person than the bell ringer I knew as John. Now this voice I was hearing, which sounded very authoritative, was telling me that this other man was John the Beloved. The voice sounded a bit like James Earl Jones when he says “THIS IS CNN,” like you would imagine the voice of God to be. Because of the general situation the strong impression came to my mind that it must be the voice of the God or Christ himself.

I ventured forth a question. “Who is the other John - the Bell Ringer?”

The authoritative voice answered back, “The impostor you met has been an enemy from the beginning. He is a prince of evil and deceit who will lead all who believe him into the abyss and destruction. Beware of evil that has the appearance of good. Beware of all those who teach that men are gods. I alone am

God.” His voice echoed until I woke up from the dream with a start and lay in my bed in contemplation.

John did indeed seem sincere and appeared to be a true teacher, but it never occurred to me to think he was some kind of evil incarnate. Now this voice that seemed to be the voice of God showed me what may be the true John the Beloved and the one who I thought was the true apostle may not be an apostle at all, but some kind of evil incarnate sent to lead me to... what? The voice said *the abyss and destruction*. That must be some type of hell, I thought.

It seemed to me that if the voice was correct I would be destroyed. If John-the-Bell-Ringer was right, I would go on to learn the Keys of Knowledge. I didn't like my choice. If John-the-bell-ringer was wrong, I may suffer some type of eternal punishment or destruction... But if the dream was wrong, I could go on to learn the Keys of Knowledge from John.

As this thought crossed my mind I found it interesting that I had fear of the voice of God in the dream. I feared it was right but did not want it to be right. I remembered the feelings of love I had when John-the-bell-ringer was in my presence, especially when he sent me his memories and later taught my wife. Then I thought of how I felt when I saw the supposed John the Beloved in the dream. The evil spirits in the dream did not follow me into the room where John was, and it seemed peaceful when I entered into the presence of John in the dream. But that peace was different from the peace I felt in the presence of the bell ringer. In that John's presence, I felt a peace that penetrated me to the core, perhaps the “peace that passeth all understanding.” But in the presence of John in the dream, the peace was like the peace you have when a baby stops crying. It seems peaceful because of the lack of disturbance, not because of any inner feeling.

Next I contemplated the voice of Jesus or God I thought I heard. The feeling from the voice seemed to penetrate my outer body and tried to work its way into my heart, but the sound of the bells I heard from John seem to penetrate my deepest heart center or soul and radiated to permeate my whole being.

I again contemplated the two Johns and concluded the major difference between them is that one created the feeling of fear and dread in me, and the other a feeling of love and peace.

I thought long and hard within myself as I had a feeling that I was supposed to make a choice of some kind. After a period of absolute stillness I thought within myself, “If I have to choose, I

will choose the John whose bells, thoughts and words touched my very soul.”

Immediately, as instantly as one can imagine, I sensed a presence beside my bed. It was a presence of tremendous evil, of that I was sure. The vibration was so terrible and overwhelming that I felt like running, but somehow I knew within myself, as if I had been sent some type of revelation directly to my brain, that this powerful entity from the abyss was the one who had given me the dream and was the one who was the owner of the authoritative voice. I somehow knew that he did not know that I knew he was there. He seemed to be standing by my bedside, waiting to see if I would fall for the illusion he had created for me in the dream. I knew the truth was now revealed to me because I chose John-the-Bell-Ringer, that he was indeed John the Beloved, apostle of Jesus. My choice was true. If I had chosen the other John, I would have chosen an agent of the dark side.

I lay completely still for another few moments, holding my breath. I sensed the being was watching me, waiting for a response. I felt a fear beyond anything I had felt before. I somehow feared this being had power to destroy me if I did not please him. I spent several more minutes quieting the fear and told myself I would put myself in the hands of the true God, whoever and whatever that would be. Somehow I felt I must confront this personage who was waiting for a response. “Oh God,” I prayed within myself with sincerity I had never had before, “what shall I do?”

Immediately I felt another presence. It seemed very familiar. Somehow I knew it was the presence of the real John, the real Beloved. “Oh John, are you there?” I asked silently. “What shall I do?”

An inner voice that I knew without a doubt came from John said these words: “Laugh at him.”

I almost broke my silence with astonishment at that answer. It was totally unexpected. Here was perhaps the devil himself at my bedside, the most terrifying creature one can imagine, and I am supposed to laugh at him! I had to take a few more minutes to absorb that one. Finally I asked silently again, “Are you sure I'm supposed to laugh at this thing?”

No answer.

Then I thought within myself. “Hey! What gives here? I want some reassurance. He might take me to some fire and brimstone if I laugh at him. Give me a sign that this is the correct thing to do, that I will be safe.”

Nothing

“John!” I shouted with a silent scream. “I need to know that I did not imagine I heard you. Please, give me reassurance just this one time!”

Still nothing.

For some reason, I thought I must go with what I had received. I reflected on the voice of John. It seemed very real, more real than anything I have ever felt. My mind just had a hard time accepting it. I had to go with that which was most real to my soul, I thought, and decided to obey and laugh at the intruder who I sensed was getting very impatient.

I took a moment, gathered my courage and lifted myself up in my bed and looked in the direction of the presence. I thought of Steven Wright (my favorite comic), let out a laugh as if I just heard a good new joke, and said out loud, “Great try you son-of-a-bitch, but your little trick didn’t work! I do find it very funny though.” And I laughed some more.

My laughter was stopped in its tracks by a negative force more powerful than anything I have ever felt. It was like a whirlwind of negative energy that made me think of the Tasmanian Devil in the Bugs Bunny show, except I was terrified rather than entertained. I feared this thing was going to destroy my body and soul within the next two seconds.

Suddenly, with swiftness faster than light, the entire presence left the room, and a fire came down from some heavenly sphere and completely engulfed everything that was me. I was both on fire and feeling the “peace that passed understanding” all at one moment. I knew that only God could produce such a feeling. The feelings I had in the dream did not compare within a millionth of a degree to that of the fire and the peace that surrounded me at that moment.

As I was enjoying this great bliss Elizabeth turned to me sleepily. “Did I hear you laugh?”

I laughed again with joy that I could not hold back. “Yes, my sweet, you did hear me laugh. I feel too great not to laugh.”

“Well, could you laugh more quietly?” she asked, somewhat irritated, and rolled over to go back to sleep.

“OK.” I smiled. “I will laugh more quietly.” Then I laughed what I have since called a quiet, heavenly laugh as I drifted into the most peaceful sleep I had ever experienced in my life.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Reunion

It was a long wait until next Thursday. I had a million questions to ask John, but the most important thing to me was just to see him again. I wanted to share my dream with him, even though I assumed he knew the story. Now the problem was that I wasn't sure how to contact him. Just before noon on Thursday I went to Albertsons to see if he was working there again. I was disappointed to find that same substitute there again. Of course, the substitute did not know anything about when John may come back.

I went back home and had lunch with Elizabeth and shared my frustration with her.

"Are you sure you heard John right, that you would see him in a week?"

"I'm sure," I said. "But who knows what all things a 2000 year old man must attend to. Maybe he had to go to Bosnia or something."

"Even so, if he is a man of his word he should contact you today, shouldn't he?"

"You would think so. Who knows! Maybe I'm not good student material and he gave up on me."

"I don't think so," Elizabeth assured me "From that dream you told me about, it sounded like you passed some type of test."

"Maybe so," I said. "I suppose I'd better get back to work. I have to go show a house."

After showing my client the house I drove back to Albertsons and several other bell ringer locations. I looked everywhere I could think of just on the off chance that John was somewhere in the area. Finally, when my workday was done, I headed home with the thought that contact was John's responsibility. "If it happens,

it happens," I thought.

Elizabeth and I spent a quiet evening together. Finally, she broke the ice. "Have you done any more thinking about the first key?"

"I've done a lot of thinking, but don't think I can go much further until John tells me about the man-God idea."

"What if he says that we're not gods? You've covered about everything else. What's left?"

"I don't know. Maybe we're just animals," I said sarcastically.

"You may be just joking," said Elizabeth, "but I guess we have to be open to anything."

"I guess," I agreed.

We went to bed just before eleven (which was quite early for me) and I lay on the bed trying to drift off to sleep, disappointed that I had not seen or heard anything from John.

Then, as I drifted off to sleep, I heard bells.

Bells?

I woke up suddenly. "I heard bells!" I exclaimed to Elizabeth. She woke up. "Bells? It must be John."

"Yes. It must be John. But now I'm awake, I can't hear them."

"You always hear them when you're close to sleep. Try going back to sleep."

"You're right. I'll try that," I said. I tried to go back to sleep, but sleep had fled from me. After a moment I said, "I couldn't sleep right now if my life depended on it."

Elizabeth sighed. "Why don't you just try laying still and tuning in. Maybe John will send you something."

"I'll try," I said. I laid still and tried to tune into my inner self. At first nothing happened, then faintly I heard the bells again. I somehow knew I was supposed to focus on the sound and did so. As I focused, the sound became clearer and an image of John formed within my mind. I saw him drinking a cup of coffee at Denny's at the exact same seat where we talked before. Somehow I knew he was there waiting for me.

"He's at Denny's!" I exclaimed as I rose up out of bed and headed for my clothes.

"Denny's?" Elizabeth asked sleepily.

"Denny's," I said firmly. "I'm going there now. I may be a while, so don't worry about me."

Elizabeth turned to me and asked, "Sweetheart?"

“Yes?”

“Tell John thank you for giving me faith again. Even though I’ve lost that extra strength, I now have hope I can be healed.”

“I’ll tell him,” I said.

In a few minutes I was in my car approaching Denny’s. I found myself wondering if there was something special about Denny’s or if it was just a convenient place. Oh, well, that question was far down the list. As I walked into the restaurant I noticed the time on the wall clock was about one minute to midnight. I hurriedly walked to the corner where we met before and there he was drinking coffee looking exactly like I saw in my mind a few moments before.

“John,” I said reaching out my hand. “I’ve never been so glad to see anyone before!”

John smiled as I sat down. “Not every beginning student feels that way,” he said. “Are you sure I am not a prince of evil and deceit bent on leading you to some eternal hell?”

“You know all about the dream then?”

“Yes. It was not unexpected. He pulls a similar trick on any student I have that shows promise.”

“He? Who is he?”

“Who do you think?”

“Well, I do know this. Whoever he is was capable of disguising himself as an agent of God; yet, when I sensed his true nature, it was an evil vibration beyond anything I have imagined. If there is a devil, this has got to be him.”

John smiled. “In the days of Jesus we didn’t use the silly-sounding word *devil*. We called him *The Adversary*. The word *Satan* in the Hebrew text means *adversary*. Today we would call someone like Hitler, Saddam Hussein or a terrorist an adversary or enemy, but it would sound silly to call them devils. We didn’t use bogeyman-like words, fluffy words or fairy tale-like words back then. We were dealing with real energies, real beings and real situations. The religious authorities of that day were the ones who feared illusionary bogeymen.”

I nodded. “I could certainly tell that being was an adversary. I knew he wanted to destroy me when he learned I saw his real self.”

“He still wants to destroy you. You really made him mad when you laughed at him.” John laughed.

“You told me to do it!” I exclaimed. “I didn’t realize I was just making him mad. That’s all I need - an enemy of immense power

from the underworld." I frowned. John paused a moment and studied my face.

"As long as you side with light and truth he will be your mortal enemy with all the force he has available." Then, grinning, he said, "I figure you might as well get a dig in when you can."

"That doesn't sound like turning the other cheek," I countered.

"As Solomon said, there is a time and place for everything. Through his control of agents here on earth he has had me killed and tortured about twenty times. The last time I was hung by piano wire and the first time I was boiled in oil. That alone should be enough to deserve the reward of laughing at his defeat. You'll never realize the joy you gave me when you followed my instructions."

"I think we really pissed him off all right," I laughed nervously.

"That's an unpious term," John scolded, "but I couldn't express it better."

I took a sip of coffee. "It still makes me nervous. He might try to take it out on me." God, as if I didn't have enough problems in my life!

"From the moment you saw through the illusion and passed the test you became a mortal enemy. But don't worry. He cannot harm you if you follow the light of truth and the Holy Spirit within you. At present you are following the highest you know and you are completely protected. But there are energy points in time and space like acupuncture points on the body. When one of those points is arrived at, it provides an opportunity for both good and evil. For instance, the other night you had a visit from a strong evil force and also a powerful good force. The fire you felt was what we used to call the *baptism of fire*. If you go forward you must risk the chance of going backwards."

"What would have happened if I had fallen for the illusion?"

"I would have kept my word and seen you today, but because you would not have felt the spiritual fire you would have rejected me and the knowledge I have for you."

"Would I have been some servant of evil then?"

"Not in the sense you are thinking," John replied. "That would only happen if you have very selfish intent within your heart. What he seeks to do with basically good people is to neutralize them. After they are neutralized he generally leaves them alone and goes on to other work. Only if a person sinks to great illusion and selfishness can he then be of conscious use to the Dark Broth-

ers.”

“Who is this *Adversary* and who are the *Dark Brothers*?”

“They are just like you and me,” John replied. “They are brothers of ours, but very wayward brothers. As you know, there must be opposition in all things. If there is an appearance of a positive force, then that appearance can only be held if there exists the appearance of a negative force.”

“Why do you use the term *appearance*?”

“Because positive and negative are real to you in this world, but in a higher reality there is only one energy and that is God. It is important for teaching sake that we always deal with the reality we are in. If you try to solve the riddles of a higher reality before you understand your own, you can get caught in an illusion that will cause you to wind up far behind the simple realist.”

I nodded. “I do notice that many intelligent dreamers do not seem to accomplish anything, whereas the dull-witted plodder often achieves a surprising amount.”

“Your statement deserves to be reflected upon,” he said evenly. I must have hit upon something important to my progression.

“So are these Dark Brothers burning in Hell like the preachers tell us?”

“They live in a world with no glory but the illusion of glory. To understand what that means you must solve a future key.” He shifted in his seat and clasped his hands. “Let me put it this way. All of us have a spark of divinity within us. As you follow this spark, your glory, light, truth and power of love is increased. There are certain very selfish individuals who, through conscious effort shut themselves completely off from soul contact. After this they completely deny all things that are good and true. Because they are conscious beings with no true spiritual contact their consciousness creates a world that is complete illusion, with no real light or glory. They believe that the true spiritual plane created by God is illusion and that they have discovered or created the only true reality. Because this false belief is so real there is no escape, and all that makes them individuals is in a state of death or disintegration. This drawn-out death often takes many years, but after it happens the spark that is their true self will continue, and the person will be re-created in a future opportunity on an earth that does not even exist yet.”

“Heavy doctrine,” I replied. “Does that mean there is no burning in Hell?”

“There is in a sense,” he replied. “When one has rejected light, surrounds himself with illusion and then comes into contact with real light, it produces a spiritual pain something like a fire. Why do you think the Adversary fled so quickly when the Spirit descended upon you the other night? The light and fire of the Spirit was painful to him beyond anything you can imagine. Even though he wanted more than anything to destroy you he was forced to leave instantly.”

“It was the most sudden exit I’ve ever seen,” I nodded.

John continued. “When people die and go to the next world they reside with others who have a similar light to their own. Many are disappointed when they realize how little light they have followed on this earth and desire to go higher. This desire takes them near the presence of a greater light and it is very painful to them. They want to move toward the light but the approach is painful like a fire, so they are in hell two different ways. They have to live with others who are of lesser light and not very pleasant company, and secondly, a desire to escape leads them to a fiery pain.”

“Are they stuck in that situation forever?”

“No. A way is made for their progress, but we could spend days on this subject. Let us move on.” John nodded to a waitress passing by for more coffee.

“I have one more question first,” I pursued after she left.

“Go ahead.”

“Where have you been? I didn’t expect you to disappear like you did.”

John frowned. “Actually, I didn’t expect it either, but my Master needed me.”

“And that would be...?”

“Who do you think?”

“Jesus?” I asked in wonderment.

“Jesus’ is the modern pronunciation of the name he went by two thousand years ago in Palestine. Of course, the preachers of this age have become attached to it, but those within His inner circle just call Him “The Christ” when making a reference to Him. When I get the opportunity to speak to Him on a personality level as I am with you I just call Him *Joshua*. The original pronunciation of the name Jesus was something like *Yay-soose*, but that name is pretty obsolete now. He decided a couple hundred years ago to use Joshua, the English translation of the Hebrew equivalent of Jesus, because it is still a name in common use.”

