

VOLUME 15

THE BIBLE SERIES

A METAPHYSICAL
AND SYMBOLICAL
INTERPRETATION OF

The Bible

by

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THE BOOK OF PSALMS

Psalms 1-75

THE BOOK OF PSALMS

The book of Psalms is actually the only section of the Bible that does not arouse animosity, because in a sense, the psalms are completely "sect-less" and most people—regardless of race, color or creed—agree that they have a message for them. The word psalm itself means "praise", and for this reason they are called "songs of praise." They are found in the third division of the Old Testament known as "The Writings," and along with the Law of Moses (or Pentateuch), and the Prophets, are referred to as Scripture by the Hebrews.

I think it is interesting to realize that the Bible is primarily the Word of God addressed to man. There are sections of it in which man speaks to man, but only in the Psalms does man speak to God—in fact, this is the only part of the Bible in which we find man directing his words to God. For this reason, the psalms have psychological and symbolical meaning for us, because if we are in difficulty and turn to the psalms we find that the psalmist expresses more eloquently than we ever could, the very things that we want to give voice to.

We will find here in this unique group of religious poems that man is speaking to his God in times of trouble, in times of joy, and in times of meditation and confidence - every possible emotion is expressed in the psalms. There is also a much deeper meaning to these poems which we will explore. Any writing that can express our problems and our dilemmas as clearly as the psalms do, is a tremendous help to us. But, these poems do more than that if we have the eyes to see and the ears to hear. They speak the language of mysticism, and delineate not only the way the mystic reaches his God, but the way in which he experiences Him. These poems may be read on the physical level, the psychological level or the Spiritual level, which is the level we are interested in.

Now the same regenerative energy is always available and always at work on these different levels, for the creative force is such that it will manifest itself on any plane of consciousness. The creative energy that is encased in a little grain of sand is the same creative energy, magnified, that is used by the human being. We can direct this energy whereas the grain of sand cannot. This idea is expressed in the Hermetic axiom: "As above, so below, as within so without." If a thing is true, it must be true on every level of consciousness. Here in the book of Psalms we can find this Truth if we really want to do so.

There has been much dispute over the authorship of the psalms. It is the traditional belief that David wrote them, but while he may have written many of them, he did not write them all. The earliest versions of the Psalms are the Septuagint, the Syriac, and the Latin. The Septuagint Bible has 151 psalms while our Bible contains 150. (The 151st is the most recent discovery in the Qumran Caves. The original Psalm and its translation appeared in the New York Times a few months ago). It is a hymn to Zion. Of the 90 psalms that are attributed to David, 73 were by him, while the other 17 were probably written about him, or about an incident that occurred in his reign. The headings were added between 100 and 200 A.D., when the Old Testament was being put into its present form and a number of them have no headings whatsoever. And it is believed, though we have no definite proof, that the later psalms were added at this time.

The reason David is credited with the writing of many of the psalms even by authorities who think that a number of contributors wrote this magnificent poetry, is that this is the first record we have of hymns of worship being set to music. David, of course, was a well-known musician and poet; he was called the "Sweet Singer of Israel" and he instigated the use of music in the temple. By today's standards, the music was very simple and the instruments employed at that time were primitive cymbals, zithers, horns (the ram's horn was called the shofar), reed pipes, and so forth.

These psalms were often used in connection with the various

offices of temple worship. Incidentally, it is interesting that in this part of the Bible the ritual of the early Judaic religion is never stressed. The psalms deal primarily with man's relationship to his God, and the way he thinks about Him. This is an amazing thing, for up to now, the Old Testament has been quite bloody. Here we have a book of praise. The psalms are written from the point of view that although man must be responsible for himself, for his actions, he is still dependent upon God and when he turns to Him, he will be helped out of his trouble. This is the dominant tone of this magnificent book.

The psalmist always approaches his God in terms of his particular situation. "This is my problem, and here I stand. I know the way out is through You", is his attitude. Whatever the problem is, the psalmist discusses it with God. This is the purpose of meditation, and is exactly what we all should do. I always say that the highest form of meditation is the ability to sit down very quietly, and talk to God exactly as we would to our closest friend. As we talk we will get our answer. What does it require? All the characteristics that the psalmist had. A complete faith, patience, and a desire to hear. We all think we have a desire to hear. Sometimes (and then not always consciously) when we turn to God, we talk very quickly because we are not sure we are going to like what God is going to tell us. We rush through our meditation and then we say that we never get an answer. We don't give ourselves a chance to hear the voice of God for we are not like Samuel who said: "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth" (1 Samuel 3:10). I cannot stress too often the need for silence at the end of our meditation. We should sit perfectly still and quietly and expectantly wait for the "Voice of the Lord" to come through.

The psalmist also believed in a monotheistic God: he realized that there is only one God in the universe. He understood that there is a part of him which continued to worry, to fret, and did not completely believe in the power of God. He knew that symbolically these are the enemies of God. So in the Psalms we see the beginning of the growth of man's spiritual understanding. You remember in the time of Moses, the first

Judges and the early Kings, Yahweh was a rather fearsome character; He was ready to go into battle at the slightest provocation. This Yahweh certainly did not embody much Love; He was a God of Vengeance, and He was just as vengeful towards the enemies of the Jews as He was towards the "chosen people" themselves. But to the psalmist, God is quite different. He is One God, One Presence, One Power. He is a God of Righteousness; of Justice; of Faith and of Mercy. If this were not so, the psalmist would never have directed his prayers to Him.

The God of the book of Psalms is above all a God of Graciousness. Here we see the beginning of the aspect of God as Love; not Love only on a Cosmic level, but Love directed to the individual by his God. For example, there are a number of psalms that deal with the idea of death. At that time the Jews believed that when a man died he went to Sheol. Sheol is the Hebraic word for the Christian "hell". Actually, Sheol was not as rugged as hell, but was thought to be a place where man no longer remembered nor cared for his God. If a man was in Sheol, they believed God could not be remembered or praised by him; therefore, when a man died it could not please God, and he must have died because he was wicked. This was the belief then and yet it was the psalmist who had the courage to say in the face of all this: "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there, if I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there" (Ps. 139:7-8). Here we see the dawning of knowledge beginning to come through—the understanding of a man who sought his God.

Another thing we learn from the book of Psalms is that God is not a God of Vengeance; He is a God of Forgiveness. His Knowledge, His Love, and His Power can be had by anyone provided he walks in His path. The book of Psalms makes this very definite. We are really studying an amazing book. In the midst of trials, of upheavals, and the cultus of the Jew; and in spite of the ideas of this stiff-necked people, this concept began to come forth and really took hold, for no other book in the Bible (not even the New Testament) is as often quoted as the book of Psalms.

The psalmist believes that God hears the petitions of His servants. Of course the idea that man is a servant of God is a primitive one. We do not call ourselves servants of the Lord; we know that we are the children of God. But this particular step—the acceptance of kinship with God—had not yet been taken. However, the psalmist was developed enough to realize that this God of Righteousness, Mercy, Faith, Graciousness and Love, was the center of his life. In every psalm he stresses communion with this God; and he knew that this communion was the source of his happiness, for as he states in the 16th Psalm, "In thy presence there is fullness of joy" (Ps. 16:11). Throughout the entire book he seeks to have a close companionship with God.

The book of Psalms is the book of the soul, which explains the communion between man and his God so that all can understand it. Its doctrine does not concern itself with life in the hereafter, but with life as it is to be lived *here* and *now*; and that if we live in accordance with the Law of God we will, to use the words of the Psalmist, find His Presence, and in His Presence, fullness of joy.

In many other ways, too, this is an unusual book. It brings groups together in communal prayer. In many churches it is used as part of the liturgical service. Its words have been set to some of the world's most magnificent music, and its simplicity in telling of man's adaptability to the Law of God makes all this possible. It speaks of Everyman's problem and Everyman's God. But above all, the greatest thing about the book is that it is a source of constant inspiration. There is probably no one who has ever read the psalms who did not respond to it.

The first two psalms form a prologue to the entire book, which is arranged in such a way that the fundamental teaching of the whole book is outlined in them.

PSALM 1 is very simple and very beautiful. It does not need much explaining, for it succinctly outlines the qualities of a good man and an evil man, and is explicit regarding the future of each one.

PSALM 2 is slightly different. Some historians believe that wherever the "king", the "anointed of the king" or the "son of the lord" is mentioned it refers to the particular king who was in power when the psalm was written. The Jews, even at that period, believed that the Judaic kings were chosen by Yahweh—they were the "anointed." (This is why they do not think "the son of the anointed" refers to Jesus). However, we believe that "the anointed" refers to the Presence of God within us.

