

"It is more blessed to give than receive"

- JESUS

(Acts 20:35)

As a former clergyman no longer affiliated with any church group or religious institution, I remain religiously minded, respectful of them all and revering most the historical figure of Jesus. It is his value-system as reflected in the words quoted above, that has motivated my continuance in some form of ministry to the people, even though I have long left the church. I am, in fact, a "wowser", one of a modern group of thinkers who say -

W - we

O - only

W - want the

S - sensible

E - explanations of

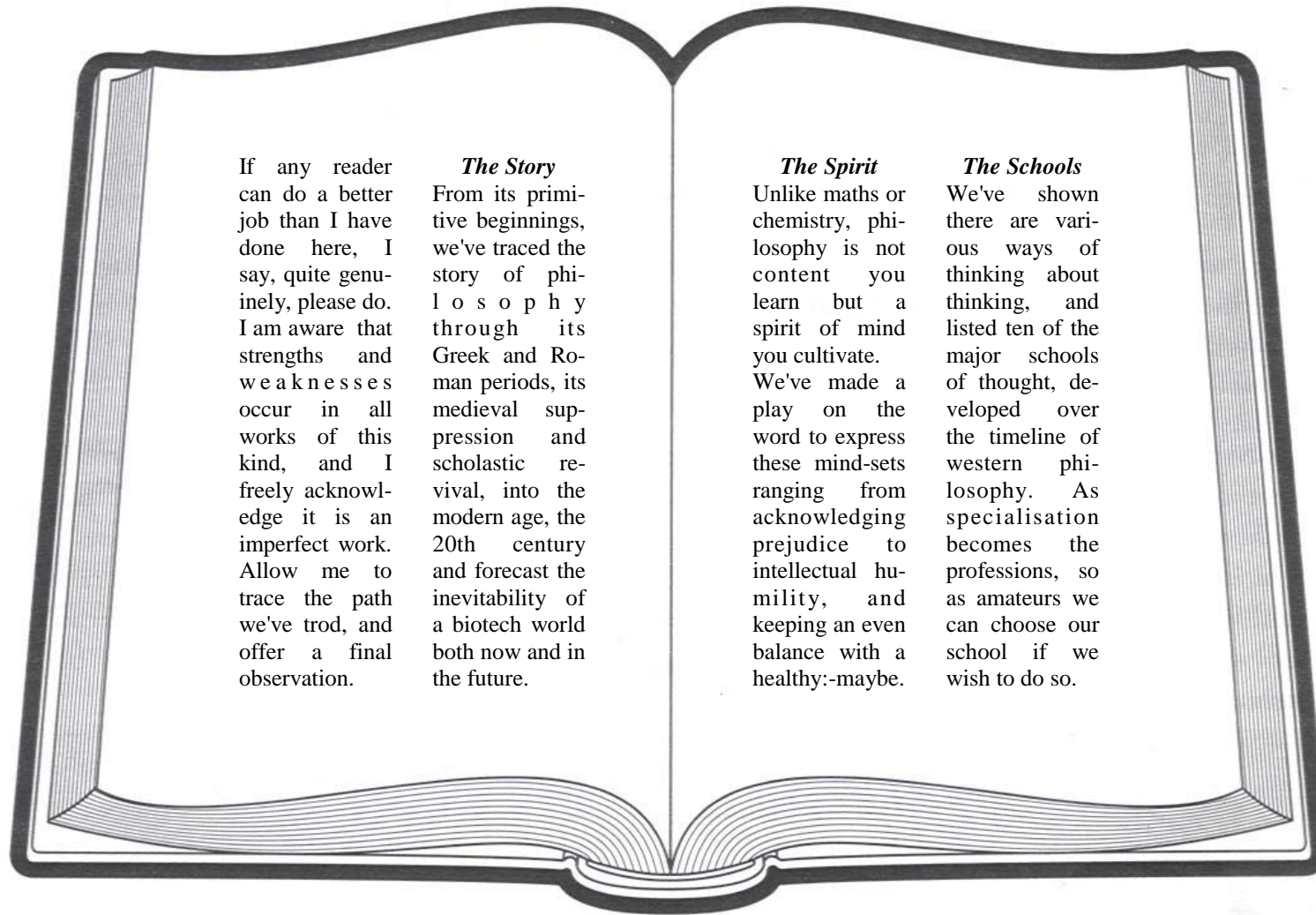
R - reason,

especially in relation to faith and morals.

In this connection, the statement quoted **authorises** my quest of the historical Jesus. It is a statement from Jesus not found in the Gospels but quoted by Paul, which indicates that extra-biblical sources concerning Jesus were acceptable to him and therefore to anyone seeking his wisdom.

It also **epitomises** or condenses in a few words what has been the metaphysical motivation of my whole life: self-giving service to the people in the model of Jesus, the man of God. *To receive, is to be blessed; but to give is to be more blessed.*

Yes, in some ways I have fulfilled this self-demand stupidly, and deserved all the disappointment I felt. No, I don't regret any part of it as part of the whole process of growth to maturity. It is from that growth I offer these fruits of my faith and reason, and hope that if they provide food for thought, all who receive these presentations will have enjoyed them.



If any reader can do a better job than I have done here, I say, quite genuinely, please do. I am aware that strengths and weaknesses occur in all works of this kind, and I freely acknowledge it is an imperfect work. Allow me to trace the path we've trod, and offer a final observation.

The Story

From its primitive beginnings, we've traced the story of philosophy through its Greek and Roman periods, its medieval suppression and scholastic revival, into the modern age, the 20th century and forecast the inevitability of a biotech world both now and in the future.

The Spirit

Unlike maths or chemistry, philosophy is not content you learn but a spirit of mind you cultivate. We've made a play on the word to express these mind-sets ranging from acknowledging prejudice to intellectual humility, and keeping an even balance with a healthy:-maybe.

The Schools

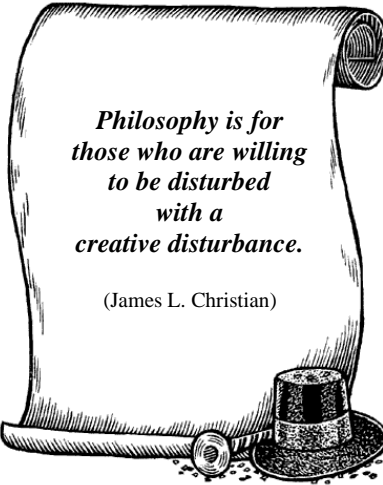
We've shown there are various ways of thinking about thinking, and listed ten of the major schools of thought, developed over the timeline of western philosophy. As specialisation becomes the professions, so as amateurs we can choose our school if we wish to do so.

The Subjects

We've examined a handful of selected topics to demonstrate how philosophy relates to the real life situation. Given the whole framework of human life, there is no aspect of life that cannot be viewed from a philosophical perspective; a quest, without conquest.

The Scholars

Rather than personal profiles, we've followed the scholars in terms of their group-perspectives on philosophical issues. Again, any preference for specialisation in pursuit of further study, could follow this structure to the reader's great profit.



***Philosophy is for
those who are willing
to be disturbed
with a
creative disturbance.***

(James L. Christian)