

VOLUME 16

THE BIBLE SERIES

**A METAPHYSICAL
AND SYMBOLICAL
INTERPRETATION OF**

The Bible

by

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AUTHOR OF

HOW TO FIND YOUR REAL SELF (textbook)

THIS I BELIEVE

LEARN TO LIVE

THE FAMILY OF ADAM AND EVE

THE BIBLE - The Seven Days of Creation

BECOME WHAT YOU BELIEVE

WHAT IS PRAGMATIC MYSTICISM?

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PSALMS 76 - 118

The idea of a God of Wrath, One Who was to be feared was, of course, prevalent in the Old Testament days. The Hebrews envisioned Yahweh to be a God of many moods, Who had to be constantly sacrificed to, to be constantly humored; One Who, if He were properly propitiated, would deal kindly with them. Though this is the concept that is stressed in PSALM 76 it is nevertheless a very beautiful song of Zion.

In the first and second verses we are told that "In Judah is God known, His Name is great in Israel. In Salem is His tabernacle, and His dwelling place in Zion." Now, Judah means "strength;" Israel, "Prince with God;" Salem, "peace." Therefore, it is evident that this psalm is by someone who has had conscious contact with God, who has evolved to the level where he knows that God is a living reality and is trying to live up to this concept to the best of his ability.

PSALM 77 is an appeal to God to perform a miracle for apparently the psalmist is in a great dilemma. So he turns to God for help; he tries to remind himself and God of the glorious demonstrations of the past and pleads that it be so again. Evidently he has reached bottom, for in verse 7 he says: "Will the Lord cast off forever, and will He be favorable no more?" Here we are encountering the concept of a God Who watches every step and move of his creatures and Who at the slightest misstep is ready to punish.

The last two verses of the psalm are also of definite interest to us: "Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known. Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron." Who can possibly know that way of God? His path is in the "great waters" the psalmist tells us, and always the waters symbolize the soul, the subconscious. If you really want to worship in Spirit and in Truth, you should approach your meditation from the point of view of joy and beauty, for these are the most important qualities in your life. You approach God in the same way as you would your dearest friend, or your beloved—

with emotion (which is symbolized by water)—for the path to God is the Way of Emotion. Since I have a pictorial mind, when I read verses of this type, I often visualize my hand reaching into the subconscious and God reaching through from the far end, taking it into His. The psalmist speaks of the “great waters” and there is nothing greater than our emotional nature which is our means of contact with God.

The 78th PSALM is known as a didactic ballad. Past events are recounted to show that God is the Activating Force in Israel and works in and through her.

PSALM 79 has no esoteric message but is merely a reiteration of faith in God and belief in His intervention.

PSALM 80 is a lament, a beautiful plea for the return of the Presence of God to the nation. In the first verses the nation's plight is put before God, after which Israel is called a “ravaged vine.” Now, the symbolical meaning of Israel is “a Prince with God” who, nevertheless, can be tarnished by negative experiences. Actually, the Presence can never be touched or defiled; Spirit is immutable, but the form that It inhabits is subject to constant change, and so the psalmist is not only speaking of his nation and what has happened to it, but indicates by his words that this immutability of the Presence within was not realized by them.

PSALM 81 is one of the most beautiful in the whole Psalter, and a prayer of great power. Every so often we find in a psalm that another person seems to take over from the psalmist, that a different voice is heard. The taking over is an example of the mystic's phrase: “the thought and the thinker become one,” when you suddenly become the listener instead of the meditator and the Presence within has taken over. It is an experience that comes by grace and cannot be forced.

PSALM 82 is another magnificent psalm, in which for the most part, the Voice of God is speaking through the psalmist.

It begins with the text: “God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods.” In those days everybody, even the Israelites, believed there were minor gods, though they acknowledged that Yahweh was supreme. The statement which Jesus later referred to (John 10:34) appears in verse 6: “I have said, ye are gods; and all of you are children of the Most High” and is followed by the tragic statement in the next verse: “But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.”

Now, if death is not of God—as we believe—where does it come from? This is an interesting question on which many hours could be spent. The root of death is, of course, fear. We know that we all have to go at a specific time and as long as we fear death we will continue to do so. However, a time will come when we will reach that level of evolution where we will no longer have to experience death. Does that mean that we could then stay on this planet as long as we wanted to? It does. But it would become a little boring after a time.