Verse 6 refers to "my holy hill of Zion". "Zion" is the metaphysical term for the soul that has made conscious contact with God. The phrase "the daughters of Zion" is often used in the Bible, and it too, means the soul that has made conscious contact with God. Zion symbolizes complete realization. The "heathen" represent the negative side of ourselves, that untrained part of the subconscious that causes turmoil when it does not have its own way. The "kings" and the "rulers" of the earth who set themselves against the Lord and His anointed (verse 2) stand for the mentality. The "kings" therefore are the rulers of the heathen. Whatever one chooses to think upon, rules one's life; and that which rules one's life is the "king" of that life. So when the "kings" choose their thoughts properly, life is brought into perfect alignment. ". . . Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee" (verse 7), is a symbol of the Presence who lives within each and every one of us; the Presence is the only begotten Son of God. "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry . . ." (verse 12), is an Old Testament phrase for the idea of anger. To "kiss the Son" is to be angry no longer, and only then can one find the real communion with the Presence within one.

PSALM 3 is a Psalm of David written when he was deserted by Absalom. You remember Absalom, his favorite son, rebelled against his father and tried to depose and kill him. This is a psalm which we would do well to remember because it is a poem for raising our spiritual consciousness. In verse 1 David faces his problem, and when this heartbroken man gets control of himself he realizes that there was only one thing to do—to turn to God. So he does, and squarely faces his problem. He then

reminds himself that God has never failed him. "I cried unto the Lord with my Voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah" (verse 4). As we read the psalms, we see the return of his faith and confidence until, at the end, we hear the triumphal shout: "Salvation belongeth unto the Lord . . ." (verse 8). The word "Selah" is interesting; it means "silence, quietness." In the term Selah we have the equivalent of that point of rest, that period of silence that enables the realization to come through.

PSALM 4. This is one to the chief musician on Neginoth—Neginoth and Nehiloth are the evening and morning services. It is the psalm of a confident man, a man who faces up to a situation and knows that with the help of his God he can conquer any difficulty; he is perfectly sure everything will be all right. The word "leasing" in verse 2 is an obsolete word for lying, deceit.

PSALM 5 is also to the Chief Musician, and is a morning song that was sung in the Temple. It is primarily a psalm of confidence. This confidence is the very thing that enables him to withstand his problems. David is surely one of the most unusual characters we shall ever meet. When he made a mistake (and he made plenty) the first thing he did was to admit it. Then he asked the forgiveness of his God, and thereafter tried not to make the same mistake again. No one can ask more than that of anyone, not even God. And He does not. David is a man who lives with God, and walks with Him. These psalms stress the simplicity of this man's belief; however, this does not mean that David was an ignorant man. On the contrary, he was very brilliant; he conceived and executed some of the greatest ideas of any king that ever ruled. But with all his brilliance he had tremendous humility. If you really want to conquer conditions in your life you must acquire some of the attitudes that David had. You must have complete confidence in your God regardless of what the situation around you may be. You must "be still." No matter what the difficulty in which we may find ourselves, we could never be in more dangerous ones than David had to face from time to time. When you are in a perilous position read these five psalms. Meditate

on them. Study the 3rd, 4th and 5th Psalms and you will certainly make your demonstration. Nothing in the outer picture can stop it.

Many of the psalms are written in the language of the mystics and delineate not only the way in which the mystic reaches his God, but in the way in which he experiences Him. They represent man's turning to God at the highest level of his consciousness, his reaching out and addressing Him from the overwhelming fullness of his heart and in a few instances the psalms indicate that God takes over and speaks to man—that he hears God's Voice.

To achieve this union with God is one of the great aspirations of all mystics. If you have had such an experience, please realize that it may not be repeated too frequently. When we reach the stage where we so continually give ourselves over to the Practice of the Presence of God that it becomes second nature, then it becomes more and more frequent, until it finally is our "natural state of mind". I do not think that many of us have reached that level yet. If the experience occurs every few years in the beginning, it is considered frequent.

Through daily meditation, the mystic at times has been able to raise his consciousness to the point where he is able to "hear" what I AM will say and, technically speaking, this is clairaudience, for what the mystic "hears" is the Voice of the Presence within himself. In the psalms, however, God does not speak as he did through Moses, or through Jesus, as both Moses and Jesus were far more developed than David.

Clairaudience—and I am not referring to psychic experiences in which discarnate entities speak—is a gift of God; it is no different than hearing a friend's voice, except that it is an inward thing. This experience begins with visions, for we are not sufficiently sensitive at the start to hear, and once the visions begin to get stronger we also receive ideas that we know with conviction are true, and then finally, at the very last stage of our development we hear, just as clearly as one hears a spoken word—though it is a completely inner experience—the Voice of the Presence of God within us. The proof of its

authenticity lies in the fact that He will not always be complimentary in what He says to us.

PSALM 6 is quite long. It is inscribed to the Chief Musician on Neginoth for the Sheminith, an eight stringed musical instrument. Sheminith also indicates very deep voices, probably baritone or basses (for chanting the psalms) and the word means "at-tone-ment", or "at-tune-ment." These words are very interesting in that they illustrate David's belief that God was responsible for his affliction, yet he never questions God's wisdom in punishing him. He knows that the Lord controls the world and everything in it, therefore he believes that God must be chastising him and though he has no idea what his transgression is he will not argue the point. He makes no plea of innocence, he does not ask for pity, nor claim righteousness. He does not even protest the severity of his punishment and his attitude towards his difficulties is completely different from that of Job's. David realizes his own shortcomings, but states that God is merciful and through this knowledge reaches the conviction that all is well with him. He repeats that no matter what his enemies do, he will be protected though he knows death is facing him. This is the old idea of Yahweh's power over man. However, he tells God not to let him die for He will then lose a loyal supporter, thus revealing what his conception of existence after death is.

PSALM 7, the "Shiggaion of David which he sang unto the Lord," indicates his efforts to control "rampant emotions", and reveals his moods. First he is positive that he is going to be saved and then he becomes afraid again, even as you and I become afraid. When we try to make a demonstration we say that we are going to keep our minds on God; that God is the only Presence and the only Power, and then suddenly we find ourselves thinking of the problem and how we can get out of it. This psalm perfectly describes our own vacillation, doesn't it?

PSALM 8. This is a hymn of praise and thanksgiving, a meditation that follows after a tremendous demonstration. There is not one line in it that does not exalt the Power and Glory of God. David must have been in a room looking out at

the night, for he mentions the moon and the stars. His prayer comes from a heart full of gratitude. As he looks upon the magnificence of the creation, he thinks of himself in relation to it. "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and has crowned him with glory and honor" he exclaims in verses 4 and 5. What he is really saying is that God has made him a little lower than God Himself. This is one of the few places in the Old Testament in which it comes close to expressing the concept that man is the Son of God, that he is a special creation of God and that he has been given dominion over His earth. It is a great responsibility and privilege that has been given us and is one that we have to accept whether we like it or not.

This tremendous hymn of praise to the Glory of God ends with the wonderful words: "Oh Lord, our Lord, how marvelous is thy name in all the earth". If you feel depressed I suggest that you meditate on this psalm.

According to *The Interpreter's Bible* the 9th and 10th Psalms were very often combined into one poem, and for this reason Psalm 10 has no heading. It also explains why the Douay Bible does not have a 10th Psalm for this is the way the Vulgate version reads. Later translators decided that it should be two Psalms.

PSALM 9 is headed to the Chief Musician upon Muth-labben, which refers to a boy's choir, and literally means the "Death of the son, the eternity of Truth". This means the dying of the old concepts and the birth of the new. It has also been claimed that it is an acrostic and that the initial letter of each verse has significance. In order to fit into the acrostic pattern, the ideas in the psalm became rather jumbled, and one must admit that it is not too well constructed.

The psalm expresses a great need for immediate help. As in almost all of the psalms the two opening verses are a declaration of thanks to God. The next two deal with turning back the enemy, while in verses 5-8 the invincibility of God is compared to the destructibility of man. This is followed by a

statement that "The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed . . ." (verse 9), and an appeal for God's favor (verse 14). In verses 15-20 reference to the judgment of the nations indicates that it may have been written during a time of civil war.

David probably never had a quiet day in his life when he was king, yet he had time to communicate with his God. He put God first, and that is something that we can all emulate. The motivating factor in his life was God. As far as we know, the only time he backslid, was in his great love affair. He probably rationalized that he could give Bathsheba a much better life than she had as the wife of Uriah. Except for his single lapse, God was first in his thoughts. In our lives, if we are not rooted in God, or as Aldous Huxley puts it, "planted in the Divine Ground", we are deceiving ourselves when we think that we are metaphysicians. Too many of us have the idea that "this time won't count", when we deviate from the Path. It does count. Not with God, but with us. And so we find that we are reduced to a rather static form of prayer. Change that. Get into a free meditation. Stop being confined to somebody else's words and recognize the fact that the words themselves are of no consequence. It is the emotions behind the words that are important. No matter what the difficulty may be, the greatest prayer that anyone can ever utter—if he *feels* it—can be expressed in the three words: "Thank you, God." If he can really feel and experience that, he need not do another thing. The day we arrive at the place where we really put God first, we will understand St. Augustine's statement: "Love God and do as you please." We cheat ourselves in our actions, thoughts, and meditations by not putting God first.