“Joshua Christ,” I smiled. “That will take some getting used to.”

“He wouldn’t think of using the name Jesus except for purposes of identification. Every time He hears one of the preachers speak or shout the name in that religious twang He cringes.”

“You know, I always wondered what Jesus thought about how the preachers massacre his name.”

John reflected a moment: “There are many mysteries to be revealed which are associated with Jesus, as you call him, and the Christ. I know Him by two of His names and He has a third which only He knows.”

“What’s the other name that you know?”

“I couldn’t tell you that without His permission,” he replied softly.

“What’s the purpose of having more than one name?”

“I cannot tell you at present. That knowledge is contained in one of the keys you will learn in the future. I can tell you a little about the term *The Christ*. It is not part of His name, but is the name of an office. The most enlightened teacher, associated with mankind, on the planet has this office and is called *The Christ*. Joshua will not always hold this office. In about another thousand years He will leave this solar system and the position of The Christ will be taken over by a close disciple. The title Christ without the article *the* is used by many disciples who share what has been called the *Christ consciousness*. I am one who is free to use the name of Christ for myself as long as the one being communicated to does not mistake me for the master teacher. Those who bear the name of Christ are not permitted to knowingly deceive, and the wrong use of the title could produce deception. Self-deception, however, will often occur because of wrong interpretation of doctrine transmitted by the teachers.”

“So, why were you called away so suddenly?” I probed.

“There was an emergency,” John looked serious.

“Can you tell me anything about it?”

“Not a lot. I can tell you that a situation developed where some terrorists had an opportunity to obtain nuclear weapons that would have been planted in Washington DC. This event was not in the plan and had to be prevented.”

“What did you do to prevent it?”

“Even if I could tell you I do not have time to go into it. Joshua needed my assistance and fortunately I was there to help. It was

at great sacrifice that I was able to make this appointment with you. There are still some details I have to return to attend to.”

“Is saving the world from nuclear attack something you do often?” I quipped.

“The last time we had a crisis like this was back in the early eighties when scientists were working on the neutron bomb. Its perfection would have been too great a temptation for any nation at this time, and this weapon and several others had to be contained.”

“So, do you control men’s minds to avoid catastrophes?”

“The Disciples of Christ, or the Brotherhood of Light, never force men’s minds. We are obligated to honor free will. The Dark Brothers, on the other hand, will use force whenever they feel the need and have the opportunity. They often find that all they have to do is create a little illusion to have their way with the masses.”

John paused a moment. “You’ve done a good job sidetracking me, but we need to get on with your education. Do you at least remember the question I posed to you last week?”

“I think I got that anyway. It is WHO OR WHAT AM I?”

“I am pleased you remembered the exact wording. Now can you give me your answer?”

“Well,” I said nervously, “with a little help from my friends and the Gospel of John, which I assume you wrote, I concluded that men are gods.”

“So are you God with a capital G or a god with a small G?”

I stumbled for a moment. “Well... the Mormons say we are becoming a god with a small G and the New Agers say we are God with a big G.”

“What do you say?”

“Well,” I stumbled again, clearing my throat, “if I am one with God, then I must be God with a big G.” It sounds weird to say that, but that’s my answer.”

“Are you confident in that answer?”

“Sort of.”

“What makes you *sort of* confident?”

“I’ve had several coincidences pointing me in that direction. I figured they must have happened for a reason.”

“So you had some signs leading you toward the answer?”

John smiled.

“I guess you could say that,” I replied.

“Have you read what the Master said about signs?”

“I think he said several things, didn’t he?”

John got out his old Bible again and turned to Matthew chapter sixteen. "Read verse four," he said, pushing the book toward me.

I carefully held the old book and read: "A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign..."

I just about dropped the book. "I remember reading this scripture, but I never thought about it in the context that is now entering my head. I thought the answer may be that I am God because of signs, but Jesus said the wicked seek signs."

"You were not actively seeking a sign," John assured me, "but several appeared to you and you thought they meant something."

"So are you telling me they didn't mean anything?" I asked, somewhat disappointed.

"It is true that there is a reason or a cause behind each happening," John replied, "but when people see coincidences they often read much more into them than should be. Suppose you roll dice hundreds of times. Sooner or later you will roll *seven* three times in a row. Does that have any deep meaning or did it happen just because you rolled the dice many times and the law of averages tells us you will eventually roll three sevens?"

"So, you're saying that coincidences just happen now and then?"

"Generally, that is the case, but then every once in a while coincidences are contrived by a higher power. But what usually happens when a coincidence happens to a superstitious person, much more will be read into it than is based in reality."

"So the fact that both Wayne, Lance and that Dark Brother mentioned man and gods was just coincidence and means nothing?"

"Not entirely," John replied. "You, Wayne, and Lance have been friends for many years and as such tune into each other's frequency and share many of the same thoughts. This greatly increases the chances that you will all come up with similar conclusions on various ideas. What happened with you three was not nearly as much of a coincidence as you thought. You were looking for an answer and you were happy that something finally seemed to jump out at you. It was no coincidence, however, that the Dark Brother jumped on this. It served his purpose."

"So, what about the answer, then," I asked. "Is it right or wrong?"

"Let's regress just a moment," John said, putting his fingers together. "Why do you suppose Joshua said a wicked and adulterous generation seeks for a sign? Now in reality wicked means *mislead*. So how is one misdirected who seeks for a sign?"

"I've never thought of looking for a sign in a negative light. Most people see signs as a positive thing." John was silent, evidently waiting for a concise answer. I continued, "OK, let me see. If we use a sign to guide our lives then we are using something outside of ourselves. Perhaps we are supposed to look within."

John smiled. "There is hope for you yet. I think your light is increasing. Now what is adulterous about seeking a sign for guidance?"

"That's a tough one. I don't see a lot of relation there."

"There is a lot of correspondence here, said John. "Answer me this: What is adultery?"

"It's where a person betrays his marriage partner and has a sexual relationship with someone else" I replied.

"And who is your spiritual marriage partner supposed to be?"

"You mean someone other than my physical wife?"

"Yes."

"Could it be God?"

"You are correct. This is taught throughout the scriptures. The Israelites are called the *Bride of Jehovah* throughout the Old Testament and the Church is called the *Bride of Christ* in the New. Both Israel and the Church are symbols of those who have the light of the Spirit of God within them. So how does a bride of Christ or God commit adultery?"

"Perhaps by leaving God and leaning on or uniting with someone else, or another God."

"Very close," said John. "The brother of light senses the Spirit of God within himself and has made a commitment to follow it and be one with it, similar to a marriage relationship. If he actively seeks a sign outside of himself for his main source of guidance, this causes a shift of attention away from the Spirit. So his God becomes a false God outside of himself and the inner God is ignored and betrayed. He has committed adultery against his only true source of guidance, which places a black wall between his personality self and the God within."

"Fascinating," I said, feeling like Spock again. "So the New Agers, who are always teaching about the God within - yet at the same time are always seeking coincidences and signs - are really teaching one thing and doing another?"

“They are not alone,” John smiled. “On the other side of the spectrum, the very religious also seek for signs rather than an answer from God through prayer as they claim to teach.”

“So, are we to look within for all answers?”

“Not exactly. That would mean the outside world has no meaning or purpose. The purpose of the outside world is to stimulate with experience and the purpose of the inner is to verify. Without the outer world there is nothing to verify, and without the inner there is no source to find the point of truth that exists in all things.”

“It would appear to me, then, the religious fundamentalists look without for their answers and the New Agers try to look within; but both are concentrating too much on one side of the pendulum,” I said.

“Another good answer,” John said smiling “Now, you’re going to want me to tell you if you have the right answer.”

“I’ve been very curious all week.” I leaned forward eagerly.

“Let’s get another cup of coffee and we’ll explore your thoughts.”

CHAPTER TWELVE

GODS-R-US

John took a sip of fresh coffee and said, "Now, tell me your answer."

"I figure this has to be a good answer because it is a direct quote from Jesus, or Joshua as you now call him, and it was written by you in the book of John chapter ten. There Jesus said, *Ye are gods.*"

John smiled and said, "So what is the answer to the question - WHO OR WHAT ARE YOU?"

"I guess men are gods." I replied tepidly.

"I keep telling you to listen to the precise words I say. The question is WHO OR WHAT ARE YOU? not *what are humans?* Now think over the question and answer again."

"Well, I guess I am God or a god," I said.

"Which one is it. Are you God or a god?"

I didn't think the answer would be that awkward. I tried again. "The Mormons say *a god* and the New Agers say just *God*."

"And what do you say?"

"I guess I am God," I said, feeling a little strange.

"Should I worship you then?" John grinned.

"No! Of course not!" I exclaimed.

"Then are you sure you are God?"

"I'm not sure," I replied weakly. "Maybe I am just a god."

"So you are a god then," John smiled again with that look in his eye that revealed he knew things that were beyond my grasp. "Then you must have great power. Why don't you levitate that waitress over there and show me your power? Or better still, why don't you snap your fingers and heal your wife?"

His latter words reached the core of my being. There was

nothing that revealed my powerlessness more than the fact that I had been unable to help my own wife. "What a fool I am," I thought to myself. "If I am God or a god, then I should be able to heal my wife." I cast my eyes to the floor with great emotion. I felt like I was nobody, let alone a god.

John looked in my eyes with compassion. "I didn't mean to hurt your feelings; I just wanted to get your attention."

"You got it all right," I said. "Boy, do I feel like a fool. I'm no more a god than that ashtray over there. If I was God's little toe I would have healed Elizabeth. I seem to do nothing for her, and I feel like nothing." I felt more emotional than I had in years.

"Don't let emotion take your eyes away from the truth," John said softly. "A true seeker must be part Spock, part Captain Kirk, with a dash of Bones."

I started to laugh.

"Glad I cheered you up. What's funny?"

"I just had an image of John the Revelator watching Star Trek. It just struck me as very humorous - comparable to Jesus singing a rap song." It's funny how you can sometimes switch from one emotion to another when something strikes you right.

John looked a little perplexed for the first time since I had met him. "I'll have to ask Joshua if he's done any rap lately," he quipped. "Now getting back to the subject. You must be part Spock and part Captain Kirk here to find truth. Emotion often turns the truth upside down."

"So, was my answer about being God right or wrong?"

"It was not the correct answer."

"So we are not really gods then?"

John paused and said, "Was your answer about being human the correct answer?"

"You said no."

"But are you human?"

"Yes.... So are you saying my answer may be true, but the wrong answer?"

"Exactly. We are called human beings, but since a human doesn't know who he is, then naming yourself human doesn't really bring you any knowledge about yourself, does it?"

"I guess not."

"If I say you are God and you do not know what or who God is, then that does not bring you an increase in knowledge, does it?"

"No."

“You don’t really know any more about who you are than you did before I told you that you are God.”

“I think I see what you’re getting at. You’re saying I must answer the question with something that really tells me about who I am. If I say I am flesh and I don’t know the difference between flesh and silicone then I might as well say I am silicone. My answer means nothing if I don’t know what flesh is.”

“That is good, my friend. I may use your example with my next student. Yes, your answer must mean something. Saying that you are human, God or a son of God may all be true, but if you cannot explain what the terms mean, then they are just labels without meaning and true knowledge.”

Frustrated that I still didn’t know the answer, I stated, “Before we go on, I would like you to explain the scripture in John chapter ten. There is a big dispute among Bible believers as to whether Jesus is really telling us that we are gods.”

“What conclusion did you come to?”

“It sounds like Jesus is really telling us that we are gods.”

“You are correct. I was actually in His presence several times when He used this argument. After He obtained a certain amount of notoriety in Jerusalem, He was often approached by religious authorities who had heard their followers express the belief that He was either the Messiah, a god, Son of God or an ancient prophet brought back from the dead or reborn. They would often speak to Him with venom, saying something like, *Who do you think you are, the son of God?*

“Then He would answer something like this: *And what if I did say I am a son of God? Why do you think that is a big deal when your own law of God in the Psalms and writings of Moses calls you gods? If those who merely received the scriptures are called gods, why do you think it would be a major claim for me to say I am a son of God?*

“Here, let’s turn to Psalms.” John opened his old Bible to Psalms. “The first verse of the chapter in question reads: *God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth AMONG THE GODS.* Who are the gods that He judges among? It tells us in verse six which reads, *I have said Ye are gods; and all of you children of the most High.*

“Here we are told that the gods that God judges among are the ones who received the scriptures as Jesus said. In fact, there are numerous instances in the writings of Moses where the people who judged among the people were called gods. In the Bibles

today these are usually translated incorrectly, but if you use any Hebrew Concordance from a regular Christian bookstore you can prove to yourself that the judges were really called gods time and time again. I'll write down these references so you can look them up."

John scribbled down some references and handed them to me. It read Exodus 21:6; Exodus 22:8-9. "Now, everywhere the word *judges* is mentioned in these scriptures it comes from the Hebrew ELOHIYM, which is the same word used for the God who created heaven and earth. Interestingly, they translated it correctly in the King James Version in Exodus twenty-two verse twenty-eight."

He handed it to me and I read: *"Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of the people."*

John offered an interpretation: "The ruler of the people was Moses, and the gods were Moses and the judges. This is why David in Psalms called God *as one who judges among the gods.*"

I added, "The Fundamentalist Christians think Psalms 82:7 refutes the idea that men are gods. Here, I'll read it: *But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.* Because this comes right after the *ye are gods* statement, they say the *ye are gods* is a mockery."

"What does it sound like to you?"

"It sounds to me David was saying they were gods who were behaving like they were just men."

"That is correct. Now turn to Exodus chapter four verse sixteen and read."

I read, *"And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God."*

John explained, "Here it is talking about the calling of Aaron to be a spokesman for Moses. However the translation is poor concerning Moses; the Hebrew reads: *Thou shalt be a god to him (Aaron).*"

"I can see why your life is in danger from life to life." I remarked. "I'll bet you really make some religious people nervous when you talk the scriptures."

John smiled, "Unrealized truth clearly presented can cause a great disturbance. The master at that was Joshua, or Jesus. The Bible does not do justice at relating how angry he made the religious authorities of his time."

"I can imagine," I nodded. "So, from our conversation so far,

it sounds as if you're telling me we are gods just as the scriptures say, but just accepting that does not really tell us who we are, so it is not the answer to your question."

"That is correct. You are both God and a god, and from another perspective, you are becoming a god, but none of these statements mean more than just words to those who quote them. I will give you a hint that will help you realize more of what God is. Read First Corinthians chapter twelve and tell me next week what you come up with. Here, I'll write that down next to the other references."

"I notice you quote a lot from the Bible," I remarked while he wrote. "What do you think of the other scriptures and philosophies of the world?"

"I use the Bible often with you because it carries much weight in this part of the world. There is some truth in all scriptures and all philosophies of the world. I am familiar with many of them and have taught with many of them. Now, getting back to the subject, do you have any other ideas about WHO OR WHAT YOU ARE before I give you your next hint?"

I thought for a moment. "So, basically all my answers are correct, but they just don't mean anything. I am a human, I am spirit, I am soul, I am a son of God and I am even a god or maybe even God in some esoteric way, but none of these statements communicate more than a vague idea. Is this correct?"

"That is exactly correct. Can you think of an answer to the question that does mean something to you?"

"I don't know if I can give you anything intelligent right now. Why don't you give me my next hint and I'll think about it during the next week?"

"All right, my friend. Here it is. To better understand who and what you are it is helpful to know what you are not. I think you have already concluded that you are not your body, that the body is merely a vehicle for that which is the real you."

"Yes, I have pretty much accepted that."

"Just like you have a car which is a vehicle that takes you places, with the real you inside the car, so do you have a body, which is not the real you, which is a vehicle that takes you places. The real you directs the vehicle. What many do not realize is that the real you has other vehicles besides your physical body.

"There are two other things you are not: You are not your emotions and you are not your mind. Instead, these are two other vehicles you use to take you places.

"The question remains: If you are not your body, your emotions or your mind - what remains? WHO OR WHAT ARE YOU?"

"That's interesting," I mused. "Many lay philosophers like myself are aware that we are not our bodies, but most see our feelings and thoughts as part of our eternal nature. But you say they are not a part of our real selves, but just vehicles?"

"That is correct," John replied. "Contemplate this and the scriptures I gave you and we'll meet back here at Denny's next week at midnight."

"Are you going back to your bell ringing job?" I asked.