PSALM 83 is not a particularly important one. However, if one studies the symbolism of the names in it, it can lead to quite fascinating revelations. For instance, Gebal means “limit in consciousness;” Ammon, “a builder;” Amalek, “negative.” This changes the literal meaning of the psalm quite drastically and indicates that the psalmist is having a tremendous fight with his own emotions.

PSALM 84 is a beautiful and perfect meditation, a hymn of praise and thanksgiving. I always think that the greatest of all prayers is expressed in these three words: “Thank you, God.” If you can really say that *and feel it*, you need do nothing else.

Meditate on this psalm for a few days. It was definitely composed for the purpose of raising the consciousness.

The *85th PSALM* is considered a beautiful prophetic liturgy that starts with a plea for aid, and is followed by the affirmation that God will hear, God will answer. From a literary point of view it is one of the most beautiful in the Psalter. The 10th verse, for example, is exquisite: “Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.” It is a definite meditation to raise the consciousness; a plea for God’s aid, and the realization that aid has been given before, and shall be again.

Perhaps you have noticed that the psalms very often start with the realization of a problem. There is no running away from the difficulty, no taking refuge in a fool’s paradise in which it is supposed not to exist. There is only a complete facing up to the fact that God is the only salvation in time of trouble and that He will come to the psalmist’s aid. In metaphysics we too face up to, and recognize, our problems.

The *87th PSALM* may very well be headed “A Code for the Citizen of Zion.” Now, you know that symbolically Zion means “conscious contact with God,” and that “daughters of Zion,”

identifies the soul that has conscious contact with God. Let us bear in mind also, that regardless of the fact that the soul may be in either a masculine or feminine body, it is always portrayed as being feminine while the "son," the masculine element, represents the Indwelling Christ.

There are a number of interesting names in this psalm which help to clarify its meaning: Rahab stands for "depravity;" Babylon signifies "confusion;" Philistia, "deviation," "changeableness;" Tyre, "ego;" and Ethopia "materialism," "the unenlightened." If you substitute these meanings you will get the following paraphrase of verse 4: "I will make mention of the depravity and confusion and the lowest depth from which this man was born" and will realize that the psalmist is speaking of the man who has no knowledge of God, the man who is a materialist. Then the psalmist speaks of Zion, and says "The Lord shall count, when he writeth up the people, that *this* man was born there" (verse 6), meaning that this was the individual who found conscious contact. And so you find that his foundation is in the holy mountain, the upraised consciousness; and you reach this foundation when you live in that upper level of Spirit where you are above the problems of every day life, where you are no longer in fear of it, but control it: that is the foundation in the holy mountain.

In the 88th PSALM man argues with God, a typically Judaic practice. The psalmist argues almost as well as Job did, giving good reasons why he should be helped, and furthermore, wants to know why God has given him difficulties. This argumentativeness is one of the healthiest things about Judaism; it never has a false concept of its God. A limited concept, the Hebrews have of course; of a mighty Warrior Who loves only His chosen people, but because they have unconsciously cast Him to some degree in their own image and likeness, they feel that they can argue with Him; Christianity tries to propitiate Him, to put Him in a good humor, which is completely wrong. However, in this psalm we come across one of the loveliest aspects of the whole Jewish concept of God, namely, that they can argue with God, and what is more, they do not expect to be punished for it.

This is what we are building towards in our meditations. We are not going to start on a Cosmic level; but through our meditations we are working towards a closer and closer contact—a conscious contact—with the Presence within, and then, when we achieve it, we find that we are in such a tremendously

intimate rapport that we know that "closer is He than breathing, nearer than hands and feet," as Tennyson put it so beautifully.

In the *89th PSALM* we have again an interplay between the psalmist and the Presence of God. There is again an argument though not as vehement as the one in the previous psalm, because the psalmist evidently suddenly remembers that a covenant has been made. This idea of a covenant, which is one of the most beautiful things in the Old Testament, is something that has importance for each and everyone of us. A covenant is nothing more than a contract, and a contract is intended to be honored. God has made one with every human being He has ever created, and that contract is found in the first chapters of Genesis. In that agreement God promises that every person who keeps the covenant will be blessed with a long life, and shall have dominion over his life and every need satisfied.

