

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, and 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 12 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 12, 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.* Sowhat's your interpretation here?" I asked.

Waynesaid, "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 ironic. The Bible has a lot of light that orthodox Christians don't see and that 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 that 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 is thousand beans in a jar."

"Yes. There's 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, 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."

"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 preconceived notions."

"Let's say, then, the fact that 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?"

Waynesat 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 that 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."