"I may have to skip it for the rest of the season," he said. "Joshua needs my help to place some safeguards on some terrorism that has potential to hinder the purpose of God on earth. Whatever you see happening the next few years, I want you to know it would have been a lot worse without our intervention. Hopefully, we can get things taken care of the next few weeks. Don't ask me any questions about it. There is little I can reveal at present."

"Sounds like you're a spiritual James Bond," I said smiling.

John returned a light smile.

"Elizabeth told me to tell you she appreciates the fact you gave her hope."

"How is she doing?"

"She had her strength back for a short time, but now she is like she was before or perhaps worse."

"Ask her this for me," said John. "Ask her if she has discovered her fears and thoughts she has been hiding from herself, and has she learned to put them in their right place?"

"I'll ask her," I said.

John arose as if he were ready to go. He pulled a red handkerchief out of his pocket and handed it to me. "Tell her to rub this on her forehead three times a day. It will give her additional strength and make life more bearable for her for the next week. However, you must return it to me next week."

"I'll do it," I nodded, taking the handkerchief from his hand.

"Do you have to go now?"

"I'm afraid so." We paid and walked out the door. As we were walking down the street he said, "Your car is the other direction."

"I know, but I'm curious. Where are you going and how are you going to get there?"

"I'm going to the Middle East. The exact point I will not say."

How? You may ask. Let us go behind that tree and I will show you.”

I walked with him behind a tree where we were out of sight from passers by. He stood perfectly still, closed his eyes, bowed his head slightly and whispered a word ever so softly. In an instant he was gone. He didn't fade away like some ghost in the movies, but he was just instantly gone.

I wasn't sure which word he uttered, he said it so softly, but it seemed like it was “Joshua”.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Hidden Fears

On my way home I found myself thinking there was now no way I could doubt that John was a mystical being. I was already very convinced of his reality because of the power of his teachings and the internal spiritual feelings he generated. But when you see someone just disappear before your eyes like that it brings home a realization of a higher reality that is just undeniable.

After I arrived home I tried getting into bed without disturbing Elizabeth, but without success.

“Honey, it’s after three. I was worried that you and John ran off together.”

“Not a chance. You’re lucky he had to go. I could have talked to him for days without sleeping. I hope you’ve gotten some sleep since I’ve left.”

She was silent. That meant that she never slept. “I wish you’d listen to me about your rest,” I said. “You’ve been awake all this time, haven’t you?”

“How do you expect me to sleep when you’re out there having high spiritual drama?”

“I’ve got to admit, I couldn’t have slept either.”

“So did you have the right answer? Are we gods or what?”

I rehearsed to her the dialog that occurred between John and I.

“Let me get this right,” she said. “Everything everyone thinks we are is not what we really are because they are just phrases that don’t tell us anything. We are also not our bodies, feelings or thoughts. There doesn’t seem to be much left for us to be. Maybe we are just blobs of nothing.”

“That sounds about as good of an answer as any the way I

feel right now," I said, somewhat frustrated.

"Let me try out that handkerchief," she said.

I retrieved it and handed it to her. "He said to rub it on your forehead and it would give you strength. I know it sounds crazy, but after what I have experienced with John so far I'm willing to try anything."

She took it and placed it on her forehead. Then she rubbed it back and forth with her hand seemingly growing steadier. Finally a smile graced her face as if she were experiencing pleasure. She looked at me and said, "Sweetheart, make love to me."

I do believe I was more surprised at this request than John's disappearance. She hadn't shown any interest in lovemaking for some time because of her illness. "Are you sure?" I asked.

"Very sure," she said with a very sensual voice.

We made love immediately with more feelings of pleasure and sensuality - and on the other extreme - more spiritual feelings than I had ever felt in lovemaking. The only way I could describe the feeling was as a union that belonged to the gods and not humankind.

Afterwards we were lying together in silence, contemplating the experience. "If I never get better," Elizabeth said softly, "this moment is worth a lifetime. How many live a whole lifetime in good health and never have one moment as we have just had."

"Very well said. But of course, no one else is married to you."

We embraced and fell asleep in each other's arms.

We both arose the next morning after just a couple of hours sleep, but we both felt refreshed. Elizabeth seemed to have her strength back again and insisted she make breakfast. After we sat down together she asked, "So have you done any thinking about who or what you are?"

"A little."

"So, if we are not just a blob of nothing, what are we?"

"I've been thinking of it this way. If my body is taken away I may still have feelings and thoughts. If my body and emotions were taken away then I have thoughts, but if all three were taken away I would still be something. I've been imagining stepping aside from my vehicles and visualizing what is there. I know and feel there is something there, the driver of the vehicles. Some type of livingness."

"Maybe you are just life itself," she said.

"I know what John would say if I said that. He would ask, *What is life?*"

"And the answer to that has baffled philosophers for ages," she said.

"Maybe we ought to start with the easy stuff," I said. "John told me to ask you if you have discovered the thoughts and fears you have been hiding from yourself and if you have learned to put them in their right place.

"I must be hiding them well, for I'm not sure what they would be."

"Have you thought about them at all?"

"What's there to think about? I think I'm pretty open about my thoughts and fears. Actually, I don't have many fears outside of becoming incapacitated with this disease."

"I've thought a little about it. If you are hiding certain thoughts and fears, perhaps they are especially hidden from yourself as you said. So if you try to look for them they are hard to find because you yourself have hidden them from yourself."

"So you're saying I've hidden them so well that I can't find them?"

"Maybe it's something like this: Let's say you have an extra twenty dollars and hide it in a cookie jar. For some reason you forget about hiding it there. Then some time later you need the twenty and it does not occur to you to look anywhere for it because you cannot even remember that it ever existed. Perhaps you haven't seriously looked for these hidden thoughts and fears because you do not believe they exist. But just as the twenty dollars still exists in the cookie jar whether you believe it or not, so do your hidden thoughts and fears exist, waiting to be found."

"You've been spending too much time with John. You're sounding just like him."

"Thanks for the compliment, but I've known you a long time and I sense that you have a reluctance to find these hidden fears."

"If they are hidden and I don't know they exist, then they don't have power to hurt me. Why should I go looking for trouble?"

"You may not have been looking for trouble. In fact, you have probably been trying to avoid it. Nevertheless, trouble has found you. If John is right, you must realize you have to let down the barriers and find what you have hidden."

Elizabeth looked like she wanted to hit me. "So if you know me so well, you tell me what I'm hiding."

"I don't know if I can find it for you. I think only you can

recognize them when found, but maybe I can encourage you and push you in the right direction.”

“So push me then, I’ve drawn a blank here.”

“I have a feeling you have some residual fears that are connected to your early religious upbringing.”

“That’s silly. My religious beliefs have changed drastically over the years. Just like I no longer fear the bogeyman I also no longer fear the fire and brimstone teachings of the old time religion.”

“You say that, but is it possible that you almost put too much emphasis on the idea that you’re not afraid of a burning hell and that guilt is beyond you?”

“I think the idea that God would send you to a burning Hell is ridiculous. A loving God would not do that.”

“Logically, that’s true, but things you were taught as a child may have had a much more powerful effect than you may admit. Weren’t your parents very religious fundamentalist Baptists?”

“Yes, I had to go to church every Sunday no matter what.”

“I remember you said that your dad’s favorite preacher was this hellfire-and-damnation guy who loved to shout out the punishments of God. You said he portrayed all humans as terrible sinners who are going to suffer unimaginable pain and suffering if they don’t follow the Bible and the line of virtue one hundred percent.”

“Yeah, I cringe at the memory of that guy,” Elizabeth replied. “Dad made all of us sit in the front row and listen to that horrible diatribe. At the dinner table during the week he would talk about the sermon and how it applies in our lives. When I got interested in boys, Dad really hammered virtue into me. He made me feel that if I ever slipped and had sex before marriage I was going to burn in Hell forever.”

I paused a moment and said evenly, “And those old teachings don’t bother you any more?”

Elizabeth sniffed. “Of course not. Like I said, I’ve put them behind me like the bogeyman.”

“I don’t think you’ve put them entirely behind you. For one thing I can tell the memory of those days still bothers you”

“Everybody has painful memories they don’t like to think of,” Elizabeth said, wheeling her chair out of the kitchen.

I decided to change the subject for the moment. Elizabeth was getting pretty defensive. I stood in front of her. “Your mother was a perfectionist, wasn’t she? Didn’t she put a lot of pressure

on you to be the perfect child?"

Elizabeth lowered her eyes. "When I was little I tried to never do anything to disappoint my folks - like I never misbehaved or talked back to them. I remember even apologizing to them in little notes I wrote for not being better in some way... But when I got older and more independent and started dating, they both seemed disappointed in me."

"Disappointed how?" I asked.

"I don't know how to describe it... like, their innocent little girl, their perfect child, grew up and innocence was lost. I did feel sexual guilt I guess. My mom gave me the third degree after every date and my dad wasn't comfortable being physically affectionate anymore. I really felt their discomfort with my sexuality. Maybe I was feeling their sexual guilt instead of my own." Elizabeth added after a pause, "It seemed like I couldn't do anything right."

"Did you ever feel like they didn't love you for who you really were, or that their love was conditional on you conforming to their idea of perfection?"

Elizabeth's eyes moistened. "Yes" she replied softly. "And I never measured up no matter how hard I tried. They never got to know me as a person and after a while, I didn't want them to. I got a little rebellious - did my share of sewing wild oats - and I'm sure they didn't want to know about that side of me either. It would have killed them, I think."

"That may be it!" I exclaimed, kneeling in front of Elizabeth. "If your folks knew who you really were, the real you, you think it would have killed them. So you punished yourself by suppressing the real you...by killing the real you."

Elizabeth looked a little pale. "You need to get to work. We can talk about this later."

"Work can wait," I replied. "Do you see now how there might be some connection between this fear of discovery, your suppression of the truth, your guilt and your disease today?"

"Um-m-m, maybe," Elizabeth frowned. "I think I've worked through my stuff pretty well, though. I'm my own person now; I don't need my parents approval anymore."

"But you need your own", I said gently, taking her hand. As I got up I said, "I think we need to explore it. I'll go to work now but I want you to promise me something. Promise me that you'll think about the guilt you may still feel about those days and the fear of not measuring up to your parent's standards for you."

“What good does it do?” Elizabeth looked up at me angrily. “It doesn’t change anything.”

“No, but facing your fears can change you,” I said, squeezing her shoulder. “Will you try, please? It may heal your disease.”

“I’ll see what I can do, but I think it will do more harm than good.”

“Trust me on this one. I think this is the right direction.”

I kissed her good-bye and put on my coat, hoping I was right.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

What We Are Not

The next couple of days were fairly ordinary. I got the feeling Elizabeth didn't want me to press her further about any hidden guilt so I laid low in that area. In fact, it seemed as if there was a distance between us that didn't exist before our conversation, and I did not seem to know how to close the gap.

I did quite a bit of thinking on who or what I was and was looking forward to my weekly breakfast with Wayne. Maybe bouncing a few things off of him again would bring some additional light.

This week I suggested we meet at Denny's and was fortunate enough to get the same booth that John and I had been sitting at. If Wayne only knew who was sitting in his seat a few days ago, I thought to myself.

Wayne started the conversation.

"Why were you so adamant that we meet at Denny's? We sometimes come here when nothing else is open, but not for our weekly discussion."

"I just like Denny's better than I used to," I replied nonchalantly.

"OHHH..KAY," Wayne said with a facial expression that told me he wasn't quite satisfied with my answer. He continued: "So did you look up that scripture where Jesus says we are gods?"

"Yes, it was quite interesting. I also found another scripture that sort of tells what God is and goes along with what you said last week." I pulled out a Bible and turned to the First Corinthians chapter twelve that John suggested I study.

Wayne looked a little startled. "I don't recall you ever carrying around a Bible in public places before."

"I never realized there was so much interesting stuff in it," I said. "I wanted to read you something interesting I found. Here

let me read you this from Paul's writings. In First Corinthians chapter twelve, Paul starts out talking about the gifts of the Spirit. Then concerning these gifts and powers he says: *But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is THE SAME GOD THAT WORKETH ALL IN ALL. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to EVERY MAN to profit withal... For as THE BODY IS ONE, AND HATH MANY MEMBERS, and all the members of that ONE BODY, being MANY, are ONE body, SO ALSO IS CHRIST. For by ONE SPIRIT we are all baptized into ONE body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into ONE SPIRIT. For the body is not one member, but MANY ...Now Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.* "I looked up. "So what do you get from this?" I asked Wayne.

"Hand me that Bible a minute." Wayne took it and spent several minutes perusing the chapter. "It's funny," he said. "I've read the New Testament a couple times, but I seemed to have glossed over this. There's a lot of deep meaning here."

"That's what I thought too," I agreed. "Tell me how you interpret it."

"I could probably spend about a hour."

"I'll tell you what," I said. "Let's go through the part that I read verse by verse. It starts out *But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.* So what's your interpretation here?" I asked.

Wayne said, "It tells us that God has one Spirit and that every man has a portion of it."

"But what I find interesting is the word dividing. The Spirit is divided to every man," I said.

"So, you think maybe the one omnipresent God divides Himself to every life form? That's another way of saying what I did last week. If God is omnipresent, He is everywhere. In one sense He is divided into each and every form and another sense just one great life."

"That kind of makes sense." Then I read on: "*Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is THE SAME GOD THAT WORKETH ALL IN ALL. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to EVERY MAN*

to profit withal... This merely emphasizes what we've been saying. Basically there is one Spirit of God working through every man."

"But would that include evil men, and of course murderers, child beaters, rapists and so on? It does say that the Spirit works through every man," he said.

"I think Christians think *every man* means every Christian."

"But it doesn't say *every Christian*. It says *every man*. Actually, if God is omnipresent, the Spirit would have to be in every person, even in every form."

"That's true. But let's stick to Paul here. He definitely says the Spirit is in every man so I guess that would have to include evil men."

Wayne stared at me a moment. "So, how could an evil man have the Spirit of God in him and still be evil? Is God then evil?"

"Maybe the Spirit is in all men, even evil men, but the evil and violent people ignore that Spirit. Maybe we all ignore it to a certain degree."

"That's a possibility," Wayne said after a moment.

I continued. "I find this next verse interesting: *For as THE BODY IS ONE, AND HATH MANY MEMBERS, and all the members of that ONE BODY, being MANY, are ONE body, SO ALSO IS CHRIST.* What I find fascinating here is if we substitute the word *God* for *Christ*, we have a description of what God is."

"So you're saying that God is like a giant body and each life is a member of that body. I've thought of something like that before. Like, I'm just one of millions of cells in some great life much higher than myself."

"Let's say you are the mouth of the body of God and you say *I am God*. Are you telling the truth or not?"

"Well, my mouth says *I am Wayne* and it is telling the truth as I command it to. It is enough of a part of me to say it is me."

"So, if we are a cell in the body of God we are not incorrect in saying we are Gods. Do you think this is what Jesus meant when He said *ye are gods*?" I asked.

"Probably. Even though the people who were called gods were far from perfect, they still compose a part of His life."

I looked at my Bible again. "This is verified by the last verse I read you: *For by ONE SPIRIT we are all baptized into ONE body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into ONE SPIRIT. For the body is not one member, but MANY. Now Ye are the body of Christ, and*

members in particular. This goes along with what we're saying. The body which is God is not one, but many. I find it fascinating the Bible verifies this thought you have had all along. We are a cell in the body of a being much greater than we are. What is really interesting is the Bible seems to indicate we can say we are that greater life which is God."

"Heavy stuff," Wayne quipped. "What have you been doing lately, reading some off-the-wall books?"

"Actually, I've been reading the Bible a lot lately."

"Feel a need to save the soul?" Wayne joked.

"All kidding aside, I have found some fascinating things in here. For one thing, did you know that the judges in the time of Moses were called gods?"

"I don't remember reading about that in the Bible."

"You don't because it's not translated correctly. In several verses the Hebrew translation reads *gods* and not *judges* as most Bibles translate it. Even Moses was called a god."

"Sounds like the Bible is a New Age book," said Wayne.

"The more I read it, the more it seems to support New Age philosophy rather than standard Christian dogma."

"Yet if you quote a scripture to a New Ager, he acts like you're in the dark ages, like you're a stupid hick that hasn't been enlightened. It's kind of ironical. The Bible has a lot of light that the orthodox Christians don't see and that the New Agers won't even look at."