PSALM 10. Although this psalm is generally considered part of the 9th, it contains two distinctly different lines of thought. One is expressed in a song of thanksgiving and victory, and the other in a plea for God's intervention. It gives a description of a man (or a people)—we do not know which—who has been extremely oppressed, and possibly completely pagan in viewpoint. It is also possible that this psalm was written by David at a time when he himself was in difficulty, for in the early part of his life he had much of it. He loved King Saul.

He felt that he was a father to him and was willing to lay down his life for him; yet Saul turned against him and tried to kill him. On two occasions when he had Saul at his mercy, he spared the king's life. At no time did he complain about Saul's treatment of him. Though David was above this, he must have had moments of discouragement and might have written this psalm at such a time, when he felt that there was nothing in life for him. Even so, whatever his difficulties were, he always relied on God.

PSALM 11 is inscribed to the Chief Musician and is one of the most beautiful hymns of faith in the whole of the Old Testament. "In the Lord put I my trust . . .", he writes. Not in anything else. It is another example of the way David prayed when he was in difficulty or danger. He enumerates his reasons for his faith. In verse 4 he says, "The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men." He reassures himself with these words that God is so completely with him, that nothing can touch him.

PSALM 12 is dedicated to the Chief Musician for performance upon the Sheminith. It is another beautifully expressed petition for God's intervention, for David had many enemies who wanted to take his life. Holding twelve unruly tribes together was an extraordinary achievement and David's life and his throne were very often in jeopardy. He ruled a people that were almost as intractable as the ones Moses brought out of the wilderness. The Israelites were not yet united as a nation and the tribes were fighting among themselves for supremacy. Whenever David got into difficulty, he prayed, and so strong was his faith upon which his actions were based, that by the time he died he had, after a reign of 45 years, managed to forge Israel into a strongly knit nation.

PSALM 13. In the third verse, ". . . lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death," there is again the suggestion that man will be of no use to God if he is dead, for if he goes to Sheol, he will have no consciousness there, and will not be able to worship Him. This poem is an example of the format that the psalms very often follow. First there is the complaint

itself, a statement of what is wrong; then there is the appeal for aid; and then the expression of complete confidence in God's help. In verse 4, "Lest my enemy say, I have prevailed against him; and those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved," David is gently nudging God and saying: "Don't delay, they are going to say you are powerless." It is a very typical concept of that time of how to approach God. At the end of the psalm, the verse, "I will sing unto the Lord because he hath dealt bountifully with me," expresses what is technically known as the "logic of faith."

PSALM 14. This is a duplicate of Psalm 53—though there is a slight change in the wording of one of the verses. It was probably written at a time when there was much trouble in the land.

Bible symbolism is again apparent in the last verse, "Oh, that the salvation of Israel will come out of Zion". Zion is always the Bible symbol for the soul that has conscious contact with God. David is here pleading for the return of everyone in the nation to the ways of their fathers so that they may find within themselves a communion with their God.

PSALM 15. In this beautiful psalm the virtues of the godly man are extolled. It is an exercise in discipline. There are a number of psalms that have been written to instruct the people. Very often they came to the rabbis or the king to ask certain questions of a more or less ethical nature, and they were then supposedly answered by the oracle, for they still believed in such things. (You may recall the Urim and Thummin in the books of Kings and Samuel). When this type of advice was given, it was always conducted in the form of questions and answers, the individual putting the questions and the Priests giving the answers. In this psalm, we are told very clearly what we must do to live the life that will please God. The word "sojourn", used here is a rather interesting one. It is a synonym of the word "dwell" which is often used in place of it. In Bible terminology, the person who "sojourns" is a person who belongs to no particular state, a *stranger* without property, who is living in a certain locality and is accepted

as being part of it. In the same way, man is completely dependent on God's goodness, not necessarily because he has earned it or has any portion or stake in it—he still has not awakened to the concept that he is a child of God—but because there is a great Infinite Mind who has created all people, and if man obeys His laws, he may sojourn with Him. This is, of course, a completely different idea from what we find in the New Testament. In David's time the evolution of man had not reached the stage where the Father-Son idea could be understood or accepted.

PSALM 16. In this psalm there is a line with which we are all familiar, “. . . in thy Presence is fullness of joy” (verse 11). It is headed by “Michtam of David,” which means “writing,” and “a golden psalm” as well as “uplifting thought.” Here, of course, David speaks with a full and happy heart. He knows that God is with him. The poem is not quite as ecstatic as the 8th Psalm, but it is in the same vein. David believes wholeheartedly that God is with him and that in the Presence of God there is fullness of joy. The word “cup” is the Old Testament symbol for destiny, or fate. In “The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup” (verse 5), the word “portion” is used in the idiomatic sense, for man gets his portion or inheritance from his father. He knows that God has given him a portion, that it is his destiny to find his God and to live in accordance with His laws. In “the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places . . .” (verse 6) we see again the kind of life that was led in those times, for when they measured farmland they used long pieces of rope which they called lines. So this, his inheritance, his spiritual portion is a pleasant place. The “reins” are indicative of the heart, or the direction of the heart. The “night's season” is used throughout the Bible and refers to the communion that takes place between man and his God most often at night. One of the most marvelous and effective times to have your meditation is about fifteen or twenty minutes before the dawn breaks. It is almost magical in its affect. There is a tremendous stillness, the strength of a new day coming and you can utilize that strength in your meditations. But there are few that want to get up at that hour.

The *17th PSALM* is a dramatic plea by a man to God, for deliverance from enemies who have brought false charges against him.

The *18th PSALM* is one of the most beautiful in the book (a version of which appears in II Samuel 22:2-51). It was written after David had vanquished all his enemies, and had united Israel for the first time. This psalm is tremendously helpful in raising the consciousness. In verses 20-24, the formula for a demonstration is given. "The Lord awarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me. For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God. For all his judgments were before me, and I did not put away his statutes from me. I was also upright before Him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity; therefore hath the Lord recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his eyesight". It is a passage well worth studying, and if we wish to demonstrate over our problems we must live up to it.

Now, none of us is given to committing violent deeds on the physical plane, but do we live according to the Law on *every* level of our being? Do we merely admire the Law or listen to lectures and sermons on the benefits that await those who use it, or do we practice our beliefs from the moment we wake up in the morning until we go to bed at night? In Proverbs 3:6 it is written: "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct thy paths." In *all* thy ways. This text does not leave room for the supposition, on the one hand, that God *might* possibly direct our lives, or that our problem probably will have to run its course. If God is the Doer, then his promises must be fulfilled, and they will be fulfilled NOW, but we must let them manifest through us. Whether it is a matter of employment, financial need or health, let us not quibble about the matter, or pay intellectual tribute to the Truth. Let us demonstrate it.

A beautifully enlightening text is found in verse 28 of this psalm: "For thou wilt light my candle; The Lord my God will enlighten my darkness". It is meant for any of us who are seeking guidance, when, having done all, our demonstration

still does not come through. There are psychological reasons behind the failure to overcome a problem within a reasonable length of time, and if it happens, the best thing to do is to meditate on this text. Light is always the symbol of rapport between God and man as well as illumination on any situation. The moment we begin to reflect on this, we realize that there is a greater Intelligence in the world than ours, that no human being can possibly compete with the intelligence of Divine Mind. When we allow the Divine Intelligence to come through, we will begin to express originality, for this quality has its root in God. He is the great Originating Cause.

In the *19th PSALM*, the first 6 verses make up a hymn of praise. It shows the relationship of the ancient Judaic teaching to that of the Egyptian, for the worship of the sun as a creative power was widespread in Egypt then, and though the sun is not specifically called God in this psalm, it does symbolize the Supreme Being. What is more, if you were to compare it to the Egyptian hymns to the Sun-God, you would discover a striking resemblance.

The last 7 verses were added later and these constitute a hymn of praise and thanksgiving that clearly defines the Law. This psalm tells us that the Law is without flaw, it is completely perfect in its working, perfect in its coordination of all factors, sure and dependable. We are told that it will not deviate from its course of action, that once we have decreed a thing, it will be established unto us by the action of the Law. The only thing that must change is our own beliefs. When we understand the dependability of the Law we begin to have respect for it—respect is the real meaning of the Old Testament use of the word “fear”—and try to live in harmony with it, for we never abuse what we respect. We respect the Law because we know that rightly used it can never bring harm—it can only bring good. When we make a demonstration, no matter how tremendous it is, if it is a real demonstration it will never bring misfortune to another. Not only will we receive our good, everyone else connected with it will also benefit from it.