The psalmist does not admit that he has not done his part, but he says that God has broken the contract. The psalm is a confirmation that the contract does exist and that it always has and always will. There is nothing esoteric in it.

The *90th PSALM* is one of the most exquisite and exalted in the whole book of Psalms. The Old Testament writers attributed it to Moses which is the greatest honor they could ever convey. The psalm is a magnificent treatise about God as the only Presence and the only Power. It also reflects the awareness that man is a shadow of that Presence, a projection of Him, and that without God man is nothing. The entire psalm stipulates very clearly the realization that God is the only and eternal Truth, that man is but His expression; that when he lives in accordance with His ways, his path is clear.

You will also notice that two very famous Bible verses—often quoted—are to be found in this psalm: "For a thousand years in thy sight are but yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night" (verse 4); and "The days of our years are threescore and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off and we fly away" (verse 10). Of course, the concept that man was not going to live too long had already taken root. Yet when we interpret these verses Cabalistically, we find threescore (or 60) and 10 equal 70, which reduces to 7; this represents the man who reaches the level of the mystic; it is the height of individual integration and it is not meant to be taken literally. Fourscore (80, which reduces to 8) is the number of power, and of course, the person who becomes power

mad, sooner or later, definitely gets into trouble and is cut off.

Is there anyone who will not agree with me that the 91st *PSALM* is one of the most beautiful in the whole Bible? I think that most of us have from time to time used this psalm in meditation. A friend of mine who lived in London during the Blitz literally lived with this psalm. One night, while she was on the second floor of her house, the sirens started to scream. She did not have time enough to reach the air raid shelter, so she started saying the 91st Psalm, and when she had reached the third or fourth verse there was a tremendous crash as a bomb hit. The house next door to hers and her own were literally cut in two by it, yet she was almost completely untouched. The only thing that happened to her was that her hands bled from the force of the concussion, but there were no cuts. I have been told of many other instances in which persons had been in danger and had used this psalm when they were very fearful or when a tremendous emergency had to be met. They too came through their difficulties unscathed.

It is a very beautiful psalm, and some of its verses are particularly telling. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty" states the first verse. Where is the secret place? It is in your heart. And that, as the mystics will tell you, is where God dwells. Then it changes from the speech of a third person into the first person with the words: "I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: My God; in Him will I trust." It then becomes a dialogue, and in the 14th verse, when the psalmist's consciousness is sufficiently raised, the Voice of God speaking through him takes over.

The pestilence in the 3rd verse refers to a chronic problem which usually stays with us; and the "feathers" and "wings" refer to God's protection, just as a bird protects her young by bringing them under her wings. The "terror by night" and "the arrow that flieth by day" represent the subconscious and conscious problems that we meet in our daily living. The point we reach when we have such confidence in God that we are what we might call under "Divine protection," is beautifully expressed by the words in the 7th verse: "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee." This divine protection is always with us, you know, and many people have experienced it. We all know of people who have miraculously escaped when others have

been injured in bad accidents; or of people who were prevented from going to a place where there later was a catastrophe.

The *92nd PSALM* is headed "A Song for the Sabbath day," and follows the usual pattern: it states that it is very good to give thanks; tells what will happen to the wicked; and extols the steadfastness of the righteous.

PSALM 93 is a song of praise which in the Judaic liturgy is sung on New Year's Day and puts forth the idea of Yahweh, Jehovah, being enthroned as King.

The *94th PSALM* consists of two different sections. The first 15 verses comprise a plea by the whole nation, for Israel is again in trouble and the congregation asks for guidance; and for reasons that no one can fathom, verses 16 to 22 make up an individual's plea to God. In the last four verses of this passage there is a cry of despair, of "who will rise up for me against the evildoers," giving expression to that moment in times of stress, fear, and indecision in which we all realize how terribly alone we are until we have found our contact with God.

The psalmist is evidently facing something terrifying. He feels completely alone, and without any defense. He is at first unable to animate that feeling of assurance, of knowing, of complete faith in God. He feels utterly helpless. But as the psalmist clings to his lifeline of prayer—he finds that doors seem to open within him, that from deep within comes a ray of light and all of a sudden he does not feel alone anymore. His fear is gone, and he gives full credit to his Source of help.

When you have a problem that is crowding in on you, take these verses, read them, put them into your own words, and you will shortly discover that they have done something to your consciousness that is similar to the tuning of a musical instrument. You are in tune with the inner security that is within each and every one of us. It is always there, but must be brought out by the conscious effort of meditation.