I thought I would change the subject a bit: "Remember the question I asked last week WHO or WHAT ARE WE? Now the best answer we've been able to come up with so far is we are gods. And what are we as gods? We are a part of the body of the one God. By identifying with the body we can legitimately say then that we are gods. But the problem is, even though this seems to tell us much, it also tells us little. Like, what is the one God anyway? One may answer life, but what is life? The problem I have here is all the mysteries of the universe are reduced to words, and the meaning of the final words are also mysteries. Therefore, saying we are gods or life means nothing if we don't know what God or life is."

Wayne grinned. "So, you're pretty much saying what I have believed most of my life. In the end, we know nothing for sure, so we should believe nothing for sure."

I frowned. Wayne sure could be a cynic. "I'm beginning to see why you have believed that way, except I have to go with an

inward belief I have. That is, when we don't know a thing for sure it is because we are either deluded or don't have all the facts. Obviously, God and life are something. We just don't have all the details as to what they are," I said.

"How about love? Do you think that can also be defined?"

"I think if we understood love completely, we could pinpoint a definition. The trouble with love is everyone has a different idea as to what it is. The parent may think love is not giving the kid candy and the kid may think love is in the giving of the candy."

"So we have a similar problem with God, life and who we are. Everyone has a different idea."

"I think it's a little like guessing how many beans are in a jar," I said. "Everyone has a different idea as to the number, but when the logical process of counting is applied, an exact number is discovered. After this number is found, there is only one answer. All other answers are illusions. One of my favorite quotes is from the book *A COURSE IN MIRACLES* which says *the truth is true and nothing else is true*. When the true number of beans is found, nothing else is true. When we discover who we are for sure that will be true and nothing else will be true."

"But there can be more than one way to describe the truth," said Wayne.

"How's that?" I motioned the waitress for more coffee.

"Let's say there are a thousand beans in a jar."

"Yes. There're not 1001 or 1002, but only a thousand."

"That's true, but another way of describing the number is ten times one hundred or ten times ten times ten. There are numerous different ways to say the number *one thousand*."

"That's a good point, but you will still have the truth as long as you are arriving at the correct number. The number one thousand is still constant though whether it is spoken in English, Spanish or as ten times one hundred. The definite number does not change, only the way it is described. The trouble in philosophy is that people describe the number one thousand and they may make it sound like two thousand. But thinking there are two thousand beans in the jar does not add a thousand beans. The jar still only contains one thousand no matter how fancy your language is."

"You've hit on the concept that explains why very few people think alike."

"Yet, people would think alike if they could see through the fog that hides and distorts the true number of beans in the jar."

"I guess I could buy that," said Wayne.

“So, if we could see the true answer to WHO OR WHAT WE ARE, then it would probably make enough sense that we could become one in thought.”

“That’s true if we could both see without distortion, or pre-conceived notions.”

“Let’s say, then, the fact we are gods is not the answer because god is just a word for us that tells us little. Let’s also say we are not our bodies because our bodies are just vehicles in use by the driver, which is our true selves. What is left?”

“Most philosophers agree we are not our bodies,” said Wayne. “Without our bodies some say we are spirits or souls.”

“But these are just words again. People are still not sure what spirit or soul is. Let’s say you had an out-of-body experience and were floating above your body. What are you in this state that you can pinpoint?”

“Assuming that such an experience is real, I guess I am still thinking and feeling and have some type of consciousness.”

“Let’s suppose your feelings are not a part of your true self, but a vehicle like your body. Suppose you are now separated from them - what is now left?”

“Thought and consciousness, I guess,” said Wayne.

“Now suppose your thoughts are not a part of your true self and you are separated from them. What is left?”

“Where did you get this stuff?” Wayne asked, confused. “Our feelings and thoughts probably survive death, assuming there is an afterlife.”

“Even so, assume they are just vehicles and you are separated from them. What is left?”

Wayne sat back and stretched. “This is an unusual line of thought for you. OK. Let’s see. I guess all that would be left would be life, consciousness, perhaps awareness. On the other hand, without thoughts and feelings you may be just a blob of nothing. It’s hard to say.”

I leaned forward. “I kind of thought that when this idea first came to me, but then I experimented. I spent some time meditating and cleared myself of all thoughts and detached myself from all my feelings, but I found that something in me was still there. I still had life and consciousness.”

“Well, maybe you were thinking and feeling and didn’t know it.”

“Why don’t you try it? When I did it I felt more alive than ever.”

“See, you said you felt alive. You were still feeling.”

“But it was a higher octave of feeling. It was not feeling in the normal emotional sense. I use the word feeling because I don’t think we have a word for what I sensed,” I said.

“So if I play your game here, our true selves must be some type of consciousness that can take in and use data, and uses emotion and the thinking process like you and I use a computer.”

“You came to basically the same conclusion I did. If you had to make a guess, would you say we are consciousness?”

“Life, consciousness, awareness, spirit... Who knows? You’re likely to go crazy if you think about it too much. I think I’ll stick to being a god. It seems simpler and more fun.” Wayne picked up his empty cup and turned around. “And if I were a god, I’d make more coffee materialize right now. Waitress!”

The waitress responded and brought some coffee. “Well”, I grinned, “you got more coffee in about thirty seconds. That must be pretty close to being a god.”

“I wish,” he said. “I’ll tell you this. I don’t know where you’re getting this stuff, but I’m looking forward to seeing what you come up with next week.”

“So am I,” I smiled. “I don’t know what is coming yet, but I guarantee it will be interesting.”

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

The Name of God

The rest of the week passed rather uneventfully. I didn't seem to be looking forward to my weekly meeting with John as much as usual because I knew I would have to give the handkerchief back. During the week Elizabeth didn't let it out of her sight. She had it in her possession at all times. It seemed to work for her though. She had most of her strength back and we went for short walks each day. In addition to this she did most of the housework and cooking. I was beginning to feel like we were a normal married couple again, except it was now Thursday and I had to deliver the handkerchief back to John.

That evening Elizabeth went to bed early. At about eleven I went upstairs to see her and observed her lying peacefully asleep with the handkerchief clutched in her right hand.

I nudged her. "Sweetie," I said. "It's time for me to take the handkerchief."

She squeezed it tighter. "No," she said. "It gives me strength."

"I think it's much better if we give it back than if we keep it."

"Ask John if I can keep it a while longer."

I paused and took a deep breath. "OK. I'll ask him, but I need to take it back."

"Let me keep it while you're gone."

"John made a point that I'm supposed to listen to his exact words. I think I should take it back, but I'll ask him if you can have it a while longer."

I almost thought I felt strength withdraw from Elizabeth as I took the handkerchief. I felt like a heel, but I thought it was the best thing to do. I kissed her good-bye and went out into the garage and seated myself in the car. Just as I reached to put the

key in the ignition I felt a tingling feeling throughout my body.

The next thing I knew, I found myself sitting on the floor of a sparsely furnished room. I looked around and saw John sitting on a chair drinking a cup of tea next to a dining table. "Why don't you come over here and join me," he smiled.

I got up and walked toward him, somewhat disoriented

"Cup of tea?" asked John

"Sure. Why not," I said. I looked out the window. The sun was in the East. It looked like morning wherever I was. "Where am I and why is the sun up? Isn't it eleven o'clock at night?"

"Here, drink this," said John pushing a cup of tea my direction. I took it, sat down and started sipping. "Wow, this really has a zing. What is it?"

"I'm not sure, really. Joshua made it. There are several combinations that He likes."

"Joshua?? You mean Jesus?"

"That's the man."

"He was here?" I couldn't believe my ears!

"Just a few minutes ago."

"Can I meet Him?"

"That's not on the agenda yet."

"Are you telling me Jesus was here a few minutes ago making and drinking tea like a regular guy?"

"That's exactly what He did." John looked like he was having fun with this.

"But isn't He ascended into heaven or wandering around in the next world somewhere?"

John laughed, "You still have a lot to learn, my friend. But enough small talk. I am pressed for time and we need to get started."

"You never told me where I am and why it's morning."

John studied me for a second. "You are in Tel Aviv and it is eight twenty in the morning here."

I stared at him. "I'll tell you this," I said in amazement, "if I was not a believer before, I am now." I glanced out the window again. We seemed to be in the midst of the city center most of the way up a fairly tall building.

John looked at me in earnest. "As you know when we started this relationship, I shared some of my memories with you. Would you mind if I shared some of yours?"

I noticed John asked if he could share my memories. I thought about the request a few seconds. "That would be fine, but there

are some embarrassing things that are now floating around my mind I would just as soon not share.”

“Don’t worry about it,” John smiled. “I will only tune into the memories associated with our relationship and the teachings. A true teacher will only tune into memories that are released through free will. Now hold up your hand.” Our right hands touched fingers and I felt a slight tingle.

John sat back in his chair and smiled. “So far so good.”

“What do you mean?” I asked.

“You’ve been tempted to tell Wayne about me, but you have resisted. It’s a good thing. Those who cannot keep a secret are usually revealed at this point. You shared discussions on the first key with him, but I did not forbid that.”

“Was that all right then?” I asked eagerly.

“It was more than all right. This type of sharing will prepare you for your mission. You will be doing much of it in the future if you are faithful to the inner voice.”

“You keep talking about a mission. Can you tell me more about it?”

“If you are faithful, your mission will embrace several areas. One will be the teaching of the keys. Any more I can say would merely be a distraction at present. Now we must move ahead. In your own words tell me WHO OR WHAT ARE YOU?”

I took a deep breath. “OK, here are my thoughts. If I am not my body, mind or emotions and if all the other terms I’ve passed by you do not have enough meaning, I guess all that is left is consciousness itself. I am consciousness.”

“Do you know what consciousness is?”

“Consciousness is livingness. Life.”

“And what is life?”

“An awareness.”

“An awareness of what?”

“An awareness of whatever is out there?”

“How about things that are inside yourself? Is consciousness awareness of that too?”

I thought a moment. “I suppose,” I said.

“So consciousness is awareness of things outside and inside self.”

“I think so,” I said unsure of myself.

“So the real you is like a camera that takes snapshots of what is outside and inside of itself?”

“I’m not sure,” I replied weakly.

"That just doesn't feel right, does it?"

"No it seems silly when you think about it. We've got to be something more profound than a camera," I said.

"Again you found something that you are not. A camera is something a living thing uses, but it is another type of vehicle that is in use by the real Self."

I thought silently for a few seconds. "I think I'm at a dead end here. I have passed by you every thing that a human being has ever considered that he was and not one of them is the right answer."

John smiled. "If the answer was obvious you would not need a teacher. A true spiritual teacher does not show up to teach maxims that are readily available in the books of the world. There are hundreds of books in print dealing with the divinity in man or the idea that humans are gods. Then there are many others dealing with the standard spiritual ideas. Joshua and those working directly with Him only present a teaching when it is either something not yet clearly revealed to humanity or an aspect of an old teaching that is not understood in today's world. There are many teachings that have never been revealed, and there are yet many others that have been revealed in the past but have been lost for a number of reasons. The time is coming soon when all the old truths will be restored and many new ones will be revealed."

"Are the keys a new revelation or lost knowledge restored?"

"A little of both. Most will be new knowledge to seekers; but there are several of them that are openly taught in the world today, but the full meaning is not understood. Each key has points of enlightenment the seekers of the world need to tune in to. To solve each of them you must not only come up with the right answer, but you must demonstrate right understanding. I see from your memories you have been doing some thinking about the nature of God as described in Corinthians."

"Yes. Do I need to run my thoughts by you or can you read it from my memories?"

John closed his eyes for a moment and said: "Your memories give me the general idea of what you have come up with. You are on the right track and we'll talk more about who or what God is later. We are short on time right now, however, so we must move on. Continue to contemplate the mystery of godliness to prepare your mind for the future. Meanwhile are you ready for your next hint?"

"Yes. I am really curious because I've reached a dead end

here. I can't imagine what the next hint will be."

"The next hint revolves around the mystery of God that you have been contemplating. I'm sure you remember the story of Moses."

"Well, I've seen the Ten Commandments and I've read the Bible story," I said.

"Do you remember what Moses did during the second forty years of his life?"

"He was chased out of Egypt and became a shepherd in the desert. If I remember right he was around eighty when he freed the Israelites, so I guess he was a regular guy most of the time during the second forty years. We don't know much about that period of his life."

"No part of any person's life is lost. All is eventually retrievable. Not much is written of this time period because it was a time of preparation. He found his father-in-law Jethro to be a wise man with teachings that had been passed down for many generations and learned a lot from him and the brotherhood of which he was a member. One of the major points of discussion Moses had with his little conclave over the years was about the nature of God. One of the great mysteries that was discussed at that time was whether or not God had a name and if he did, what it would be."

John continued, "The reason the name of God was such a big item then was that it was a tradition among the Hebrews and many other ancient peoples to attach great meaning to a person's name. In that period a lot of thought went into naming a child because it was believed that the name was connected to or would determine the child's destiny.

"For instance, Abraham meant *father of a multitude* and that was what he became. David meant *beloved* and David was the *beloved of God*. The name *Joseph* means *the person will have increase* and Joseph - who was sold into Egypt - became the world's richest man and also had a very great posterity.

"Because of this great interest in names, one of the greatest mysteries to Moses was the name of God itself. If one were to discover the name of God, he would hold the key as to what type of being He really is."

I nodded. John took a sip of his tea. "During this forty-year time period, Moses spent many a day tending sheep alone with his thoughts, questioning many of the mysteries of the time. The

prime mystery that was in the front of his mind was the mystery of the name of God. He contemplated and wondered about this over and over.

"Finally came the experience of the burning bush where he entered into the presence of God and received that rare chance to ask any question he wanted. Do you remember what that question was?"

"Yes,' I replied. "He asked God what his name was. You know, I kind of wondered why he asked that question, but now it makes sense."

"Do you remember what the answer was?"

"God said I AM THAT I AM."

"What kind of name is that?" John asked.

"I don't know for sure. I always thought it was kind of a strange answer. I guess God is just saying that He just IS."

"Was God saying He has no name?" John asked.

"I'm not sure. It sounds like it. I have heard some say that His name is just I AM."

"If you were Moses and God gave you that answer to your question, would that satisfy your curiosity?"

"Hm-m-m, not really."

"If you were Moses what would have been your response?"

"I would have asked, *What kind of name is I AM THAT I AM?*"

"Moses was an intelligent man. Why do you suppose he did not ask for some type of clarification to a weak answer to a question he had been contemplating for forty years?"

I thought a moment. "I haven't thought about it that way, but you're right. I just figured it was one of the Mysteries."

"There are two possibilities. First, perhaps Moses was not that curious after all, or second he was satisfied with the answer. Which do you think it is?" John asked.

"You said Moses thought about this question for forty years so he had to be curious, but I cannot see why he would have been satisfied with the answer."

"You're right," John said nodding. "Moses was too curious to let a partial answer pass by. Let us say that Moses was satisfied with the answer. How could this have occurred?"

"Maybe he understood the answer better than I do."

"That is correct. However, he did understand the answer better than you do not because he was smarter, but because he heard a different answer than is presented in the various translations of the Bible."

John pulled out his old Bible again and opened it to Exodus chapter three and asked me to read verse 14. I read the words: *And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.*

“This is pretty much the standard translation in most Bibles, but it is a very bad one and most honest Hebrew scholars know this. In the Hebrew it reads: *I Am Becoming that which I Am Becoming. Go say to the children of Israel that He who Is Becoming has sent you.*

“The ancient Hebrew is much different from the English you are used to. It always had gaps in it that were to be filled by either the obvious or by the intuition. Now let me tell you plainly the answer that Moses heard. As you remember, Moses asked God what His name was. To this question God said: *You ask for my name so you will know who or what I am. This I cannot give you because I Am Becoming that which I decide to Become. Go tell the children of Israel that He who is Becoming has sent you.* John paused a moment. “Now tell me how you think Moses understood this answer.”

“I think you’ve turned on a light in my head,” I said excitedly. “Here’s the way I see it. As you said, in that age, a name revealed the core essence of who the individual was and Moses was expecting an answer like this from God. In other words, he thought he might get an answer like *I am the great and powerful one*, or something like that. Instead, God told him that He cannot give Moses a standard name because He is in the process of becoming whatever it is that He wants to become. Thus any name given to Him at one time may not apply at a future time.”

“Great answer! Perhaps we have the right man for the job after all,” John smiled. “Your answer is right on track. God is always changing the image that He presents to the various parts of the world at different times in history. For instance, in the time of Moses He presented an image of the all-powerful ruler who is to be obeyed at all costs. Then in the time of Christ this changed to the all-forgiving God of Love who sacrificed His only Son. This was a definite change in the presentation of God that is not acknowledged by most Christians. Also, God is presented to the world in different ways in many other religions that had an inspired beginning. Notice that each religion has a different name for God. This is because the name has a particularly important message for their consciousness that will help their particular group or race

progress.