In the first section of *PSALM 20* (verses 1-5) the congregation addresses a king who has been victorious in many trials and tribulations. This is followed by an expression of faith in God's continued help. The psalms are always set against backgrounds of actual historical events, with a specific experience in mind. This to my mind, makes them such practical instruments of meditation.

There is however, another interpretation which takes it out of the literal meaning. The "king" represents the intellect, the mentality. He is in the temple in full possession of his physical and mental faculties and knows that God works through him and guides him. If read in this light, it is a hymn of spiritual growth and understanding.

Today we know that we have no right to be resentful, or to enjoy seeing those whom we think have hurt us receive their "fair desserts," so we say that the Law of Karma will take care of them. We really have not changed too much, we have merely refined our methods.

PSALM 21 is a hymn of praise in the face of difficulty. "King" in the Bible refers to the mentality. This psalm indicates that David's mind was sufficiently attuned to the Presence within to realize that God was the source of all good in his life, that God supported him in all his difficulties, and that it was through the Power of God that he overcame them. David is speaking of his own mind, for when the word "king" is used in the Psalms it refers to the mind that is disciplined. "Prince" is the mind that is still trying to gain discipline.

PSALM 22. Many people believe that the 22nd Psalm was a prescient account of what was to happen nearly a millenium later, since it paints a picture of Jesus that is second only to the one given in Isaiah 53. It is the lament of an individual who is deeply distraught, whose only hope for help lies in God. He admits his terror and gives a vivid description of it. He begins, as you or I might have begun under such circumstances, with the cry: "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Then, when he manages to gain a measure of control, he gives thought to what he knows about God and ends his meditation on a note of power, confidence, and praise. He

affirms that his deliverance comes from God and that, though it has not yet manifested, nothing can hold it back. The animals represent negative thoughts; dogs refer to well-meaning friends who often do harm when they intend good; bulls are symbols of physical strength. The fact that lots are cast for the garments indicates that it was loomed in one piece and is of exquisite quality. It also shows that Jesus was not considered a poverty-stricken man, for only the well-to-do wore seamless robes.

This psalm portrays an actual, physical experience that every man must face sooner or later. As I have mentioned before, when we reach the level of complete mental and emotional integration there are five experiences of the soul known as the great Initiations, one of which is the Crucifixion. Now and again we experience, on a lesser scale, situations which are like the experiences of the Initiations although not as intense emotionally; also, these are always involved with personal problems, whereas the Initiations are concerned with the final development of man. For example, if this were David's plea on the death of his son by Bathsheba—and certainly it was a moment of great torment, a form of crucifixion—how can we compare David's capacity for feeling with that of Jesus at the time of the Crucifixion? The answer is that as we develop a deepening sensitivity, the greater our sensitivity becomes, the greater depth of feeling we develop. Though David was a sensitive person, he could not compare to Jesus, or Moses in spiritual evolution. Moses was, of course, far more advanced than David was and had that complete inner poise that rarely permitted his inmost emotions to show. This is a true sign of the real Initiate.

The 23rd is probably the most beautiful, most beloved of all the psalms. Most of us have been raised on it, with the result that we are inclined to take it for granted. Because it is so familiar to us, we do not get quite as much out of it as we should. We could never exhaust this psalm in our search for peace, understanding, and spiritual growth, for its six short verses touch on every conceivable human need. It is close in stature to the Lord's prayer and a comparison will show that there is quite a similarity between the two. When you are

troubled, or have a problem that you cannot seem to overcome, meditate quietly on the 23rd Psalm. Think about it. Who is the Lord? It is the Presence of God in you, I AM. Do you believe this? Are you sure? Question yourself. Recall that the Presence of God within you has a vital interest in you; that your welfare is dear to the heart of Being. Take the psalm text by text, and analyze it. All problems are but shadows cast by your own wrong thinking, for evil has no substance of its own. The only reality it can ever have is our belief in it. The moment we withdraw that belief, the evil must disintegrate. Consider this when you have a problem. Is your faith in the omnipotence of the problem or in the Omnipotence of God? I do not care what your problem is, if you can really tune in with the truth in this psalm, you will have the most magnificent demonstration you have ever known.

PSALM 24 is a song of praise that comes from a heart full of gratitude, a heart that has found a tremendous answer to prayer. There are certain phrases in the psalm that indicates that it is also the hymn of a man who has had spiritual experience. The term "spiritual experience" can be confusing at times. If you have progressed to the level where you have peace of mind, are glad to be alive, or you are very grateful to some person or to God, that is a spiritual experience. There is however, a greater experience than this and when it—this Spiritual Experience which I capitalize to distinguish it from the lesser experience—has been achieved, it means that personal contact with God has been made, and can never be lost again.

There is also a peculiar symbolism that all the mystics use—one that all mystics recognize. It is a language that they have acquired not through study or reading but through Spiritual Experience. The phrase in the psalm, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in," expresses one of the great experiences of the mystic. It is a sudden feeling of walls disappearing, of doors being opened. Sometimes it takes the form of a vision, at other times the feeling that one is entering into a larger room, a greater space in the Cosmos. You

will frequently find a certain type of phraseology in the psalms which indicates that it is a psalm of Spiritual Experience.

The *25th PSALM* was written by a man who has seen Truth in action, who has experienced God's tender mercies and loving care. He has known what it means to be a part of God and to be in step with Him. Then he falls away, but when he realizes his error he uses the words of this psalm to raise the level of his consciousness to the point where there is no fear, where he is one with the Presence within, and he then manifests Truth.

The *26th PSALM* is the prayer of a person who has been trying to make a demonstration for a long time and has been unable to do so. Finally it dawns on him that a review of his beliefs and actions may give him a clue to what has been overlooked in his efforts to demonstrate. We can all be very blind to our own shortcomings. At the same time, it is also true that the more knowledge we acquire on the Path, the more subtle are the errors we commit. This can be our undoing, for this may sometimes be the reason why we do not progress more speedily. We do not see clearly where our error lies.

The *27th PSALM*, according to our beliefs, has a much deeper meaning than is given to it by the orthodox religions. The very first line: "The Lord is my light and my salvation," expresses the significance of the psalm. As far back as the beginning of religious instruction light has always been the symbol of Divine Intelligence. The reason for this is quite interesting. One of the first things that happens when a human being makes a conscious contact with his God is that he has a vision. That vision is always a steady beam of pure light, white or pale golden yellow, shining on him. It usually occurs when he is alone, or in a room in perfect darkness. This experience is one of the first indications that the mystic has made conscious contact with God. We know from this that David actually did have the experience of union with the Presence within. And having had this contact, he is then able to say "Whom shall I fear?" This is a statement of absolute truth after you have had the experience. Although you may still have problems you will never again fear.

PSALM 28 opens with the words: "Unto thee will I cry, O Lord my rock . . ." and *The Interpreter's Bible* states that the word "rock" appears 33 times in the Old Testament. The word indicates that which is immovable, a strong foundation, and for this reason it is so often used to symbolize God. In the New Testament, however, the word takes on a new meaning: that of faith. If your faith is as firm as a rock, no harm can befall you.

In this psalm the psalmist is in difficulty and in spite of previous experience does not quite see how he will be able to get out of it. However, he does express confidence in God's help. The constant fluctuation of David's moods is one of the reasons that his authorship of some of the psalms is questioned by certain authorities. Now we all know that it is quite possible to fluctuate in our spiritual lives. One day we may feel that we are on top of the world and then, seemingly for no reason at all, nothing seems quite right to us. David certainly is no different from us in this respect. The important thing is that he is a mystic and that he did have contact with the Presence within—that he performed some of the most remarkable feats recorded in the Old Testament, even though he was one of the most human of persons. I think that it is because he is such a human person that we love him so much. He reacts to life in the same way that we do, in spite of the fact that he lived in a different time and period; he loses his temper and is a little bit pleased when his enemies are punished. Even so, he does reach the great spiritual heights more often than anyone else in the Old Testament with the exception of Moses and Isaiah.

The 29th PSALM, according to *The Interpreter's Bible*, is a celebration of God's glory in a thunderstorm. Actually, it is a psalm of initiation. Again we get our clues from the terms that are used. "The waters" always symbolize the soul, the subconscious, the emotional nature; therefore, "the voice of the Lord is upon the waters . . ." (verse 3), means that the Presence of God is within every human being and finally begins to manifest through the subconscious mind when the individual himself seeks it, and not until then. Lebanon means "white," "clean, pure thoughts"; Kadesh represents "perfection, the ideal state, the peak,

bright light"; Sirion means "coat of mail, covered with armor," and symbolizes the protection of God. If you read this psalm with these interpretations in mind, I think you will be able to see that David is not describing God in a thunder storm, but the tremendous experience that takes place in the heart of a human being when he suddenly realizes that he and God are One.

The 30th PSALM is a song of thanksgiving and praise for a demonstration made. However, it is not until he realizes that he has let spiritual pride take hold of him that he is able to find his way back to God and make his demonstration.