The *95th PSALM* begins a new trend away from Yahweh, the God of War. The oracle—the Urim and the Thummin—has taken His place. It was situated in the Temple and only the High Priest had the authority to talk to it and to receive the answers to questions that were put to it. In the 7th verse, it is the oracle that answers the petition for help.

The *96th PSALM* calls for a new song to be sung unto the

Lord, and it is indeed a new song, for there is nothing negative in it, no cry for help. It does nothing but give expression to a feeling of pure joyousness! It is a wonderful example of the praise and thanksgiving that works miracles. If you have a physical ailment, an extraordinarily effective way of healing it is to praise the particular organ which is causing trouble. If you do this with tongue in cheek, of course, you will be disappointed. Very often it is a wise idea to praise your eyes, your ears, your liver, etc., to tell them once in a while that they are doing a wonderful job. You know, appreciation is something we all greatly desire, therefore, what makes you think that your body is different? Your organs make you and you make them. Try it!

The 97th *PSALM* is another psalm of kingship. There are 10 of these in this section, in which the Kingship of God is proclaimed. This one starts in the same manner as any effective meditation—with a reminder of the greatness of God. It stresses that there is nothing but God; that God is all-Powerful, the ruler of His Universe, and all men, and all gods (please note) must worship Him because He is supreme.

PSALM 98 is also a song of praise. It and the others in this category serve, in a sense, to re-establish the contact between the congregation and God. It was written during a period of peace, when the people had time in which to give praise and count their blessings.

PSALM 99 is very possibly an earlier psalm, for it lists things that have happened in the past and calls to remembrance tremendous aid that has been given, of miracles that took place.

PSALM 100 very briefly summarizes the Judaic creed, simply and concisely. In the first text it states that the Lord is God; in the second that He is our Creator; in the third that we are His people; in the fourth, that the Lord is Good; in the fifth, that His kindness is everlasting; and in the sixth that His faithfulness endures unto all generations. It is simple, concise and basic. And this is our creed too. But our human side frequently refuses to accept its simplicity. We want to make it more difficult; the mentality insists on being intellectual about it.

PSALM 101 is headed a Psalm of David. Martin Luther said of it that it was "David's mirror for reigning princes." It is similar to Psalm 15, and actually is a code for a citizen of Zion, a soul who has conscious contact with God. The "perfect

heart" referred to in verse 2 represents the subconscious that is completely cleansed of negative things; the "house" represents one's life, one's environment, everything that pertains to one's life. So that ". . . I will walk within my house with a perfect heart . . ." may be paraphrased to mean: "I will have no negative thoughts, fears or doubts." A "froward heart" is one that is ill-tempered, irritable, disagreeable.

PSALM 102 is a typical lament and appeal for aid. It is divided into three sections. Verses 1 to 11 constitute an appeal for aid and give a run-down of the psalmist's discomforts; verses 12 to 22 are once more an affirmation of the fact that the Eternal God lives in Zion. This stills the outer world of the psalmist, and he experiences an inner calm. His confidence in God is expressed in the final verses. One might say that it is a pattern for demonstration. We do not make our demonstration, as you know, until first of all we have withdrawn ourselves from the turmoil without; until we have overcome our fears by reminding ourselves of whom we are, that God is in the midst of us and will come to our aid. Then we find that the outer world conforms to the inner and that the peace and harmony have been restored. To demonstrate, we must enter Zion, even if only for a short time. To live in Zion is to have complete peace of mind in the realization that there is nothing but God, that "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof . . ." (Ps. 24:1). Whatever you need may be, once you have this realization, the answer to that need manifests. Nothing can stop it, and it would not matter if the problem were something that had been with you for years or something that had just come out of the night. It *must* happen.

PSALM 103 is one of the most beautiful passages of the whole Bible, and a very powerful treatment. I suggest that any one who is filled with fear and doubt and in great misery, sit down and meditate on it. Remember that it is the Presence of God speaking to you, and through you. If you will reflect on what it means, the problem will disappear.

There is one line that is extremely interesting: "He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him" (verses 10-11). Here is an intimation that God does not punish us—we punish ourselves. When we turn to God it is unimportant what our past has been; the only thing that matters is what we do *now*.