“God has many names because He is many things to many people in many times. Thus He could not give Moses any ultimate name because He becomes what He decides to become to the consciousness of any group or individual.”

I nodded, but a thought struck me. “But isn’t there a scripture that says God does not change? It sounds like He, in fact, is in a constant state of change.”

John nodded. “When the prophets wrote about the changelessness of God they were telling the people that the words of God are 100 per cent dependable - that He does not promise the people one thing today and break it tomorrow. They were not saying He does not change in any way. I tried to make this clear in my own Book of Revelations. I talked about God revealing a new name, that He will create a new heaven and new earth, and that He will make all things new. Look at the earth and the universe around you, which is God’s Body. It is all in a state of change and becoming new or renewed. Everything is changing. Because God is everything and everything changes, then God changes.”

“Speaking of new, this is certainly a new teaching. I have never heard anything like this in any church.”

John’s countenance became serious. “The religions of the world do not believe in new things. They will always resist any new teaching and attempt to preserve the old, even if it is scientifically proven to be incorrect, as in the days the church persecuted Galileo for merely revealing what his eyes saw through a telescope.”

“I’ve come to that conclusion myself. That’s why I don’t attend any church even though I basically believe the scriptures.”

“That is also one of the reasons you were chosen. Anyone whose mind is fixed in a dogma is not usable to us as a world teacher. It may seem hard for you to accept but if the standard believer who is fixed in a dogma were to have experienced all that you have with me and were to have heard what you have just heard, I would be rejected as an agent of the devil.”

“Even if he were transported halfway around the world in an instant?” I asked.

“The closed-mindedness of those stuck in religious dogma is beyond belief,” said John, shaking his head. “This was demonstrated by Joshua when He raised Lazarus from the dead after he was three days in the grave. Instead of converting the religious leaders, it just inflamed them and hastened the crucifixion. The

leaders also knew without doubt that Christ was raised from the dead, for He appeared to them after the resurrection so they would be without excuse. Even this did not convert them and they fought all the harder against His followers. When the average person has his mind centered on a belief, only the destruction of the world created by that belief will change him. That can happen by an inner or outer collapse.”

“I’ve never thought of it that way, but I can certainly see that you are correct. I don’t mean to change the subject, but what is my hint for this week?”

“What we have talked about is the hint,” John said evenly.

I thought a moment, recalling the Bible verses. “Can’t you give me something more direct?” I pleaded.

“I have given you much food for thought. Contemplate in particular what we have talked about concerning Moses and God.”

I thought for a moment. “I have a couple other questions.”

“Ask away. I have a few minutes.”

“You said you have been killed a number of times, even once under Hitler. How could this happen to you when you have power to disappear? Look what you did to me. You teleported me half way across the globe.”

John smiled. “Intelligent question, my friend. There are certain laws and principles in place that regulate how an evolving humanity can be assisted. The higher they evolve on the spiritual ladder, the more directly they can be worked with by the Brotherhood of Light. When a member of the Brotherhood decides to work directly with the people, he must be subject to the same personal limitations the general populace has. Thus, when I directly worked with Staufenberg in Nazi Germany, I became subject to the same perils he was. The only way I can be invulnerable to death is to work at arm’s length through a disciple like yourself. If I were to work side by side with you, there would be so much controversy stirred up because of the nature of the work that we would both be killed before the work was done. There is another factor. In past ages I could move from one part of the world to another and no one would be the wiser. With today’s communications systems, once my picture appears in a National Enquirer or the Star, any hope of anonymity is over. So taking all things into consideration, we have decided it best to work through an apparently ordinary mortal such as yourself.”

“You mean I am just apparently ordinary?” I asked with interest.

“Joshua sees much more potential in you than you might guess,” John said with a smile. “Even though your life has seemed fairly ordinary, you have had many experiences which have prepared you to be a teacher. You, in turn, will find others who will become major players in this part of history. Some of these would have just lived ordinary lives if not for the great opportunity you will present. Great opportunity brings forth greatness of the human spirit.”

Wow, this gave me a lot to think about, but I couldn't remember having many experiences that would lead me to teaching “Sounds overwhelming. So what are you doing here in Tel Aviv?”

“We have a disciple like yourself here and several other middle eastern countries. Their primary purpose is not to teach, but to influence political leaders on the path to peace. Believe me, we have a difficult task, particularly since the Dark Brothers also have their disciples carefully placed. I thought I could spend some time relaxing in Boise and teach you at my leisure, but we seem to have a lot of crises coming up lately that have to be dealt with. One major problem is the proliferation of nuclear weapons to third world countries that would not hesitate to use them. This is a much greater threat than your leaders realize and needs to be dealt with. This is all I have time to tell you about this at present.”

Realizing my time was short, I reluctantly pulled the handkerchief out of my jacket pocket and handed it to John. “My wife appreciates the relief. Is it possible she can keep the handkerchief a while longer?”

John replied softly, “Believe me, I feel for her and also you, but the natural laws must be allowed to flow. She's got to be on her own with her struggle. Let me warn you it will be more difficult than you expect the next few weeks, but the end will be good if you both follow the highest you know.”

“That's encouraging, I guess,” I said without confidence. Elizabeth will be so disappointed, I thought.

John patted my back. “Time to send you back. Perhaps we can spend more time together next week.”

The next thing I knew I was back in the front seat of my car. I got out and walked into my home in somewhat of a daze. It was several hours before I got around to going to bed.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Becoming

After getting to bed so late, I was hoping to be able to sleep in, but was awakened by Elizabeth shaking my shoulder.

“My legs! I can’t move my legs at all!”

“Maybe they’re just asleep,” I said, half asleep myself.

“No. No. It’s worse than it was before. I can barely move them at all now. Help me!”

I hated feeling so powerless, but helped her up into her wheelchair.

“Look! “ she cried “My legs are now totally useless. Even at their worst they had some strength, but now it’s worse than ever. Did you bring that handkerchief back?”

“Honey, John said I couldn’t...”

“What kind of man is this guy? He gives me a gift and takes it away. Now I’m worse than I was. I wish I had never even seen John.” Elizabeth sobbed bitterly.

I knelt in front of her and took her hand firmly. “Don’t say that, sweetie. Because of John you now know for sure it is possible to be healed. He said if I solved the first three keys, you would be healed. We must look forward to that time.”

She gathered her composure for a moment and asked, “So, did you get the first one yet?”

“Not yet, but I’m getting closer.”

“Maybe you are and just maybe this is some cosmic joke and there is no answer. Maybe we are nothing and going nowhere,” she said, starting to cry again.

I hugged her for a moment and then lifted her chin and looked deeply into her eyes. “I know there is an answer. I will find it.”

Elizabeth turned her head away. “So consciousness is not

the answer?"

"No."

"So try *nothing* next time. That will be as good as anything. You've guessed everything else we could be."

I was startled with her coldness. "I've never seen you so negative."

"Negative? You don't know negative," she said bitterly. "Call Doctor Kevorkian and I'll show you negative!"

I felt a terrible feeling in the pit of my stomach as she said that. I felt like running out of her presence as far as I could. It was as if it was not her who was talking, but some hateful being. Nevertheless, I knew I had to override that feeling and show her all the love I could.

"You'll get your legs back. This is just a temporary thing," I tried to assure her. "We'll take you to the doctor. Maybe he can give you something."

"The doctor never helps. I'm staying right here."

"I'll call your mom and she can come over while I show some homes."

"I'm not helpless. Just go and I'll take care of myself." Elizabeth wheeled herself out of the bedroom toward the kitchen.

I called her mother anyway to keep an eye on her when I had to be out. There was a certain amount of work I had to do to survive financially, and I spent all the time I could with Elizabeth, but nothing I could do or say seemed to help. She was in the darkest spirits I had ever seen her in. It was almost as if she were turning into another person. Realizing she may not have much time left, I thought every spare moment about the newest hints and the first key. I came up with a few ideas and thought I would share them with Wayne during our next breakfast.

When Sunday came, Elizabeth was still in a negative state and didn't even want me to have breakfast with Wayne. I assured her I needed someone to bounce ideas off of and of the importance of solving the keys, but she seemed to act as if I were wasting my time. She was generally very supportive and this resistance did not seem like her. I went to see Wayne despite her comments.

"I see we're back to our regular eating place," said Wayne. "How was your week?"

"It was the best of times and the worst of times," I said with a forced smile.

"I've had a few weeks like that," he said. "So have you de-

cided that we are consciousness or have you come up with some even heavier thought?"

"I've concluded that the core of our being is not consciousness, but uses consciousness. Consciousness is like a camera and our true self is like the one who takes the pictures."

"So who or what is the one who takes the pictures?" Wayne asked.

"I'm not sure yet. You know the philosopher Descartes tried to discover what there was in man that he could call real and he came up with the phrase *I think, therefore, I am.*"

"Yes," Wayne agreed. "If I remember right, the famous Latin phrase was *cogito ergo sum.* Descartes, using the process of elimination, concluded that the only thing he knew for sure was that he was thinking, therefore he had to exist. That was one of the few things I learned in college. I think it's interesting that both Descartes and God reduced our essence to the phrase I AM. Maybe we just are and it's a great mystery we will never know or understand."

"Funny you should say that. I've been studying the words of God to Moses and the phrase *I AM that I AM* is a mistranslation. The literal translation according to scholars is *I am becoming that I am becoming. Go tell the children of Israel that He who is becoming has sent you.* Taking this into consideration, it seems that the essence of God which may be our own essence also has something to do with the process of becoming."

"So maybe Descartes should have said *I think, therefore I am becoming.*"

"That probably would have been more accurate," I said, "but I think there is some mystery behind all this that we just haven't seen yet. We have an essence that is becoming, changing or evolving, but I don't think I've found it yet."

"I doubt if we ever will," said Wayne. "We just are. Any more than that would be just about impossible for us to find out."

"It can't be impossible!" I said with greater volume and emotion than I had anticipated.

Wayne looked startled. "Whatever you say, buddy. You feel pretty strong about this quest of yours, don't you?"

"I suppose. I didn't mean to startle you. I kind of feel under a lot of pressure. Elizabeth is quite a bit worse again, my finances for helping her are limited and my emotions are on edge."

"I feel for you and her. Want me to drop by some evening this week and see if I can cheer her up?"

"It might not hurt, but call first. She's been kind of withdrawn lately. She acts like she doesn't want to see anyone."

"Sometimes it's good to have company, even when you're not in the mood."

"I agree. Now getting back to our main line of thought." I said, leaning forward. "What do you think it is that is in us that is becoming? It can't just be called I AM. There's got to be a name for it."

"If I didn't know you better, I would say you're becoming obsessed here with this idea. Here we're talking about a crisis with your wife and you switch the topic back to philosophy. It seems kind of strange."

"You're right, it does seem strange, but I have a good reason for it." I paused for a moment to think of a good reason that would not be a lie. "Elizabeth is very interested in my finding the answer. I think it will lift her spirits if I can come up with something good."

Wayne didn't look convinced. "That's an odd way to lift someone's spirits."

I paused. I really hated holding out on Wayne. "We've been friends a long time," I finally said. "Could you just trust me on this? It would mean a lot to me and possibly to Elizabeth."

Wayne looked me in the eye. "I've known you a long time. I think there's something you're not telling me here, but if it's important, I'll just play along."

"There is something I can't tell you. All I can tell you right now is that it is important that I find the answer to this question."

"Now you've really got me curious." Wayne leaned forward and lowered his voice. "Come on. You can tell me. You tell me everything."

"I'll tell you as soon as I can, but just not now."

Wayne leaned back. "OK. I'll let you off the hook for now, but I'll expect the juicy details soon. Why do I keep getting the feeling that you think you've had some vision or something?"

I tried to smile nonchalantly. "Who knows? Now I want you to wrack that brain of yours and tell me if you have any deeper thoughts on this subject."

"Answer me this then. Do you really think we are capable of getting the right answer?"

"You know I've never lied to you. I will tell you this. I happen to know that we are capable of getting the answer."

"You think so," Wayne said looking at me squarely.

"I told you I know so," I said with emphasis.

“OK,” said Wayne. “We’ll proceed on the assumption you are correct here and that we can really go where no man has gone before. Perhaps a key here is God really said to Moses he is becoming rather than he just is. Becoming implies action, movement, evolution, whereas I AM implies a static, unchangeable state. Now all religions that I know of think that God is perfect and does not change, but I AM BECOMING implies a God who is changing and moving toward a higher state. That means He isn’t perfect, because if He were, He wouldn’t have to evolve any further. Maybe humans are gods, as some teach, for the very reason that we are imperfect and that we are also in a constant state of change and evolution. Maybe the perfection of God is just some hocus pocus passed down through the ages and is completely false. Maybe God is trapped in this universe and is just trying to find his way home like the song says.”

A light went off in my head. “Good Wayne! I don’t know if you’re right, but at least you’re leading us into new territory. Now let’s assume that you’re on the right track about what God is. If we are truly gods, then who or what would we be?”

“That’s a hard one. Maybe we’re movement or action,” said Wayne.

“You know, that could be it. Everything else that people think we are is just a vehicle or instrument that we use, but action or movement is not a vehicle. You know, as scientists investigate the atomic world they find only motion, but have not found anything they consider solid. When you think of it, everything is made of wavelengths in motion, therefore the answer may be motion.”

“That’s true. Without motion on the atomic level there would be no life, or form, as we know it.”

I reached in my pocket for money to pay for my breakfast. “I think we’re on the right track. I feel it in my gut. Thanks for your help, Wayne. Sorry to cut our breakfast short, but I’ve got to go.” I stood up, ready to leave.

“Why do I get the feeling we’ll be talking about this again?” Wayne mused as we walked toward the cashier..

“You’re probably right, my friend. You’re probably right.”

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

The Attack Of Darkness

I had a feeling I should not leave Elizabeth alone for long and I should return as soon as possible. I found that my hunch was right when I returned home and found her wheelchair was empty.

“Elizabeth!” I shouted

There was no answer.

I started searching all the rooms in the house. Finally I heard a whimpering coming from the bathroom. I ran inside and found Elizabeth in a corner with a look of terror on her face with tears drying on her cheeks.

“Sweetheart, what happened? How did you even get in here with no wheelchair.”

“I needed you and you were gone. I told you that I didn’t want you to go.”

“Here, let me help you back into your wheelchair and we’ll talk.” I lifted her up and carried her back to her chair. She was clinging to me very tightly, softly crying. “There. Now I’ll make you a cup of tea and we’ll talk.”

I made us both some herb tea and sat down facing her across the table. “OK. Now tell me what happened.”

She looked at me and suddenly a look of terror took over her face like I had never seen before. She screamed “It’s him!” and started wheeling away from me as fast as she could.

I ran after her and caught her and forced her to look at me again. “Look at me! It’s me. No one else.”

“I saw his face. Your face became his face!”

“Whose face?” I asked with no small amount of frustration.

“When you left I felt tired and fell asleep in my chair. I dreamed

I was at this flea market where there were all kinds of people hacking their wares. I was in my wheelchair, but managed to wheel my way around from booth to booth until I came to one that seemed to me manned by John. I thought it odd that he was wearing dark sunglasses and I wheeled my way closer and saw that he was selling all kinds of scarves and fine handkerchiefs. As soon as he noticed me he said: *I know what you want.* He picked up an old wooden box and opened it up and pulled out the old red handkerchief.

"Can I have it?" I pleaded.

"Of course you can have it my dear. Here, grab hold."

"He dangled the handkerchief in front of me and I grabbed an end and immediately I felt my strength returning, but was puzzled by the fact that John held on to the other end. *Are you going to let me have it?"* I asked?

"On just one condition," John said.

"And that would be?"

"Look into my eyes for six seconds."

"It seemed like an odd request to me and something about him seemed unlike John. His voice, the sunglasses, the request - it seemed really strange. Nevertheless, I wanted the handkerchief and his request seemed harmless so I agreed.

"Then he said, *After you have looked into my eyes for six seconds you can have the handkerchief.* He took off his sunglasses and to my horror I saw that his eyes had no pupils or iris. They were entirely white. I was surprised, but I really wanted the handkerchief so I looked back at him. Suddenly, I felt the most evil feeling anyone can imagine. Then I felt myself paralyzed as I felt my very life force being sucked from my body. I wanted to turn away, but couldn't. I somehow sensed when the six seconds were up, I would be doomed to death, extinction, Hell...who knows what."