In the 31st PSALM we find a pattern that is followed in most of the longer psalms; there is a statement of faith, a cry for help; an affirmation of faith; a plea for understanding; again a statement of faith; an assertion that the psalmist has done no wrong, and then once more, a statement of faith.

PSALM 32 is a psalm of wisdom. Maschil in the Hebrew means "spirituality", "inspiration", "wisdom", "guidance." *The Interpreter's Bible* states that this psalm gives us the fruits of penitence. They also question the use of the word "blessed" in the first text and think that the word "happy" should have been substituted, for they believe that a man cannot be blessed if he has sinned, but only after he has overcome his transgressions, and sins no more. I find this idea rather strange for the root meaning of the word "blessed" means "to heal, to make whole", so that the first verse might read: "Whole is the man whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sin is covered". This gives the verse a completely different meaning, does it not?

It is also a psalm of meditation. In verse 8 there is a sudden change-over from the third person to the first: "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye." *The Interpreter's Bible* interprets this as David telling his people that he will instruct them. That may be so, but I am much more inclined to believe that it reflects a moment in prayer, in joyous prayer, in which God in him has taken over. As it is in the first person, I believe that in these two verses the voice of God is speaking to the psalmist. Every prayer we make is of course God speak-

ing through us; but it only happens occasionally that we suddenly find that we are listening while the prayer is being continued within us by the Presence.

The 33rd PSALM is a restatement of the fact that by His Word God has created the heavens and the earth and that without God, nothing exists. If we really grasped the meaning of this it would be utterly easy to change any condition in our lives in the twinkling of an eye. In metaphysics a great deal is said about understanding. It is a very necessary element in spiritual growth and I am a firm believer that the greater the capacity of your mind, the greater your powers of development must be. However, the power of the mind is merely the instrument through which we work, it is not the source of faith or spiritual unfoldment. Now, everybody has faith, but unfortunately more often than not it is a negative faith. We all believe in something. Either we believe in God or we believe in fear. Either we believe that God is with us, and that God is perfect fulfillment, or we believe in the power of the outside world from which we have to protect ourselves.

How then do you turn negative faith into positive faith? By building up your faith through your actions. There is a saying: "Act as if I were and you shall know I am." When you face a problem that fills you with fear, force yourself to "act as if" you were not fearful. If the charge of fear is very strong, repeat a statement such as "Be still and know that I am God" (Ps. 46:10) or "God is with me," until the fear is stilled, and you will then make your demonstration.

Most people, unfortunately, are afraid to take this step. If you are, take a verse from the New Testament, such as: "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief", meditate on it and refuse to dwell on the appearances in the outer picture. Remember who you are, and though your heart seems to have turned to water, keep reminding yourself of your divinity, your sonship. If you stand firm, you will suddenly discover that you are free, that you have no problems. When you change your consciousness the outer picture *must* change.

Instantaneous healing is a perfect example of the overcoming of a problem by changing fear to faith. It may take a person years of treatment to heal an arthritic condition, yet if he has cancer and only a short time to live, he has great prospects for an instantaneous healing. I have witnessed a number of such healings and have found, in analyzing the reasons for this, that the person healed had reached such a peak of terror that in treating his feeling of utter despair and fear he was able to convert enough faith through his desire to live and be well to overcome his problem. On the other hand, the person with a chronic disease has become so attached to his problem subconsciously, that it takes him a long time to dislodge it. He does not fear it enough and he has learned to live with his discomfort.

When one of my students seemed to make no progress in overcoming a physical ailment recently, I examined her method of treatment and found that it consisted primarily of a long list of things she wanted. I suggested that she stop treatment and instead meditate for half an hour morning and evening on the word "peace." She was not, of course, just to repeat the word but to think of synonyms for it: Calm, serenity, quiet, etc. and to reflect on what they meant.

The 33rd Psalm stresses the fact that there is nothing but God in the universe, that without God we are nothing, that all good comes from Him, and unless we realize this, we are cheating ourselves. I also suggested that she form a picture of the word on which she was meditating—for example, the word peace might suggest a mountain with sunlight and snow on it—that she look at it, try to feel the peace that it suggested within her, dwell on it, and then go on to another word and do the same thing. Do not for a moment think that making a word picture is a childish pastime. It is not. It is very deep therapy. The moment you take a word and associate a particular scene with it, one that you love, and that appeals to you, you are stimulating the deep recesses of the subconscious mind and are clearing out negative channels. At the same time you are also developing your powers of concentration. You will find that

you are clearing out a great deal of debris in the subconscious this way. I thoroughly recommend this method of treatment to anyone who has a problem that does not seem to be clearing up.

Though my student still felt she should take a list of her problems into the meditation, she had two instantaneous demonstrations when she followed my instructions. This happened because she had built up her faith and strengthened her understanding of the meaning of peace.

Isaiah states: "And it shall come to pass that before they call I will answer; and while they are yet speaking I will hear" (65:24). Do you really think that our Heavenly Father does not know what our needs are? When we bring our problems with us into our meditations we are actually reminding ourselves of them and building them more deeply into our own subconscious. It is when we "let go, and let God" that we have an instantaneous healing. Too often, unfortunately, this only happens when the pressure of fear becomes so unbearable that it bursts the bonds that hold us to the problem.

PSALM 34 is a psalm of wisdom. It was written to instruct the people in the temple, but it has a message for all of us, for it assures us that when the righteous call upon God He will answer them and will deliver them from their fears and difficulties.

In *PSALM 35* the psalmist appeals to God to punish his enemies, for here he does not accept responsibility for his own misfortunes. Although he has reached a level of spiritual growth where he no longer wants personal vengeance, he does expect the Law to punish his enemies for him, and even relishes the idea of their torment.

PSALM 36. Now when you reach a very high state of consciousness in your meditation, you too speak with God. If you will therefore conduct your meditation along the lines that the Psalmist uses in, for example, the 23rd Psalm you will find that it brings you to a much closer relationship with God than you ever dreamed possible. The idea that meditation is something awe-inspiring and formal is quite prevalent in metaphysics. But formality with God is a barrier to contact with Him and

for this reason when I instruct new students in the technique of meditation, I always use terms that are extremely personal in addressing God. However, each person must find his own way of approaching God. If you find that you no longer need the aid of the psalms or any other spiritual reading as the basis for meditation but just want to "talk" informally to Him, to the Presence within you, it is a sure indication of spirit growth. Then, after you have done this, sit quietly in silence, and you will be amazed at the results. However, the need to do this *must* come from within; you cannot force it, for this desire to talk with God is the result of a growth in consciousness. The free and intimate outpouring of a person's innermost thoughts, typical of many of the psalms, is indicative of this inner development.

PSALM 37 once more describes the way of the wicked and what is in store for them, and at the same time confidently stresses that God will reward those who have seen the errors of their ways. It is, according to *The Interpreter's Bible*, considered to be the "wise counsel of an aged man." In metaphysical language it might be called a karmic psalm for it stresses the Law of Cause and Effect: misfortunes will befall the wicked, and the righteous will be exalted.

The 4th verse: "Delight thyself also in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart", expresses in Biblical terms the modern metaphysical concept: "Having the Giver we have all gifts". The psalm is the essence of simplicity and its lovely lines are filled with sound advice for harmonious living on every plane of being from the physical to the spiritual. It deals with the emotional attitudes and stresses the great karmic truth that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7). The 11th verse: "But the meek shall inherit the earth and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace" (abundant prosperity, RSV) foreshadows one of the beatitudes of Jesus, who said: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5). If ever you have doubts as to what your course of action should be, read this psalm for it covers almost every one of life's contingencies.

The 38th *PSALM* is one of the rare psalms of limitation.

It gives one of the very few instances in which David reached the depths of despondency. There is reason to believe that it was written after the death of his child by Bathsheba. The recognition of the gravity of his sin fills him with guilt and he calls upon God to help him.

The 39th PSALM has great meaning for the mystic, who very frequently speaks of the "dark night of the soul." This is probably the most disturbing of all the experiences that a person can undergo after he has found conscious contact with God. Having found and tasted this union with God, the initiate suddenly becomes aware of a great void. There is no contact—no matter how much he seeks it. It is as if he is walking in blindness, in darkness. For the person who has undergone it, there is nothing more terrible in all of life's experiences. Physical pain—even being nailed to the Cross—is as nothing compared to this indescribable nothingness. It is one of the experiences in the growth of the soul.

The fact that it is a meditation is established by the word "Selah" (after the 5th and 11th verses), for the term means "to be silent," "to rest in silence." The purpose of this psalm is to restore the mystic's conscious contact with God. It is one of the most beautiful of all the psalms in the Bible and one of its most powerful meditations.

The whole purpose of the study of metaphysics is to change our state of consciousness and one of the best ways of doing so is through these psalms; by thinking about them and meditating upon them until the subconscious mind begins to absorb the ideas expressed in them.