PSALM 104 is a continuation of the 103rd, but instead of being about the individual and his relationship to God we have here the Cosmic Plan. It's a beautiful description of the Cosmos as it was understood by the ancient Hebrews, and a wonderfully clear understanding it was. It might also be called a psalm of Cosmic Philosophy, for that is what it really is. It shows that the Providence of God is completely beneficent, and that nothing is created for Itself alone, which is the important statement of this psalm. There is a correspondence between this psalm and some of the phrases of the first chapter of Genesis.

PSALM 105 is a psalm of remembrance in which God is mindful of His covenant with His people. This covenant has, of course, not only been made with the people of Israel, but with every human being created by God. It is really a hymn of praise, and a reminder of all that God has done, and that He still will do for those who keep that covenant.

PSALM 106 is a recapitulation of the history of Israel, in which their faults are not played down. Throughout Exodus and Numbers they were called "a stiff-necked people" and Moses had his hands full trying to keep them in line. And yet, there was always an undercurrent of faith that ran through their history. When they strayed, even as you and I do, that faith held, and when they returned to it, it performed amazing works for them down through the ages.

Now, faith is certainly not confined to the Hebrews only. It is there for each and every one of us to use. When we are in difficulty we look back on our history of demonstration, which gives us a reassurance that will again be effective. Here we find the same thing taking place. It is merely a historical recital of problems and the wondrous ways in which the Hebrews were saved.

The *107th PSALM* is a prayer to the Lord for His steadfast love. It does not have anything esoteric or unusual about it, but covers practically every need that one could ever have: the needs of those who are lost in the desert; of those who are in prison; the sick; of those who travel about in ships. In verses 33 to 43 it speaks of God in Nature, and the Power of God as steadfast Love. However, to me the most important text in it is verse 20: "He sent his word and healed them, and delivered them from destruction." It is one of the most powerful demonstration texts in the whole Bible.

PSALM 108, a Psalm of David, is one of praise and petition.

Now, if you watch the meditation "formula" you will notice that the meditation always starts with a statement of praise, of what is actually known about God, and then it becomes personalized. People often ask me why this is so. In the first place it serves to "set the stage" for meditation, so to speak. You start with a review of what you believe about God, which in this psalm takes the form of praise of God. Then follows a review of what has happened before, and what the psalmist knows can be expected to happen. Then the particular need is stated, or in metaphysical idiom, we "speak the Word" for that which we wish to demonstrate.

PSALM 109 is rather bloodthirsty, a chant of evil. We are inclined to lose sight of the fact that though the Hebrew religion was actually formulated by Moses, the people were exposed to many neighbors whose belief in other gods and in magic was a very powerful force in the community. As the Hebrews slowly but surely swung over to the concept of One God, they still clung to the belief that Yahweh, their God, would also go out and punish those who wronged them, because this is what they were taught the other gods did. While they believed that they had the protection of their God, they would deny that right completely to the one who wronged them. David felt that if he was insulted by anyone, so, automatically, was God, and therefore God had to avenge both David and Himself. He had developed to the point where he no longer would do physical harm to his adversary—he passed that privilege on to God!

PSALM 110, a Song of David, is known also as one of the Messianic hymns. It is supposed to be one that forecasts the coming of Jesus in verse 1: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." The reference to Melchizedek, who was the priest of Salem, refers to the Christ Mind; he is the one who is supposed to have guided Abraham.

The *111th PSALM* is an acrostic, a beautiful psalm of praise. Verse 10 is another of the gems that are so frequently found in the psalms: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all they that do His commandments: His praise endureth forever."

The *112th PSALM*, also an acrostic, deals with the blessedness of the individual who follows the commandments of his God. It gives the fruit of the citizen of Zion, the inheritance of the soul who walks in the Path.

A hymn of Praise, the 113th PSALM states the theological concepts of Judaism. The psalmist speaks of God Who is exalted above all; Who is kind, and takes care of the needy. This is the basic theology very simply and beautifully stated.