"So, did you look at him for the six seconds?" I asked, anxious to hear her answer.

"In a way the few seconds I did look seemed like an eternity, but somehow internally I seemed to sense the true passing of seconds. During the first three seconds the man's face changed and I saw that this person was not John. He was an older effeminate-looking man with white hair. Right around the fifth second he smiled. It was a smile I never want to see again. It made an evil shiver go all the way through me. The smile seemed as if it belonged to a serial killer who is watching his victim die and enjoying the moment of death. At that instant I cried out to God in

my heart to give me strength, and just before the sixth second I received power to turn away and instantly woke up.”

I gave her a hug and said, “My poor sweetheart. What a terrible experience.”

“That’s not all,” Elizabeth continued. “After I woke up I realized it seemed real but consoled myself in the fact that it was just a dream. But then to my side I sensed that same awful presence, similar to what happened to you. I tried to wheel myself away from it but it felt like the brake was on. Somehow I fell out of my chair and found myself crawling away. I turned and looked toward the presence again and saw a faint outline of the white-haired man and heard his words in a whisper. *You are dead anyway, why not give your life to me.*”

“I shouted, *NO!*”

“Then he said something very strange. *Tell your husband I know who I AM. I AM THAT I AM. I AM SELF. I, the self, is all that matters.* Then he disappeared, but I still felt his presence and crawled into the bathroom where you found me.”

“Is his presence still here?” I asked.

“I felt it again when I saw his face instead of yours, but it seems to be gone now.”

“It’s funny that I felt his presence before, but not now,” I said. “Maybe evil must be revealed as well as good.”

“I’m just glad you’re here,” Elizabeth said with a weak smile. “I never want you to leave me again.”

I hugged her again. “You would think going through this disease would be plenty for your share of pain in life without having to go through something like this.”

“I’ll tell you this.” she said with a deep sigh. “I thought I knew what fear was when I found out that I had an incurable disease, but that was nothing compared to the sheer terror I felt today. It was as if my soul was at stake, in addition to my life.” Elizabeth was still shaking, and I continued to hold her close.

“I know,” I nodded. “I felt that presence. You really do have to experience it to understand the feelings it can generate.” I took a deep breath and let Elizabeth go. “I think it’s time we finished that cup of tea.”

We seated ourselves around the table again after micro waving the tea so it was hot again and resumed our conversation. I asked, “This entity made an interesting statement about who he thinks we are. Now how did he word that?”

“He said to tell you *I AM. I AM THAT I AM. I AM SELF. I,*

the self, is all that matters."

I replied, "What I find interesting here is that John said that *I AM THAT I AM* is a mistranslation. It's interesting to compare the two translations. *I am* implies a static condition and is another way of saying self. *I AM BECOMING* implies an evolving condition that involves looking outside of self. In a weird way this makes a lot of sense to me. To the good guys out there, self is not the ultimate, but what the self evolves into in connection with all other selves is the thing. But to the bad guys all there is, is self, so every goal they have is to only benefit the self as they see it."

"Why do you suppose his eyes had only whites?" Elizabeth asked, calmer now, but I could tell the memory of the event was still horrifying to her.

"I'm not sure. Maybe it's a symbol of their blindness."

"So do you think the New Agers are wrong when they tell us to look to the self for everything?"

"Maybe they just don't have the whole truth. On the other hand, the Christians could be equally as wrong for stressing the translation *I AM* instead of *I AM BECOMING*. It seems that both the New Agers and the Christians may have inadvertently put undue attention on the self."

"The funny thing is that this evil entity may have helped us rather than hindered," said Elizabeth, stirring her tea. "Is it possible that when all is said and done we are just individual selves?"

"In some way we are individual selves and for the Dark Brothers that's where it ends. Thus, all they do is for selfish ends. But the keynote of the Brothers of Light is unselfishness. Therefore, they see something beyond self or greater than self. Somehow, I feel that the word *BECOMING* is a key one here. Perhaps self is meaningless to those in the light because they are in a state of evolution. Therefore the self tomorrow would be a different self than the self today."

"And, by contrast, the unevolving self would be the same tomorrow as it is today," Elizabeth added.

"And the fascinating thing to me is that this is one of the main perceptions that people have of God - that He is the same yesterday, today and forever. When you think of it, this concept would make for a very boring God, wouldn't it?" I mused.

"Maybe that's one of the reasons I turned off religion so much. I always relished new experiences and everything about religion seems to be centered around keeping things the way they are now and not rocking the boat with any changes." She paused

and finished her tea, then asked, "So what did you and Wayne come up with about the first key?"

"It seems that everything we've come up with that we could possibly be so far is a vehicle of some kind. Even consciousness itself is like a camera our real self uses. So we finally came up with something that John can't say is a vehicle."

"And what would that be?"

"Everything is created by vibration, action or motion, so that has to be what we are."

"Sounds like a strange answer to me."

"But think about it. If everything was still, there would be no interplay; and if even the vibrations that make the atom were stilled, there would be nothing to exist. We must be composed of some type of vibration in motion; and if it ceased to exist, then we would cease to exist. Therefore, we must be composed of movement itself. That would explain why we are becoming."

"Maybe, and it is a good thought, but it doesn't feel right to me," Elizabeth said frowning.

"It may not be right, but it's the best I can come up with at the moment. I have a feeling that we're getting close. I think the next hint will tell the tale."

"I hope so," Elizabeth sighed. "I don't know how much longer my strength can hold out."

I took Elizabeth's hand. "You'll make it, Sweetie. When we solve the third key John is committed to healing you."

"If you could solve even the first one I would be encouraged," she said. "It appears that you're trying to find an answer that has eluded the best philosophers in history. What makes you think that you can go beyond anything that has ever been done?"

"No one else had the apostle John to help them, " I said softly.

"But John's been wandering the earth for two thousand years. Maybe they have had his help. Maybe this will be harder than you think."

Good point, I thought to myself as I tried to assure her that we will solve the keys.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Dark Brothers Revealed

The next Thursday evening, as Elizabeth and I were sitting down for dinner and I was wondering how I was going to contact John this week, I heard a knock on the door. To my surprise it was John!

"I hope I'm not imposing," he said.

"No... No, come on in. Sweetie, look who's here!"

Elizabeth looked pleasantly surprised. "Come have some dinner with us."

"You might talk me into it," John smiled.

"Hope you don't mind Sloppy Joes," I said.

"If it tastes as good as it smells I won't mind at all."

We all sat down to dinner and told him what happened to Elizabeth.

"I knew they were going to try something like this," John said frowning.

"What would have happened after the six seconds if she didn't break it off?" I asked.

"This adversary would have stolen your life force to enhance his own vitality. Without assistance from the Brothers of Light you would have died within a few days."

Elizabeth looked horrified. "What are these guys, some type of spiritual vampires?" I asked, looking at her reaction, then to John.

"That's exactly what they are," he said. "You will find that many stories and fables from your culture contain some seeds of truth. According to stories, a vampire will steal blood from his victim to give himself a renewal of life. Theoretically, he could live forever if he could have an endless supply of victims. These dark

brothers do not take your blood, but they do take your life force, which corresponds to the physical power of blood. This stolen life force allows them to continue their existence.”

“What do they do then, spend their time preying on helpless victims like Elizabeth?” I asked, taking Elizabeth’s hand.

“He attacked Elizabeth because he was trying to get to you and put an end to our work. Taking her life force would have been a bonus. Actually they get most of their energy by working through agents on the earth.”

“What do you mean by agents?” Elizabeth asked.

“Just as you will soon be an agent for the Brotherhood of Light so also are there agents on the earth for the adversaries of light, or the Dark Brotherhood. The enlightened brothers feed the multitudes of those who are open to the Spirit and give out an increase of energy, but the Dark Brothers steal energy by feeding off the multitudes and are only interested in helping themselves.”

John continued, “When you are in the presence of a dark agent you will often feel a drain of energy that is unexplainable. Sometimes you will feel weak and even have to sit down. A person under his influence will often not think clearly and be literally unable to speak anything but approving words.”

“You know,” I interrupted, “I’ve felt that way several times in my life, but I can’t say that the people that made me feel that way were dark agents. One was a religious leader of high acclaim, another was a government official and the other was a head of a corporation. They all had impeccable reputations.”

“Did you notice they all seemed to be surrounded with an unusual aura of authority?”

I thought of them a moment. “Yes. I particularly remember the authority around the religious leader. I remember that I disagreed with him and couldn’t bring myself to vocalize it. At the time I couldn’t understand why I didn’t say anything.”

John smiled knowingly. “They have to shut down your resistance before they can steal your energy. When you yield to their illusionary authority you virtually become a subject and a source of their power, but their power is not real because it is stolen. When humanity wakes up and reclaims their power, the power of the Dark Brothers will instantly vanish and the adversaries will be bound for over one thousand years as predicted.”

“So how does one free himself from their control?” Elizabeth asked.

“The illusion of authority is what gives them power. They

had power to shut you up because there was a part of you that yielded to that authority. You can easily neutralize any dark agent by completely releasing yourself from all his so-called authority and recognizing only one authority. Do you know what that is?"

"God?"

"And where do you find God?"

"Within, I guess."

"Yes. The Master said *The kingdom of God is within you*. If you subject yourself spiritually to any person outside you, you are in danger of losing the true light and being subject to a false one."

"Does that mean that in a perfect world we shouldn't have leaders or civil authorities?"

"Not at all. The structure of society could not stand without leaders, bosses, and some civil authorities. You can support a boss, mayor, local police and others and yet give all your spiritual allegiance to God within yourself. Only a few can perceive the difference between cooperating with authority for the good of the whole and yielding your power to an authority. You only learn this completely when you successfully neutralize a dark agent. Then the seeker understands. You have successfully accomplished this when you neutralized the Dark Brother who appeared to you." John laughed wryly. "Believe me, you really caught him off guard by laughing at him. He's still reeling from that encounter. It's one reason why he attacked your wife." John focused his gaze on me. "Did you notice who he pretended to be?"

"Yes, he pretended he was you," I replied.

"Why do you suppose he did that?"

"Was it because you are the greatest spiritual authority in our lives?"

"Yes, and this is unfortunate. Elizabeth has given me too much of her power and this created an opportunity for the Dark Brothers to attack. You must remember this: A door must be open before they can come in. When you learn to keep all the doors shut they will be unable to touch you on the spiritual and energy levels."

"His eyes were terrible," Elizabeth grimaced. "They were white with no pupils or iris."

"The reason his eyes appeared white is because they were turned inward toward self. This is a symbol of their utter selfishness. Their eyes can appear normal when they desire, but when they attempt to commit the ultimate act of selfishness, which is to take another's life force and use it as their own, they turn their

eyes inward to the self. This aids them in siphoning off your energy for their terrible use. Thus if you ever see or dream of an entity who only shows the whites of his eyes, avoid looking at him as you would the Medusa.”

“Do the agents of the Dark Brothers on the physical plane have this power to steal life force?” I asked.

“The uninitiated agents on the earth do not have power to kill with negative energy, but do have power to steal enough to make you weak. Then there are a handful of Dark initiates on the physical plane who have greater power. The advanced Dark Brothers are in another astral sphere such as the one you just encountered. Generally you will only encounter them if you pose a real threat to their plans.”

John continued, “These agents of the Dark Brotherhood are often given material success and prestige in return for transferring energy to the Dark Brothers. Even though they are dedicated to selfishness there are still some obvious reasons to assist each other. The Overlords in the unseen world find certain agents useful, and they know they must give them a few crumbs to get their cooperation; and when they are no longer useful, they no longer get the crumbs. On the other hand, the Brotherhood of Light is dedicated to their disciples as well as mankind, and are ever vigilant to lend a helping hand. We are not quite as all powerful as many assume; however, and are limited in a number of ways in the amount we can assist. You are fortunate that I have freed myself sufficiently to teach you.”

“We are both honored to have you,” I said, getting a nod of agreement from Elizabeth. “So I take it that many of our leaders in high authority, position and influence are really Dark Agents.”

“Yes. Many of them are. Most of them are not aware they are agents transmitting dark energy, but a handful of the most dangerous are completely aware. Then too we must remember that all leaders are not dark agents. There are always a handful who are sincerely doing their best to serve. Even in this latter category many are following deceptive paths and their good intentions are thus neutralized.”

“Are you saying,” Elizabeth interjected, “that I would not have been in danger if I had not given you too much power?”

“That is exactly true,” said John.

“How then can we learn from you if we don’t recognize you as an authority?”

“The key,” said John “is to realize there is only one authority.

That authority is the Holy Spirit and can only be contacted from within. Nevertheless, all humans are interconnected by the Spirit. The only authority that I have is through the Spirit. When I speak truth and you are focused on the Spirit within, you will feel a confirmation within. When you then feel that confirmation, you will accept my words not because you see me as an authority, but because of confirmation through your personal authority.

“You were deceived by the Dark Brother because you were accepting my words and actions without checking with the Spirit within. The healing power of the handkerchief convinced you that you just had to accept me no matter what. This is the great error beginning disciples always make. Even if I am right all the time, you must still check; for there may come a time that he who you think is me is not me after all, just as happened with your deception. Thus, giving your power even to a true servant may open the door for a Dark Brother to trick you.”

“These Dark Brothers don’t make a lot of sense to me,” Elizabeth said, shaking her head. “I don’t understand why they are so destructive.”

“The main difference between the Light and Dark Brothers is one sees in the light and the other feels in the darkness,” John replied.

I thought about this statement and asked, “Is this another way of saying one uses his mind to perceive the truth and the other uses emotion to cover the truth?”

John smiled. “Exactly, my friend. Imagine two groups of people trying to find their way home. One travels by night and the other in the light of day. Which one would have the easiest time?”

“The one traveling by day, of course,” I answered.

“All intelligent lives seek God at one time or another. Even the Dark Brothers have gone through what both sides call the *long dark night of the soul*, but in that night they did not find Him, so they created God after their image and thus established a system where God is not found in the Universal Spirit, but in external forms. Thus, you see why the Dark Brothers convinced the Israelites to build the golden calf as a source of external power.

“All but a very few have their golden calf, which steals their power. But the glitter of gold must eventually yield to the pure white light of Mount Sinai that reveals the way home.

“There is much yet to be revealed about light and darkness. One may see correctly at one time and be deceived at another. To stay in the light requires eternal vigilance. I will reveal more to

you about this from time to time.”

John sipped his coffee, “My time is short so we need to get on with our lesson. Have you discovered who or what you are yet?”

“I think I have either found the truth or am close to it,” I said, leaning toward John. “When scientists examine matter they say that they cannot find proof that solid particles exist. All they can seem to find on the smallest level is wavelengths in motion. If all these wavelengths were to be stilled, the universe would virtually disappear. If the motion of the wavelengths that make me would be stilled, then I would probably cease to exist. Therefore, the real me has to be motion or action of some kind.”

“That’s very good,” said John. “Coming to this point is a milestone, but you are not there yet. Answer me this: What is it that is in motion and what is the force creating the motion?”

I thought a moment. “If there is no such thing as solid matter then nothing is in motion, if that is possible. I guess the force propelling the wavelengths is pure energy.”

“But,” said John, “if there is no solid matter, then nothing is in motion, as you say. Therefore, does it not stand to reason that energy is not required for motion since nothing is really in motion?”

“Maybe I was right after all,” Elizabeth chuckled. “I said half joking that we were nothing and perhaps I was right.”

“As far as the material plane goes, you are correct,” said John. “But from the greater reality you are a great something. That something which creates all motion in the universe is the great mystery. Energy is not the answer because in reality there is really nothing solid in motion.

“Now I will give you two major hints. First, in my hand I have a pen. Now I will take this pen and throw it on that sofa over there.”

John threw the pen on the sofa.

“Now, what made that pen fly over to the sofa?”

“Obviously you did,” I said

“And who or what am I? And don’t say *John*.”

“So the real you threw that pen?”

“Yes. That which is the real me made the pen move. This is the first major hint. The second one is a parable. Do you both have a few minutes while I relate it to you?”

“We’re not going anywhere on a bet,” I said.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

The Parable

John continued. "Listen carefully to this parable and write it down in your own words after I leave. You will publish it later and it will be an inspiration to many. If you sense the Spirit in the words you will guess where it originated."

"On a certain night Jim, Mike, Ron and Dave died. Shortly thereafter they all found themselves walking on a beaten path. It seemed right to follow the path. Finally they came to a dividing point. One path veered to the left; the other to the right. They stood a moment, pondering what to do, when suddenly a man in white appeared and gave them instructions.