There is a deep esoteric reason behind this. When we meditate on a psalm we are alone with ourselves; we do not have to consider the reactions of other people; we can take a text such as: "I will declare mine iniquity, I will be sorry for my sin" (38:18), and face squarely up to our transgressions.

There is no need for a public confession, it is something entirely between ourselves and God. There is not one of us who has not made foolish mistakes or given in to negative emotions, and that is what we have to face up to. The human

mind, of course, has a strong tendency to look for alibis and other excuses and to plead ignorance. When you succumb to this temptation, remember the saying: "Ignorance of the law excuses no man." Even though your mistake may be a genuine case of ignorance, it is still subject to the Law of Karma.

The 40th PSALM is by a man who is not without trouble, yet in spite of this, his faith in God remains unshaken. One of the things many persons ask when they first become interested in metaphysics is whether it does not lead us away from reality. The answer is no. We do not say that evil does not exist in the outer picture, for it does. We say that evil has no reality, except for our belief in it. When we withdraw our belief, evil fades away. Even science tells us that change is one of the laws of the physical universe, and by this same Law of Change we can overcome our difficulties. We do this by changing our beliefs about our problems; by reminding ourselves who we are, speaking the Word for the demonstration, and then our difficulties begin to melt away.

In PSALM 41 David starts with an expression of thanksgiving for a recovery from a grave illness. He also recognizes that he is surrounded by enemies. In those days enemies were prevalent, for the emotions were close to the surface, and mankind had not progressed very far from the concept of "an eye for an eye." However, in many ways we are not very much more civilized than the people of the Bible and our self-control at times is only a thin veneer, but we have progressed a little. In metaphysics we recognize that our enemies are really "those of our own household"—our own thoughts and feelings. When we have allowed them to run rampant and problems have appeared in our lives because of this, meditating on this psalm will clear them up.

I recommend the 42nd PSALM, one of the most inspiring psalms in the Bible, to any one who is low in spirits. It is addressed to the Chief Musician Maschil, for the sons of Korah. Maschil means "wisdom, inspiration, guidance"; Korah, "crystal clear, cold, devoid of love, unproductive". The River Jordan, also referred to, symbolizes the stream of thought that flows

downward through the subconscious and is known as the River of Judgment; it is a symbol that goes back to antiquity. When you cross the Jordan you move from one side to the other in Judgment. Since a mountain represents a raised consciousness, Hermon, the sacred mountain, means "lofty, majestic, white," a sublime state of mind. Mizar symbolizes "smallness, insignificance, being despised."

The 43rd PSALM is considered part of the previous one, and its last verse (5) repeats almost verbatim the final verse of Psalm 42, which gives credence to this theory.

PSALM 44 was originally written for the Hebrew congregation as a prayer for deliverance in times of stress and oppression. Later it became a hymn of remembrance.

Though the psalm was used by a group it also has meaning for the individual. It develops into a meditation that is as beautiful as it is powerful. One thought follows logically upon the other and is not indicative of coming from a mind that is paralyzed with fear. It is well thought out and as the points of reasoning are presented they are not so much addressed to God as to the self, a reminder that God has helped before and will help again, the He always does.

PSALM 45 is a song of Love. According to *The Interpreter's Bible* it is a Psalm written for the celebration of a royal wedding that was sung at the marriage of a prince and princess. It is actually the description of a mystical experience. God is the King, the Presence; the princess is the soul—your soul and mine—and she is brought into the house of the King where she lives for evermore in peace and harmony. If you will read it in the light of this interpretation you will find that it makes much more sense than it does as a description of a royal wedding procession.

The 46th PSALM is, of course, one of the most magnificent meditations in the entire book of Psalms. If you are faced with a problem and feel depressed, sit down quietly and meditate on it. Think about it, for if you really understand and absorb its meaning you will find that you have attained a higher understanding and growth, to say nothing of a heightened ability to change conditions.

The psalm starts out with a very definite statement that, no matter what the outer picture, God is always with us; God is our place of refuge; He is our strength, particularly in a time of trouble. To undo the past, to overcome the present and to make the future what we want it to be we must find our way back to Him, for our troubles stem from the fact that we have forgotten Him. We do this by a meditation in the manner of this psalm, that is, through deductive reasoning: If God is All in All, if He is the only Presence and the only Power then we shall have no fear: no matter what the outer circumstances, within us there is peace, there is faith.

In Bible symbolism, water represents the feelings, therefore we note that in the third verse: "Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah" is descriptive of our emotions at a time when we are in a state of fear. Everything around us seems to shake. At such times we find that our fear becomes so great that it seems impossible for us to control our thoughts. The psalmist tells us that if we will remind ourselves who we are, our emotions will quiet down. He describes this inner calm as ". . . a river the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High," for the river, of course, represents the quieted emotions, the controlled emotions. The City of God—very often called the "City of Zion," "the Mountain of Zion"—the holy place, represents the state of the soul which lives in conscious contact with God. When the emotions are under control our soul's contact with God becomes a reality. Then "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her and that right early" (verse 5).

To achieve this state of consciousness we do not have to do very much really; we have to exercise self control by telling ourselves that the outer conditions have no power over us, even though "the heathen raged," and to keep our minds steadily on that thought. They are, of course, not the heathen that missionaries go to great lengths to convert. They are our own negative thoughts and desires, our indifference to giving up

the old ways, or what we sometimes call "the subconscious on a rampage," when it refuses to accept a new thought pattern. But when "he uttered his voice, the earth melted" (verse 6) the power of God within us dissolved the resistance, for "The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah." We have now entered the silence, the higher state of consciousness. We can expect to "behold the works of the Lord," for "He maketh the wars to cease unto the end of the earth;" (verse 8), and we are assured that our demonstration will be made.

Then follows one of the most beautiful texts of the Bible: "Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth." Who is responsible for the demonstrations? I AM, the Presence who lives within you and me and every other living human being, it is He who overcomes the negative thoughts (the heathen) and conditions (the earth). The Lord of Power (the Lord of Hosts) has done it. No matter what your problem may be, if you will meditate on this psalm for a week you will find that you not only no longer have it, but that you have also cleared up other negative situations. It is the shortcut to salvation.

The 47th PSALM is also a psalm of praise, in which God is King of all creation. The Hebrews used it when the celebrated Rosh Hashonah—New Year's Day—in the temple, where they worshipped Yahweh as the God of Power. They also believed Him to be the God of Wrath, the God of Love and of Fire. This was the day of His enthronement and the psalm exhorts the people to behold the glory of Yahweh.

According to *The Interpreter's Bible*, the 48th PSALM is a pilgrim's song to Zion. However, when we remember that "Zion" represents the soul that has made contact with God we see that this is a hymn to the individual who has achieved that union with Him. Tarshish means "hard, severe, broken, intellectual" and as the east wind symbolizes the spirit, verse 7 expresses the idea that the action of God is breaking through the rigidity of our emotions and thoughts, and thus helping us to straighten out our lives.

PSALM 49 is a wisdom psalm that stresses man's vanity, for as it says in Corinthians: "The wisdom of the world is foolishness with God" (I Cor. 3:19). With a touch of arrogance the psalmist points out the weakness of the human thoughts and desires. The psalm has nothing esoteric about it, nevertheless, it is a good psalm for us to study when our egos get just a little bit out of hand.

The *50th PSALM* is of a slightly different nature. It is called the psalm of Asaph which means "collecting," "a gathering together," therefore it is a psalm of concentration. It is one of the few psalms that says (though this idea had been put forth in Deuteronomy) that God is not interested in burnt offerings and sacrifices, only in the observance of his commandments. It is one of the clearest and earliest descriptions in the Bible that God is interested in what is in a person's heart and soul, rather than sacrifices to Him. The psalmist is, of course, expressing only his own beliefs for what he is saying is completely contrary to the teaching of the temple at that time.

The first line in *PSALM 51*, verse 5: "Behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" was not originally part of the psalm, but was added later by the early church fathers who believed that man was conceived in sin. Emmet Fox's comment on this was always: "What a horribly disrespectful way to speak of your parents!"

Texts 16 and 17 refer to an era when sacrifices were the order of the day. David, though a man of that time, shows in these verses, however, that he has evolved to the level of spiritual growth at which he realized that sacrifices in the outer meant nothing whatever to God. The sacrifices of animals—an outward action—is of course the easiest and most ineffective way of trying to reach God. The hardest way lies in sacrificing something of ourselves on the emotional level. When we really want to contact God, or reach the point of really becoming an integrated individual (which is another way of saying the same thing) we know that the only way we can attain that union is by sacrificing our negative emotions; our selfishness, doubts, resentments, envy, fears, criticism, impatience and procrastina-

tion, and the most important sacrifice of all, our lack of faith in God.