PSALM 114 is one of the most mystical psalms in the book. It belongs to the Hallel group. (Hallel was a prophet who was not particularly well-known.) It deals with the passing of the soul from the body. This is indicated by the mention of the River Jordan. It is interesting to note that Dante used this hymn, which was sung by the spirits in the boat that took the human souls—in groups about a hundred—to the shore of Purgatory. Actually, it deals with the passage of the soul from the body to the unknown. The mountains and hills represent the consciousness. The terror of people at the moment of death is portrayed in it. In the first verse, Egypt means "bondage," Jacob means "supplanter" (Everyman), and Israel, "Prince with God." It indicates the hope that the soul would mount to Heaven, but there was the doubt and fear it might be sent to Sheol. This was a strong part of Hebrew belief at that time.

PSALM 115 is very beautiful and entitled, by *The Interpreter's Bible*: "To Thy Name give Glory." It was apparently written at a time when neighbors were scoffing at Israel's religion. This is in the nature of a rebuttal to it. This psalm, as well as the 116th and 118th, is always sung in the temple at the end of the Passover, so that it is also a liturgical hymn.

PSALM 116 depicts a person who has made a beautiful demonstration and is giving thanks in the presence of the congregation. He brings his required sacrifice, and acknowledges his healing for which he gives all credit to God.

PSALM 117 needs no comment.

The 118th PSALM is the last of the Hallel Psalms and a litany of thanksgiving. It is one of the more beautiful ones, and it too comes under the heading of the Messianic psalms. Verse 22 symbolizes the refusal by the Hebrews of the Messiah who is to come, and is believed to refer to the coming of Jesus. Verse 22, 23, 24 are frequently quoted: "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."

While the psalm is attributed to Hallel, some authorities believe that Hezekiah wrote it. In the Book of Kings, Hezekiah was doomed to death and prayed to God for a healing. The authorities think that this psalm may have been part of his prayer of thanks for the restoration of his health.

PSALMS 119 - 150

The Interpreter's Bible calls the 119th PSALM a tour de force, an ingenious accomplishment, and well it may! It is an acrostic in which, in the Hebraic version, the first word in each line of every stanza starts with the letter of the alphabet heading the stanza. In other words, the twenty-two letters of the alphabet, from Aleph to Tau, appear consecutively as the first letter of each line of an entire strophe throughout the psalm. Moreover, it deals with one idea and one idea only: the Law. *The Interpreter's Bible* also points out that ten different synonyms for it appear in the text: *ordinance, judgment, law, testimonies, way, precepts, statutes, commandments, word, promise.*

This is, of course, not surprising when one realizes that the Psalm is allied to the Tarot, the deck of cards in which may be found the hidden teaching of the Egyptian Mysteries. The Egyptian word for Law is Tarot; the Hebrew, Torah, and the Greek, Rota. However, before we take up this study of the Law and its meaning as it is revealed in the Tarot, let us briefly see how it came into being.

Thousands of years ago religion played an important role in Egyptian life. And, in time, as almost inevitably happens when religion becomes highly organized, the spirit departed and the love of power took over. The masses finally rebelled and the priests were sent into exile. Though they believed that some day they or their followers would return to power, the priests knew that provision had to be made for the preservation of their teaching. Indeed, they dared not destroy it.

This Truth, called the Mysteries, of which they were the custodians, had always been passed down by word of mouth and imparted only to a very small group, a select "Inner Circle," so to speak. Spiritual snobbery was to a great degree inherent in the deeply esoteric concepts of the initiates in such fields as the Egyptian and Greek Mysteries, the Cabala, and what is known as Gematria, or the teaching known as the Tree of Life. These systems of religion felt that the average individuals, people such as ourselves, were not sufficiently illuminated or spiritually developed to be worthy of being admitted into the inner circle. They knew that if they revealed their secrets to the populace, their hold over them would be gone, for where there is knowledge there is power. This concept still prevails today in many modern religious orders.

The priests were extremely brilliant men, and after great thought devised a means of preserving their knowledge in such a way that it would not be lost, and at the same time would not be understood by the uninitiated. They knew that man was a lazy animal so long as he was amused. They decided they could safely hide their knowledge—their mysteries—by concealing it in a game which would entertain mankind and so great would be his pleasure that he would be satisfied. This game consisted of a deck of cards called the Tarot.

These cards are the ancestors of our own pack of cards. We, however, have discarded their most important section, the Major Arcana, or trumps, and only use the Minor Arcana. We no longer know their symbols as swords or cups or wands or pentacles, but call them spades, hearts, clubs, and diamonds respectively. The only card of the Major Arcana that we have retained is the Fool, which we call the Joker. These Masters of old showed great wisdom and cunning when they disguised the key figure in their pack as a Fool, for as it says in I Corinthians 3:19, "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God . . ."