"Welcome, my friends', he said. 'You are approaching your new home and I am here to instruct you as much as is permitted. You notice there are two paths before you: One of them takes you to Heaven, a place more beautiful than you can imagine. The other takes you to Hell, a land full of darkness, despair and wretched individuals. All I can tell you at this point is you are to choose a path, but once you reach your destination you cannot turn back. Once you get to Heaven you will stay there, or once you get to Hell you will stay there. One more word I can say. Do not be frightened, for that reward you get in the end will be that which you deserve. Go forth confident that if you have led a just life, you will reap as you have sowed. You must proceed one at a time and each walk the path alone.'

"After saying this the man disappeared. The four were astonished at this somewhat random method of reaching Heaven or Hell. Finally, they decided they must go forward and drew straws to determine who would go first. Jim got the first opportunity and chose the path on the right. He thought that perhaps this

would lead to heaven because the "right" is always associated with "good." But as he proceeded he heard the fierce sound of wild animals, clouds seemed to hide the sun and the earth seemed to shake. He became very frightened and thought, 'Maybe I have chosen the wrong path.' He turned around, went back to the beginning and told the others of his experience. Then he decided to try the left hand path. As he ventured forth he saw more ominous signs. He kept wondering how far he could go before he could not turn back, and with each step he became more and more frightened until he was forced to retreat back to the beginning.

"Seeing that Jim could not make a firm decision as to which path to take, Ron and Dave suggested Mike now take his turn. Mike, however, was paralyzed with fear for, according to Jim's story, neither path sounded very heavenly. 'I'm going to think about it a while', he said. 'Someone else can take a turn.'

"It was now Ron's turn and he said, 'I'm picking the right-hand path and not turning back.' He followed through with his decision, and went past the sound of wild animals and through the darkness and storm clouds until he found himself in a place of unspeakable beauty and peace. He assumed he was in Heaven and rested there.

"It was now Dave's turn to move onward. Jim said he thought he heard a wild animal eating Ron and a chill of concern spread through them all. Dave was not sure he was making the right decision, for he chose the path on the left. He thought within himself: 'No matter what happens I'll go forward on this path and make the best of it.'

"As he proceeded, things went from bad to worse. There were horrific shrieks from wild animals and storm clouds with fierce thunderbolts were everywhere. Still, he proceeded until he reached a sign that said 'Hell'. Behind him, the path disappeared and there was no retreat. Before him was a depressing place dark and stormy, full of inhabitants living in run-down shacks. The people lived in constant fear of attacks from the animals and roaming gangs which stole whatever they could get their hands on. Everywhere he went he was told this was a land cursed by the devil, and that things are going to get worse for all eternity.

"Dave thought long and hard within himself. 'I promised myself I would not retreat from this path and make the best of it. I refuse to listen to these voices of doom. Within myself there is no Hell and my conscience is clear, so why should there be Hell on the outside?'"

"From that point on, Dave went forth in confidence and taught the people they did not have to live in the run-down shacks, and that they could change their circumstances so they would not have to live in fear. He also questioned their belief the land was cursed by the devil. A handful of people took hope and listened, but the rest were afraid and even looked upon Dave as an enemy, fearing he would make things even worse than they were.

"Dave gathered the people who would listen. They refused to accept the slum they were given as a final resting place and made blueprints of new beautiful homes. The best land they could find was an uninhabited swamp. They drained it and built their homes and a beautiful city with teeming gardens and landscapes. The gangs did not bother them, for the inhabitants supported and protected each other. The wild animals became friends, for the people nurtured them. Even the dark clouds and storms began to subside and bright, sunny days became a common sight.

"The people who were against Dave saw what had been accomplished and they took courage; one by one, other parts of Hell became transformed into beautiful cities and landscapes. After a period of time there was nothing but beauty and peace as far as the eye could see.

"Dave surveyed the now-beautiful land and came to a realization: One more thing needs to be done. He walked over to the original entrance and found that old sign which read 'Hell', tore it down, and replaced it with one that said 'Heaven'. As he did, another path with a fork in it appeared and so did the man in white. His look caught Dave's eye and he said, 'I think you know what you must do'.

"Dave looked back and said, 'I see I must choose again'.

"'Correct', said the man.

"Before I proceed, can you tell me the fate of the other three?"

"The man answered: 'Ron is in a city that resembles the place you have created. He has one regret: he wishes he had a part in creating it. When that desire becomes strong enough he will be given another path to choose and will wind up in a place called 'Hell'. as you did, and be given an opportunity to build Heaven.

"Jim and Mike are still paralyzed with fear, afraid to make a decision. They are the ones who are truly in Hell, yet sooner or later they must proceed onward.

"And what lies ahead for me?" asked Dave.

"The unknown', said the man.

“The statement made Dave afraid, yet excited at the same time. And with no hesitation, he proceeded on the path leaning to the right.”

No one spoke for a moment. “That’s a beautiful story,” Elizabeth said, her eyes glistening through tears. “I’d better help my husband remember it.”

“That’s an excellent thought,” said John. “Now the first step to solving the first key is to find the first keyword. The first keyword is the title of the parable and also the power that put the pen in motion. The second stage of the first key is in your understanding. You must show a degree of comprehension about the key.”

Suddenly it seemed as if a light turned on in my head. “I have the word!” I exclaimed. “I can’t believe I never thought of it before, but I’m sure I am right this time.”

“You’ll have to wait another week to give it to me,” said John.

“You don’t know what you ask here,” I said. “Now that I have the word I want to talk about it.”

“If you are correct you will gain much by contemplating the full meaning of the word and principle during the next week.”

“I feel strongly in my bones I am correct. I am just anxious to be verified.”

“A week is a very short period,” John said patiently.

“Where will we meet next Thursday?” I asked anxiously.

“Denny’s, unless there is a change of plans. There, we will discuss the beginning of your mission.”

“Now you’re making my wait worse than ever. You’ve mentioned a mission before. Exactly what do you have in mind for me?” I asked anxiously.

“It is more what Joshua has in mind. He has a plan to reveal new teachings to the world, and you, my friend, are a part of that plan.”

“Now you really have me stimulated! Why don’t you just stay here for three days and answer all my questions?” I felt like a kid on Christmas Eve begging to open presents early.

“At this moment, my time available is limited. Maybe we can spend three days together when Joshua can let me go for a while. In the meantime, happy contemplating until next week.” John started walking toward the front door.

“Let me ask you one more question before you go,” I requested.

“Go ahead,” said John, turning around.

“The Dark Brothers attacking me is one thing, but picking on my wife seems really unfair. Is there anything we can do to protect her until we learn more about protecting ourselves?”

“It is not only your wife you have to be concerned about. There will be many others - who will seek the teachings of light and you will be assisting - who the Dark Ones will seek to distract and pull down to their level of selfishness. There is something that you, your wife and others who come forward can do to keep your minds steady in the Light. Of course, the greatest protection is found in becoming one with the Spirit and being true to the inner voice, but few have achieved that to the desired degree. There is a special prayer which has been passed down that will give aspiring disciples protection. We didn’t plan to release it just yet, but perhaps it would be appropriate to give it to you now.” John surveyed the room for a moment. “I need a moment of privacy. May I use your bathroom?”

“Sure. Down the hall and to the left,” I instructed, curious.

When John went into the bathroom, I couldn’t help but move closer to the door and stare at the crack under the door. I faintly heard some voices and couldn’t tell if it was just John or John and someone else. It also seemed like the light coming from under the door intensified. When the voices ceased I backed off and soon John came out.

John looked quite pleased and stated, “Today may seem like an ordinary day, but in reality this day marks the beginning of the end for our Dark Brothers. Their power will end, not because we will destroy them, but because the pure in heart will no longer give their power over to them and thus the innocent will be protected. When the Dark Brothers are denied the source of power that does not belong to them they will destroy themselves. Tell me, have you heard of *the Song of the 144,000?*”

“If I remember right, it comes from the Book of Revelations. The Jehovah Witnesses use that number all the time.”

“Find me a Bible and we’ll read about it.” John commanded.

I hurriedly got a Bible and gave it to John. He turned to Revelations chapter fourteen and read:

“Rev 14:1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads.

Rev 14:2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:

Rev 14:3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

Rev 14:4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb.

Rev 14:5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God."

John closed the book thoughtfully and looked at Elizabeth and me. "I wrote this in symbolic language nearly two thousand years ago. It sounds like the song will be sung by heavenly beings flying around the throne of God, but in reality anyone here on earth who recognizes the Spirit of God flowing through him is very close to the throne of God. It may sound like the song will be sung by virgin men but they will be both men and women who are pure in heart. Many have also thought the number 144,000 is a limiting number, but in reality it is the number of one great symbolic choir, one of many that will eventually come from this small planet. Also, the song will not be sung, in the ordinary sense, on the physical plane but by souls of aspiring disciples. It is to be spoken out loud and registered by the spirit within. When the words are registered by the soul a beautiful song is sent to God, and, in return, the seeker will receive spiritual protection and assistance."

CHAPTER TWENTY

Song of the 144,000

“So, are you going to teach us the song then?” I asked eagerly.

“Yes,” John replied. “Get a pen and paper and write down the words precisely as I tell them to you. This is one teaching you are not to put in your own words, but must be exactly memorized.”

I got the materials and prepared to write. “I’m ready,” I said, poised for revelation.

John began by closing his eyes for a moment. Then he opened them and slowly spoke these beautiful words:

“We thank you Father that you have revealed to us your protective universal light; that within this light is complete protection from all destructive forces; that the Holy Spirit of Your Presence permeates us in this light, and wherever we will the light to descend.”

John paused a moment and closed his eyes. As Elizabeth and I looked on in wonder, we became aware of a white light, ever so softly at first, growing in radiance about an arm’s reach from John’s body until we could hardly gaze upon it. Then, a few seconds later, we noticed a radiant light beginning to manifest and dance around our own bodies. After about another minute the three of us were like three glowing suns of light.

Then John spoke again:

“We thank you Father that you fill us with your protective fires of Love; that within this love is complete protection from all destructive thoughts and feelings; that the consciousness of Christ is lifted up in us in this love, and wherever we will the love to be enflamed.”

John was silent again, and after a few seconds we noticed bright yellow, pink and magenta color added to his aura of light. Shortly thereafter, we noticed it in our own spheres of light. Then we felt the fire of tremendous love. It was a love and fire that permeated to the very soul and was very delicious to the spiritual taste, something beyond our power to put in words. Somehow Elizabeth and I both sensed we were all feeling it together; and even though we had not felt this intensity before, it seemed very natural and welcome.

Then, just as we were enjoying the greatest experience of our lives, John opened his eyes and spoke again:

"We thank you Father that you are in us and we are in you; that through us Your Will is sent forth on wings of power; that Your Purpose is accomplished on earth as it is in heaven; that through us Your Light and Love and Power is manifest to all the Sons and Daughters of Mankind."

This time, a deep violet with edges of gold manifested in his aura and again spread to our own light. In addition to feeling the Presence of Spirit and great Love, we now felt a sense of enormous Power that was overwhelming. If we had any doubt about the existence of a Supreme being before, they vanished when we felt such a great manifestation. The sense of power seemed so great it felt as if the one who possessed it could snap his fingers and make the world disappear if desired. It was indeed a humbling experience.

John stretched both hands outward, and the light seemed to circulate around the three of us as if we were one life. Then he said quietly, "Ask yourself... When you are in this state is it even possible to feel any fear? Can you sense it would be impossible for the Dark Ones to disturb this peace?"

I looked at Elizabeth. "The way I feel right now, I can't even imagine anything negative existing, let alone fear it." Elizabeth nodded, smiling, in agreement. She seemed unable to speak.

John lowered his arms and the light began to fade, but even when it was gone we continued to feel a great peace within us. After a moment John spoke again, "You, my friends, have just heard the Song of the 144,000 before the throne of God. There are already groups of 144,000 singing the song on the spiritual planes, but this is the beginning of the spiritual song upon the earth. Soon, it will be on earth as it is in heaven; and there will be 144,000 and more who will feel the Light and Love and Power of the Father-Mother God and allow themselves to be a note played

within the music of the spheres.”

After contemplating this beautiful vision I asked, “Are we supposed to say this song or prayer on a regular basis?”

“Yes,” said John. “Say it together at least once a day and say it as an individual at least once a day. Each time you say it, however, visualize all those who can sing the song of the soul as if they were in your presence and enjoying the light and love and power you have felt here tonight. As each new person learns the song the whole will be strengthened and energized.”

John paused and continued, “My time is short and I will teach you more later on this subject.”

We said our good-byes and again watched John walk off into the darkness.

That night Elizabeth and I said the song together before going to bed. We didn’t see a visible light or feel the fire as we did when John said it, but we felt a peaceful feeling... and Elizabeth was able to fall into a deep sleep without fear of another dark attack.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

The Mission

For the next three days we recited the song faithfully several times a day; then on the fourth day we seemed to get distracted and didn't think to say it. We didn't suffer any obvious attack, but I did notice that Elizabeth seemed more negative about her illness. In addition, we got into several arguments which seemed to take us out of the spiritual mood. During the fifth day there seemed to be a cloud hanging over us. At bedtime neither of us felt like saying the song, but I felt it was important so I prodded Elizabeth into saying it along with me.

After we finished Elizabeth said: "I think we slipped out of harmony with our souls. I didn't realize it until now. Let's say it again."

We said it again and this time we felt a return to the great peace we previously felt. As we were basking in the peace I said: "This song really does have a positive effect. We must remember to say it every day whether we feel like it or not."

Elizabeth agreed and we made a mental commitment to remember to say the song each day.

Outside of the two days we did not say the song, the week went pretty well. In fact it seemed to go better than usual. I sold two homes without the usual problems and went through what was supposed to be a difficult closing without a hitch. Elizabeth also seemed to have more physical strength and, except for the two negative days, her attitude was much improved.

Wayne and I were too busy for our weekly breakfast. In my spare time that week I thought much about what my mission was supposed to be and formulated a number of questions for John. From the little John told me, I knew I was supposed to somehow

present his teachings and the keys of knowledge to the world, but I hadn't taken that thought too seriously yet since I had not even completed the first key myself. Yet he told me he was going to talk about my mission during our next meeting. I was indeed curious about that.

This time, when Thursday night arrived, Elizabeth and I said the song together. We both felt a great peace and neither of us was concerned about her staying alone for a couple hours.

As I got into my car to go to Denny's I found myself half expecting to be whisked away to who-knows-where, but nothing happened. Without incident I drove to Denny's, went inside, and found John drinking coffee and reading the local newspaper in our regular booth.

As I sat down John looked up and smiled, "I see you have been saying the song," he said.

"How can you tell?" John was always a surprise to me.

"I see it, as I just told you."

"What do you mean you see it?"

"When I sang the song for you what did you see?" John asked.

"I saw beautiful lights dancing around you."

"So you saw me singing the song?"

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Did you not also feel me singing the song?"

"Yes, we felt the most wonderful feelings one can imagine."

"And you also heard me utter the words, did you not?"

"Of course."

"The true singing of the Song of the 144,000 is accomplished on three levels: the physical, emotional and mental planes, which opens the door of the spiritual. You have been singing the song recently and I can see your light and feel your peace. Thus, I see that you have been singing the song."

"Could you explain more about what you mean by singing on three levels?"

John paused and said, "If a person merely memorizes the words and repeats them only on the physical plane, he is not truly singing the song. The vibrations of words only being uttered cause very little result. In addition to saying the words one must feel and think the words. In a sense you become the Word which is God. The final thing you must always do is to sing the song as if you are in the presence of all others who are also in the great choir. When you do this you open the door to the spiritual energy and become a true singer of the song; you not only help yourself, but you also

assist all others who also know and use the song. There is a strong interplay and sharing of energy that is available to those who have the Father's name written in their foreheads."

"I have a question," I said. "When you sang the song we saw a visible light around us, but when Elizabeth and I did it we didn't see a light. How come?"

"You did not see a light, but I did. When I saw you walking toward this booth you were glowing like an angel. You saw the light in my presence for two reasons: I have had more practice singing the song than you and the light was thus more intense: second, your spiritual sight was more sensitive that night. If you develop your spiritual sight you will be able to see the light each time you correctly sing the song. You will sing this song in groups in the future and some will see the light and others will not. Everyone, however, will feel some type of effect. Those who are not ready will feel a negative effect and will drop out of the choir and not sing it again until they are more prepared."