If you really want to sacrifice to God, start with your doubts. Refuse to give power to outer conditions; give power to your inner world only. You will find it the most difficult sacrifice that you can make. It is the easiest thing in the world to give time and money and effort; they are as nothing compared to "walking by faith"—to use a New Testament phrase (II Cor. 5:7). This is the true sacrifice.

The *52nd PSALM* was written during the period that Saul had cornered David in the house of Abimelech. David is in a dangerous position, but he offers his thanks to God for His mercy, and confidently awaits a miracle. I am often asked if I believe in miracles, and my answer is that I do, though I do not call them that. I apply the word "miracle" to the fact that we have the intelligence to understand the Law and to apply it properly; the results take on the appearance of a miracle. I have seen amazing things happen and I believe that nothing is impossible with God.

In *PSALM 53* David is sadly cynical about the lack of faith in the congregation, and points out the ways of the ungodly. Students sometimes ask me why people who care nothing about things metaphysical, who think only of themselves and often lead a "bad" life, are nevertheless extremely successful and attain everything they want in life. The answer is that "life is long and time is fleeting" and that we have spent many lifetimes on this earth and that people are not all at the same stage of evolution. You might say the person who, in spite of his dishonesty and rapaciousness, seems to prosper, is reaping good dividends earned in previous lives. If he does not reinvest the good, the dividends will run out and he will in time reap the results of his present actions, if not in this life, then in another incarnation. On the other hand, it does happen that we may suddenly find ourselves face to face with all our problems at the same time. When this happens, it means that when we start to clear out our subconscious, we begin to activate the negative things within ourselves and they all come

to a head at the same time, so that we have the problem of getting rid of them in one fell swoop rather than facing them one by one, which can take several lifetimes. It is to this that David is referring.

In *PSALM 54* David does not personally want to get even with his oppressors, but asks God to do it for him. Although he complains about his enemies, he always returns to the concept that God is all, that God is ever his help in trouble, or to put it in metaphysical language, that God is the only Presence and the only Power. It is because of his faith in God that he seems to have led a successful and charmed life and managed to stay on the throne for over 45 years in spite of perilous times and many enemies.

PSALM 55 does not contain any metaphysical lesson. It is the plea of a man who has been terribly hurt by the betrayal of a friend.

The *56th PSALM* is a beautifully simple prayer for help at a time when David is nearly overcome by fear.

The *57th PSALM* again portrays David in a perilous situation but this time the psalmist is not as filled with fear as he was in the previous one. The lions to which he refers are a symbol of courage and indicate that he has overcome his fear, that he is riding high and that no evil can touch him. If you feel depressed, or in a quandry; when you are in a rut and find life rather boring, take this Psalm and meditate on it, and you will find it a good way of tuning up your consciousness.

The *58th PSALM*, was evidently written shortly after David ascended the throne, and the weight of government lay heavily on his shoulders. He was young and idealistic, and it was a great shock to him to discover that the judges who presided over the small communities of his realm were corrupt. In his distress he turns to God and asks for guidance and help and for the restoration of peace, for with the exception of Moses, there was no other figure in the Old Testament who was so constant in the practice of the Presence of God as David.

The Interpreter's Bible has titled the *59th PSALM* "A Prayer in Time of Stress." It follows a pattern found in many

of them, in which the psalmist when he is in dire difficulty reminds God that he is in need of protection. In this psalm it is quite obvious that the enemy is capable of killing, that it is a matter of kill or be killed.

It is true, that the Psalmist could not be killed unless his karma permitted it, for death would then cut off his only avenue of growth at that particular stage of his development. This planet is the only one on which we gain experience and consequently grow. We arrive on the other plane with a memory of everything that we have said, done, and thought in this and in former lives. If we wish, we have the opportunity to grow in knowledge and understanding on that plane, but cannot change our karmic pattern there. That can only be done in the physical body. A person is killed only because his karma requires it, no matter what the cause of his death in the outer picture. But the killer contracts a karmic debt which must be paid, if not in this life, then in another incarnation.

PSALM 60 was used at the time Joab was Commander-in-Chief of David's army. He had suffered reverses, and it looked as if defeat was imminent and that the fairly new nation of Israel was about to be wiped out. David was not only a man of action, he was also a man of prayer and when he was in trouble he went directly to the source of strength, so that when Joab, a fine soldier, was in danger of defeat David immediately sought God and the moment he made contact with Him, the tide turned.

In *PSALM 61* David is still involved in a national calamity—he affirms that God is the only Presence and the only Power and once he has a realization of that Truth, his problems disappear.

PSALM 62 is an excellent psalm to use when misfortune strikes, so let us study some of the ideas in it. We all know that in reality the Presence of God within us is at all times active, provided that we make it possible for God to act through us. Therefore the "soul waiteth" (verse 6). The soul waits once we become perfectly still and concentrate on the idea of perfection that resides in each of us. This leads to the realization of what it means to "Be still and know that I am God" (Ps. 46:10).

In "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for thy expectation is from him" (verse 5), there is the recognition that all the good that ever happens in our lives, in accordance with God's Law, originates with Him. God uses human channels to help us solve our difficulties, though I fully believe that if we are very hard-pressed and there are no normal channels, the demonstration would still be made.

That our salvation is of God is very beautifully stressed in this psalm. Our salvation is at hand, and the only reason that we do not demonstrate it immediately is that our "little self" gets in the way—"the little self" who bases his expectation on past experience, and believes that if something unpleasant happened before, it must happen again—that the outcome cannot be different. Psychologically this, of course, indicates a tremendous ego, the conviction that once we have come to know something no one can improve on that knowledge. Emmet Fox used to say that we are a special enterprise on the part of God. However, that is too often interpreted to mean that we are rather special and that God was pretty lucky to have made us! If you do not agree, ask yourself in a time of quiet why you think that it is so much more difficult for you to make a demonstration than for John Jones or Susie Smith. Why are you so "special" that the Law will not work for you when it does for everybody else? And why does it not work more quickly? It should, you know. It does not because we all have—to some degree—an exaggerated idea of our own "specialness" and that, as a rule, is the reason for our not solving our problems.

The Psalm teaches us that God is *Here and Now*. God is not under the law of time; He has not the slightest interest in how long you have had your problem, be it a few minutes or many years. The only thing that He is interested in is your opening yourself to Him. The moment you do this, your problem is gone. There is not room in your heart, your soul, your life, for both God and your problems. Another way of saying it—a way that shocks many people—is that the place where you have a problem is the place where you will not admit God, where you shut Him out. It is very true.

The 63rd PSALM was written by David in the Wilderness of Judah. Most events mentioned in the Bible have a historical basis, though they may also be symbolically interpreted.

What does David mean? "Love." What does Judah mean? "Strength." Yet the psalm says that David is in the Wilderness of Judah. It means that he is in a state of depression, he is afraid, and that this is a prayer to restore his contact with God. In the first verse the "dry and thirsty land, where no water is," undoubtedly refers to a physical event, but on the other hand it can certainly apply to ourselves when we find ourselves in that "dry spell," that is part of the progress of the soul. When we choose to follow the meditative life we are often off to a good start and are quite successful in our meditations. We leave them with a feeling of peace or elation, of strength and joy. Day by day this feeling grows and then suddenly it leaves us and we no longer seem to be able to contact the Presence within. Then we start to wonder if we ever really made contact. We look back and recall specific instances of our having done so and we realize the distressing truth, we have actually lost contact with God. When we have once had this union with Him, the most important thing, physically as well as spiritually, is to re-establish that contact again. The ground has been cut from under our feet and we are at odds with our world. In some of the other psalms David's problems are of a material or physical nature, but in this one he is speaking of the contact with God that he has lost. This of course is a temporary thing, actually, in most instances, it is a period of subconscious digestion.

The 64th PSALM is undoubtedly the most remarkable passage in the whole book of Psalms. It is the only expostulation against black magic. Perhaps I should explain. As you know, we believe that there are only two things that we have to deal with in our existence. One is the Presence, Life Itself, within every human being. The other is what is known as Power or the Law. We also know that one can learn to use Principle (or the Law, as it is more frequently termed) to develop oneself to such a degree that one can use the Law without the Presence.

This is one of the great tests for all mankind. It reaches its climax at a certain stage of the evolution of the human soul and from that point on—if the individual does not succumb to the temptation—he is forever after incapable of doing so. Up to this point there is always the temptation to the individual to awaken this Power and to use it for his own aggrandizement, particularly since man firmly believes that he is a creature beyond compare on the face of the earth. Now, this is, of course, true, for man is “fearfully and wonderfully made. . .” (Ps. 139:14), therefore he learns the techniques for developing and using that power which he knows is waiting within him to be awakened. The danger inherent in this type of development does not lie in the havoc it can wreak in others (the person who gets in the way of this evil is there because of a karmic pattern and, in a sense, this offers him the opportunity to free himself) but for the person who is developing this Power. As he develops the Power and it manifests to a greater and greater degree, the person begins to believe that he is God, and therein lies the danger, for man is *not* God.

Man can achieve contact with the Presence within him, which in time manifests through him, but no individual can ever become God. However, there are those who, drunk with their own power, completely overlook this and of course, in time, the Power boomerangs and destroys them. The karmic patterns that this sets up for them is frightening to think about. There are a few who have attempted this and Isaiah 14 very clearly deals with the subject. Read it in the light of World War II. You will be amazed. There are on the other hand those who innocently—seemingly—become involved in it, as David apparently did in this Psalm.

The black magicians develop their minds through concentration on the tremendous power that lies dormant within each of us. This development of man's inner faculties can of course take place under the guidance of the Presence within, but the black magicians develop them for personal exaltation, and that is wherein the danger lies. This brings me to a point of warning: Never, never, let anybody hypnotize you. The moment you

do, you put yourself in the power of the hypnotist and the tie can be very difficult to break. Not only that, but the more often you allow this to happen, the more your own will power is destroyed and you can become like a automaton.

Certain of the texts indicate black magic because they mention the power of thought. "They search out iniquities, they accomplish a diligent search: both the inward thought of every one of them, and the heart, is deep. But God will shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded. So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves: all that see them shall flee away" (verses 6-8). Practically every text touches on it. The entire psalm is concerned with the power of thought, and the power of words, and is the only psalm that deals with this subject.

The *65th PSALM* is another psalm of thanksgiving. It tells of the benefits that accrue to the person who wholeheartedly and sincerely tries to live the spiritual life. In this instance it is a psalm of thanksgiving by Israel who is living in a state of peace and prosperity. The Israelite fortunes, like those of most peoples, waxed and waned during the course of history, but it is interesting to see that when they follow the teachings of Moses they prosper and whenever they fall away from it, they come upon hard times. Since no historical and political study has been recorded that would throw light on the effect of the practice of religious teachings on the course of history, it would be interesting to trace their effects on events to see if, when faith and reason died, the decline of a nation also set in.

PSALM 66 is a very lovely psalm, however, I do want to draw your attention to the word "terrible" in verse 3. Once in a while I think that we have to remind ourselves that the English language is a living thing and that words do change in meaning over the centuries. The word "terrible" does not here have the meaning of "awful" or "dreadful" that we give to it today, but means "powerful", which was its original meaning. In the same way "wrath" does not mean anger, but "to be active".

This is again a psalm of thanksgiving that touches on every

level of human activity. First of all, there are the physical gains in store for a nation that follows the ways of God; then there are the advantages for the individual; and then there is the admission that if he only presents the outer deeds, the sacrifices, and does not worship with his heart his efforts are in vain; God will not hear him. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he . . .", it is written in Proverbs 23:7. In Bible symbolism the heart means the subconscious mind. That is one of the reasons that I always tell my students to go on a "resentment therapy", so that they may get rid of the "iniquities" in their hearts, for we all have them.

PSALM 67 is very similar to the 65th. It is one of the psalms that were sung at the Feast of the Tabernacles, known as "Succoth", when the harvest is gathered and God is glorified for His bounty. In verse 4 the Psalmist says: "O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth". It is a pity that this has not come to fruition, for until we reach the time that we recognize that we are all one, we shall never really have peace on earth.

I think that the metaphysical movement is unique in its approach to spreading the truth: it does not require anyone to give up his religion, and has no interest in hurting other creeds. It knows that as the student grows, he will get a deeper understanding and in time will realize what Jesus meant when he said that it is not a matter of attending a church or a temple. He said instead " . . . when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (Matthew 6:6). Your closet is that inner chamber within your own being where you mentally shut out the outer world. This is the most effective way to pray.

I sincerely wish that all people, whatever their race, color, or creed, may be taught that they need no intermediary between themselves and their God. However, most people are afraid to accept this truth. We have gotten very far away from the basic concepts about God which are so utterly simple and

we have made them so complex. It is true that we live in an amazingly complex universe but each of us is a microcosm living in a macrocosm: "as above so below, as within, so without." Complexity enters in when we start to realize the amazing breadth of the Wisdom of God, though actually the basic core of Truth that is really important to you and to me is utterly simple: we need *NO* intermediary between us and our God. As we approach and begin to live with our God, we will find that our lives begin to change, beautiful experiences come to us and the only thing that can stop us is our own misconceptions and stubbornness.

PSALM 68 is one of the sanctuary psalms that were used in the temple. It opens with the same verse that Moses gave to the people as a signal to lift up the Ark of the Sanctuary when they broke camp for their journey into the wilderness. It is a psalm of gratitude in which God is extolled and yet greatly feared. The psalmist gives an account of everything that God can do. He states that God is all powerful and able and willing to help the godly and punish the evil doers.

The *69th PSALM* is a plaintive cry for forgiveness and deliverance. It is typical of David that in a few instances he will admit that he is responsible for the evil that has befallen him, but most of the time he blames others. At the same time he is very careful to keep his hands clean while fervently hoping that God will punish his adversaries. David has been falsely accused, and he is deeply hurt and stripped of his honor. He does admit to a certain amount of guilt on his part and affirms again and again that God will forgive him and deliver him from his enemies.

The *70th PSALM* is also a psalm of remembrance, a very lovely one, in which the psalmist prays for God's aid.

The *71st PSALM* is one of the few that relates the actual experience of the soul having contact with God. *The Interpreter's Bible* heads it "The Tried Refuge of an Aged Saint," though I must say that I cannot remember any mention of saints in the Old Testament! I believe they came into being with the interpretation of the New Testament.

PSALM 72 is not a plea for help, I think you will agree. Although it is headed "A Song for Solomon" it does not seem to have too much to do with David's son when the symbolism is studied.

In verse 5 it is stated that the kings of Seba and Sheba shall offer gifts. Seba means "security", and Sheba means "to restore the wholeness, to make complete." Lebanon means "purity of thought." In this prayer to God the psalmist tells us what the benefits are that one receives in turning to Him.

PSALM 73 is headed "A Psalm of Asaph", which you may recall, signifies "a gathering place." It therefore means a gathering together of thoughts that have been put into the form of a psalm. The soul of the psalmist is that of a mature man—a spiritually mature man. He looks at his enemies, the people who scorn him, and realizes that it is because of pure ignorance that they are doing so. Therefore he holds on to his own belief. He says, for example: "So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee. Nevertheless I am continually with thee: Thou hast holden me in thy right hand" (verses 22-23). He is beginning to realize that his own growth is the most important thing in the whole world. He is not striving to overcome his enemies now, he realizes that his enemies are due to his ignorance, his selfishness. It is one of the few psalms that indicate a mature approach.

As the intelligence of the people advanced, the idea that God did not do things for them but through them and with them, grew. This maturing of the spiritual side of the people of Israel emerges in *PSALM 74*.

PSALM 75 is a beautiful hymn of praise which also stresses the fact that the Lord upholds the cosmic and mental order of Life. At that time it was not generally realized that God was also capable of controlling the physical order of life, such as the body, although there are a number of instances of healing in the Old Testament. This psalm is an invocation of the majesty of God. It is a warning to man that his inner growth is not judged by outer standards but by what he does himself, by the qualities within himself, and how he develops in relation to his God and his fellowman. This is the basis of his spiritual advancement.

I think the Book of Psalms needs nothing more than the earnest desire of the student to seek for himself. The psalms are so completely personal that I feel they can say far more clearly than I can that God is the only Presence and the Only Power.

M. M.

Thank you, and God bless
you.

Mildred Haun

Seven Steps in Demonstration

Desire: Get a strong enthusiasm for that which you want in your life, a real longing for something which is not there now.

Decision: Know definitely what it is that you want, what it is that you want to do, or have, and be willing to pay in spiritual values.

Ask: [When sure and enthusiastic] ask for it in simple, concise language...

Believe: in the accomplishment with strong faith, consciously and subconsciously].

Work at it ... a few minutes daily in seeing yourself in the finished picture. Never outline details, but rather see yourself enjoying the particular thing ...

Feel gratitude. Always remember to say, "Thank you God," and begin to feel the gratitude in your heart. The most powerful prayer we can ever make are those three words, provided we really feel it.

Feel expectancy. Train yourself to live in a state of happy expectancy ... Act it until it becomes part of you, as it must and will.

These are the seven steps. Follow them and they will bring you whatever it is that you need.

*FORMULA FOR DEMONSTRATION

(A demonstration is answered prayer..
the manifestation of the Presence,
Power and Love of God.)

" **A**sk And Ye Shall Receive,

Seek And Ye Shall Find,

Knock And It Shall Be

Opened unto you"

- *JESUS*

(*The formula is ASK Mildred Mann)

VOLUME 15

THE BIBLE SERIES

A METAPHYSICAL
AND SYMBOLICAL
INTERPRETATION OF

The Bible

by

Mildred Mann