"What's the main determination as to whether a person is ready?" I asked.

"Each person will be his own judge. But if one is not ready he will not benefit and thus will not even attempt to sing the song on a regular basis."

"It seems odd to say we are singing a song when we are not singing in the normal sense."

"From a higher point of view there is not a lot of difference in beauty between speaking and singing. The beauty of the song of the soul far eclipses the most beautiful singing on the earth. Thus you will find some of the most spiritual people on the planet often do not have a good physical singing voice. This is because they have put so much attention on the inner beauty. On the other hand, there are a handful of spiritual people who have also cultivated a good singing voice, so you can't really judge the spiritual evolution of a person by the sound of his physical voice."

"What a relief!" I joked. "I'd probably go to Hell if I was judged by the way I sing."

"Actually you sing very well. If you were to listen to your whole self, you would see it." John smiled.

"This is news to me," I said. "I've never thought of myself as being a good singer any way you look at it."

John took a sip of coffee and asked. "Do you think you have the first key word?"

"Yes. I really think I do."

“Let me have it then.”

I told him the word that came to me last week.

“Are you sure that is correct?” he asked.

“Reasonably sure, yes.”

“You must learn to trust the inner voice. When you are in tune with it, there will not be doubt. What does your inner Self say? Do you have the right word or not?”

“I’m real sure, but I wouldn’t bet my life on it.”

“There will come times when you must bet your life and more on your inner voice. You must learn to register it and then trust it with all you have. That is the only way to completely free yourself of the influence of the Dark Brothers and all negative energy. Now look deep within yourself and answer. Have you found the right key word? Yes or no?”

I tried to tune into that still small voice, but the more I tried to receive the more I doubted myself. Was I imagining the confirmation because that’s what I wanted or was I getting a real answer? “I think I have the right answer, but to be honest I don’t know for sure.”

“It is good that you are honest, but to complete your mission you must learn to hear the inner voice and trust it. The question is this: Is the key word you thought you received confirmed by your inner voice or not?”

John sat up straighter and leaned forward. “If you cannot give me the correct answer in the next few minutes then our relationship is at an end and you will not see me again in this life.”

I was stunned by his words and I felt myself flush. “What? After all that I have gone through you would just cast me aside if I cannot give you the correct answer here and now?” I couldn’t believe his words!

John studied my face for a moment. “I would not cast you aside, but if you cannot receive and trust the inner voice of the Spirit after all that you have gone through, I must find someone else for the job. It is nothing personal, but I have a job to do and I must have someone who trusts the still small voice. Now I will give you a moment of silence, then give me the answer.”

John was silent and I tried to tune into the voice, but seemed to get nothing. John’s statement unnerved me, but I tried to focus. After a moment of frustration on my part John asked “What is your answer?”

I was angry with myself because my moment of contemplation gave me nothing. I decided to guess. “Yes. I have the right

answer. I'll go with it."

"Did your inner voice confirm that to you?" John asked.

I paused a moment in fear. I never wanted to lie so much in my life, but if I told John I received something it would be a lie, and he would probably know it. I painfully told him the truth. "I tried to get a confirmation, but I drew a blank. Have I failed?"

"Not yet. Now take a couple minutes and contemplate. Are you sure you have the right key word? Do you have confirmation from the soul and do you trust it? Your next answer will be final. I'm going to the rest room. When I return I expect your answer."

"Take your time," I said to John as he walked off.

I had never felt under pressure like this before. In the past when I wanted some inner guidance I always tried to be in a situation where there were no distractions, but this seemed impossible. Nevertheless, I tried to clear myself and hear my inner voice. "I think I have the key word. Is it correct? God help me. Please tell me if it is correct!"

There was no answer. Nothing. I had never drawn such a blank in my life. Here I was, with perhaps the greatest opportunity a man has had for two thousand years, and I was going to let it slip through my fingers. In addition to that, I would probably lose Elizabeth because I would never receive the first three principles. I almost started to cry, but held back the tears and forced myself to continue. John would be coming back any minute.

I sat back in my seat, closed my eyes, and thought back to last Thursday night when John taught us the parable and song and when the key word came to me. For a moment I relived those few glorious moments.

In an instant I realized I had the answer John wanted. At that exact moment John came out of the bathroom.

He casually sat down in the booth and took another sip of coffee and asked, "Do you have a confirmed answer?"

"Yes. I do."

"What is it, my friend?"

"I did not get confirmation tonight because I already received confirmation at the time I received the key word. At the moment I received it, I was completely sure, but during the week my trust wavered and I doubted myself. When I let my mind go back to that moment last week, I realized anew I had definitely received the correct key word. My answer is yes. I am sure the key word is right and it was confirmed by my inner self."

"No doubts, then?" he said.

"I am now sure," I said firmly.

"What if I were to tell you that you are wrong?"

I felt a shiver of fear go through me for a second, but then gathered my composure. "I would say that you are wrong, because I know what the inner voice confirmed to me, and even God cannot take that away."

For the first time since I had known him John looked visibly affected. His eyes became moist as he grabbed my right hand with both of his and said, "The long famine of truth is over, my brother. You are ready to assist in bringing a great light to the earth. Welcome to the Brotherhood."

John and I sat there in silence holding hands for what seemed to be an hour, but I knew it was less than a moment. During that interlude I did not have to ask him if the key word was correct. I knew it was. During this time something else happened. I saw the story of John's life over the past two thousand years. I was amazed beyond words at the struggles he went through to help mankind. But what affected me the most was that time and time again, his work met with failure because of lack of cooperation from those whom he had taught. Sometimes those who were supposed to be working for the Brotherhood of Light were just sluggish; other times they sought for their own glory; sometimes they were paralyzed with fear; then, sadly, there were other times when the workers of light lost their light and moved to the side of darkness and sought to destroy all things that bring freedom and light to mankind.

Then, once every several hundred years I saw that John had a faithful co-worker or two, and his heart was gladdened and his hope in mankind renewed. After that I felt overwhelming emotion over the hope and expectation that John had for me. At that instant I broke off contact.

"You expect more out of me than I expect from myself. I don't want to let you down as others have done."

"Never, never let fear of failure prevent you from taking action. Remember the lesson of the parable. Always take action on the highest you know and you will learn from your mistakes and eventually meet with success."

I waited for the lump in my throat to go down and said, "One thing that bothers me is that as great of a teacher and human being as you are, you have still met with failure time and time again over the past two thousand years. Do you really believe we can succeed this time?"

“The past two thousand years has been a time of training and preparation for the Workers of Light. We are now on the cusp of a new age and a new energy. The keynote for the past two thousand years has been sacrifice beginning with the sacrifice of Christ. Now we are entering a grand new period where we can enjoy the fruits of the sacrifice. The new keynote is service. Perhaps the greatest phrase ever recorded from Joshua is that the greatest in the kingdom of heaven shall be the greatest servant. The greatest among the Brotherhood of Light are those with the greatest capacity and willingness to serve.

“We seemed to fail a lot the past two thousand years because we were learning and demonstrating sacrifice, but now it is decreed we will learn and demonstrate service. In order to serve we must succeed; therefore, it is our destiny we will succeed this time around. There will be setbacks here and there, but our ultimate success is as good as guaranteed.” John smiled at me as if I was part of this success.

“So, I take it I have passed some type of test here?” I asked.

“Yes, you have. More important than learning the keys is learning to trust what the Spirit confirms to you. When you are given a confirmation, you are not usually given another one until you are faithful to what you have already been given. Last Thursday you were given a confirmation of the key word and you were tempted to doubt it. Therefore, when you tried to get confirmation again it did not come. Doubt throws up a wall between you and your soul. You did exactly the right thing when you went back to the point of reception and reviewed it. You did the same thing when the Dark Brother tried to deceive you; you thought back to what the true voice of the Spirit was like and compared it to your dream. This is a process few have mastered. Almost everyone wants confirmation of truth again and again instead of trusting confirmation they have already received. If you cannot trust confirmation you received yesterday, how do we know you will trust renewed confirmation today?”

John continued. “The true disciple will not look for new confirmations again and again. He will find them naturally when he lives by the highest light he has already received.

John leaned forward and lowered his voice after our waitress finished filling our coffee cups. “Let me repeat myself. This is perhaps the most important advice you will ever receive: Always live by the highest light you have already received. If you do, you will receive more, worlds without end. If you do not, your

progression will come to an end and cannot proceed until you go back, review the last light you have received, and then live your life according to the standard of that light.”

I thought a moment. “I’ve always tried to do that, but did not realize the full implications of that standard until now. So tell me. Am I done with the first key or what?”

“You have found the first key word. Now your next step is to understand the key itself. During the next week I want you to think about why this particular word is a key of knowledge and why it identifies the core of your existence. Why is it the cause of all motion in the universe from a planet to a pen to an atom?”

“I feel privileged to continue this after the scare you gave me.” I said, laughing with relief.

John smiled reassuringly. “Not as bad as the scare you gave me. I would probably feel worse losing a student with the mission you are supposed to have than you would have in losing the opportunity. After all, I have much more knowledge of the implications of it all than you.”

“So you were supposed to tell me more about this mission...” I urged.

“Yes,” he said. “There are several stages and all will not be revealed at once. We want you to concentrate on the work at hand rather than some future event that seems impossible at the moment.”

“What then is the first stage?”

“The first stage is for you to write several books giving out new teachings and keys to the world.”

I scratched my head. “I don’t think you understand how busy I am. To pay all my bills including Elizabeth’s medical expenses I now work 7 days a week, often 12-16 hours a day. I not only have to work like crazy to make money, but I have to do all the work around the house since Elizabeth’s illness. I would be happy to do whatever you ask if you would materialize a few gold bars so my hands could be free.”

John smiled. “I remember those few sweet years with the Master - how we would often give Him replies like that. Do you know what He usually said back to us?”

“What?”

“Oh ye of little faith.”

I chuckled. “Well with me it should be *Oh ye of little time*. There are only so many hours in a day.”

“Are you telling me it impossible for you to find time to write a

book?”

I reflected a moment. Oh, what the hell. “All right. Nothing is impossible. I’ll find some way.”

“Let’s look at the practical possibilities first. Can you mortgage your house to free up some money which would free up some time?”

I frowned. “Are you kidding? I’m mortgaged to the hilt!”

“How about friends or relatives. Will any of them help?”

“Most of them already think I’m too far out. No. None of them would loan me money to write a book. I’d have to lie to them and I know you don’t want that.”

“Dealing with the material side of life is something that even the highest teachers have a problem with,” said John, frowning. “But especially in this age we recognize that it is a necessity. All you need to do is find time to write your first book or two. Now because of certain spiritual laws we cannot just materialize your bars of gold or other wealth, but we do believe that many people will be interested in the teachings and be willing to buy the books. When this happens, you will have enough coming in to free your hands so you can spend full time as a student, teacher and writer.”

I took a long sip of coffee. “Maybe I could stay up an extra hour or two each evening until I get the book done. I’ll find a way to do it. I must warn you I have been planning on doing some writing for years and have just not been able to find the time, but I know this is important. When am I supposed to start?”

“Right away.”

“But I haven’t even completed the first key.”

“You don’t have to. The first book will tell about your encounter with me and your experiences and what you have learned up to this moment. You are not to reveal the first key word in the first book. One reason is you are to give many copies of the first book free by making it available on the Internet or any other way you can come up with. There, seekers can download copies and get a feel for what is to come. If they are then interested, they can either purchase a hard copy or future books you write. This will supply you with money to free your hands and begin other projects we have in mind for you.”

“So I am supposed to start writing right away and write everything exactly as it has happened? The trouble with that idea is no one will believe it. They’ll think the book is the work of an illusionary dreamer.”

“Actually, you are more correct than you realize. We have

made two previous attempts to put out advanced teachings to the world in a straightforward method and both failed miserably. We found that New Age gurus who just made everything up from their subconscious had more success than did our two disciples. An additional problem was our disciples were so honest and straightforward they were boring.”

“I’m sure you’re not asking me to be dishonest.”

“Far from it. Even Joshua would fall from the light if he asked you to do that.”

“So what are you asking?”

“We are asking you to write a book of fiction,” John replied.

“Fiction? But none of these fantastic things that has transpired is fiction.” I exclaimed.

“No. But some of them are too unbelievable for you to write and there are other things that lack a certain glamour necessary to attract an audience. Therefore, we want you to create any characters or events you want to make the book interesting. Since you will publish the book as fiction you will not be dishonest in creating any characters, situations or events necessary to make an interesting story. There is one criterion, however, that you must adhere to.”

“What is that?” I asked.

“The whole purpose of your writings will be to present teachings important for the coming age of peace. Therefore, you are under strict command to not alter any teachings you receive from me or any other future spiritual teacher. You are to present them as clearly and as honestly as you are capable. Even though you will publish the writings as fiction there are many who will sense the teachings themselves are true and many will want to know more.”

“The most unbelievable part of this whole adventure is you,” I smiled. “Should I tell the whole story about you?”

“We are leaving that up to you. You will probably have to alter me to some degree, or possibly many degrees. If necessary you can say you met Hercules, or the moon goddess, whatever you think will make a good story. Just be true to the teachings you have received.

“You and the Christ are much wiser than me. Why are you leaving such an important assignment up to me?”

“Teachings to humanity must come through humanity, through ordinary mortals such as yourself. Every time we have broken that rule in the history of the world it has always ended in disas-

ter.”

“I thought you spiritual teachers were infallible. It sounds like even the Christ can make a mistake.”

“True perfection consists in having the ability to complete a task successfully. When one is in the process of completing a work there will always be mistakes, but that does not prevent the end product from being perfect. Look at this world and the inhabitants on it. There is much imperfection here created by God himself, but the end result of it all will be a perfection beyond imagination.”

‘Hm-m-m, interesting.’ I thought. “So you are forced to rely on a mere mortal such as myself to get the word out?”

“Yes. The closest I can come to you is as a teacher, and even then you must be an active participant in asking questions and finding answers. You have to really want to know each step of the way as you progress.”

“Well, I must admit I have a strong motive since the life of my wife depends on it.”

John smiled, “I believe you would pursue the truth with a vengeance even if her life did not depend on it.”

“Perhaps. I guess we’ll find out when she is healed.”

“I have faith you will help her achieve that healing. Just remember to always follow the highest you know. This principle also encompasses the area of healing. In fact, she is now anxiously awaiting your return. You need to go home so she can peacefully sleep.”

“You’re probably right.” I said. “I’ll try to get my first chapter done for our meeting next week.”

“Do not bring it to me until the book is done,” John said.

“Why is that?”

“The less influence I have the more powerful it will be even if it is written in your weakness. I will read it when you are finished, but I will be constrained from editing it.”

“Won’t you be able to give me your opinion at least?”

“I will tell you whether I enjoyed it or not. When you are done we will see how much more I can reveal.” He got up to leave and said, “We’d better call it a day here.”

“Will I see you next week?” I asked hopefully.

“We’ll just meet here at Denny’s again unless you hear otherwise.”

“I look forward to it.”

John turned back to face me. “There is just one thing I ask

as you begin this task.”

“What’s that?” I asked.

“Write a good book. Try to not embarrass me.”

“I’ll make you larger than life,” I replied, smiling.

Books By J J Dewey

You have just finished Book I of the Immortal. Our published edition includes this book and adds the larger Book II in one bound volume. Below are our prices on various publications.

The Immortal (Books 1 & 2) \$19.95
 The Lost Key of the Buddha
 (The Immortal, Book 3) \$19.95
 The Keys of Knowledge Vol 1 \$19.95 Each
 The Keys of Knowledge Vol 2 \$19.95 Each
 The Keys of Knowledge Vol 3 \$19.95 Each
 The Keys of Knowledge Vol 4 \$19.95 Each
 The Keys of Knowledge Vol 5 \$19.95 Each
 The Keys of Knowledge Vol 6 \$19.95 Each
 The Gathering of Lights \$19.95
 The Molecular Relationship \$19.95
 The Gods of the Bible \$14.95

All orders have the postage paid
 Foreign orders add \$5.00 for the first book; \$3.00 for
 each additional book.

To Order Send Check or Money Order to:
Great AD-Ventures
P. O. Box 8011
Boise, Idaho 83707 USA
or Call 1-800-390-5687

We accept MC/VISA/Discover and American Express.

If you desire a free digital copy of The Immortal, Book I, you can
 download it free from: <http://www.freeread.com>.

For information on the free discussion group on the internet from
 which these writings are derived e-mail to: book@freeread.com.