The Minor Arcana is divided into 4 suits, and whether they are the cards of the Tarot or of our own deck, they deal with the elements that make up our world and ourselves: Air, Earth, Water, Fire. The Swords represent Fire; the Cups, Water; the Wands, Air; and the Pentacles, Earth.

When we reduced our pack to 13 cards—as against their 14—we did so by discarding the Page and keeping the Knave.

The Mystery Schools were prevalent up to the second century. The earliest known were in Egypt; later some were established in Greece and a few in Palestine, but they were gradually extinguished by the darkening spirit that slowly penetrated the Christian faith. They were truly marvelous establishments and their teachings were based on single concept: the study and evolution of Man. The priests who headed these schools were chosen by their obvious development in spiritual understanding.

There are no such schools in the West today, though there are a few in the East. An outline of the teaching which they sponsored in order to stimulate the chosen students along the path of Initiation is discussed in Volume 9 of this series. It is this teaching that was hidden in the Tarot and is also to be found in Psalm 119. Moses, of course, had been given this training in Egypt.

At the time of the ancient Mystery Schools a numerical system had not yet been devised but letters were used as symbols to convey ideas, and so these letters stood for numbers. This resulted in the system of Gematria, in which it was believed that if a word had the same numerical value as another, there was some underlying similarity or identification that both words had in common. Therefore, you will find this pattern of Gematria very evident in the Tarot.

The part of the Tarot that we are going to deal with, the Major Arcana or Major Wisdom, consists of 22 cards—22 symbols that tell a story in pictures. They were devised with the intent of stirring the intuition, to bring the person studying them to the point where he responds to the intuitive call of the cards.

Each card is numbered and you will find that there is one card that is marked zero. This represents the Fool, who really is I AM, the Presence of God, the Indwelling Christ. The 22 cards of the Major Arcana are divided into three groups of seven each, with the Fool at the beginning, as well as at the end. The first seven deal with the qualities or principles that make us spiritual beings. They represent our emotional and mental makeup, our tools, and show us how to use them. We do this by understanding the Laws behind them.

The second group (cards 8-14) deals with the various elements with which we have to work. The third level (cards 15-21) deals with the results of our working with these qualities and are known as the symbols of the Major Initiations of the Soul. Basically, the three rows of cards tell the story of the Fool, the card marked zero, Who lives in you and me, and in every other human being. When He has developed beyond the role of the Silent Watcher in us, when He has become our conscious ally, His place is after the 21st card. He is then the manifested Christ in each of us, or, the Risen Christ.

Now let us go back to Psalm 119. Remember that each of the Tarot cards is allied to a letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and, as previously mentioned, the psalm is divided into stanzas, each headed by a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Another point to note is that each stanza has eight texts; it is a complete division of eight, the number of the Law, Eternity, of "as above, so below." Each stanza deals with the letter to which it is allied.

The first card is the Magician. He represents Everyman. He stands before a table with the symbols of the four elements—

earth, air, fire, water—before him and a wand in his right hand. The wand symbolizes the power of the spoken word which gives him dominion over his life and affairs. The symbol 8 over his head indicates inner and outer emotional balance. His letter Aleph, literally means Bull, or Earth. We therefore know that he controls his world, that he is not subject to outer influences and that this world over which he has control includes his lower nature. The section dealing with Aleph pertains to this.

The second strophe is symbolized by Beth, which means House. The second card of the Tarot represents a fascinating figure, the High Priestess. She symbolizes the Nature aspect of the Creator; the Subconscious Mind of God. This is the ether, the matrix of the Universe, that Power that makes Nature renew herself. She is the Great Creative Principle, the High Priestess who controls all Creation. She is completely subject to the Law of God—she responds to this Law in creating universes—as well as to your direction and to mine, for it is from her that we get our strength, our creative ability. She is the House of all Substance from which all form emanates as well as the place in which everything is stored. She is also the great Creative Storehouse, where the records of everything that has ever happened are imprinted, and which are often called the Akashic records.

You will also notice that she sits with her foot on the Moon—the symbol of the emotional nature—and the cards tell us that all creative activity must have the impetus of an emotional drive. Sometimes we find it a bit difficult to think of God as being emotional when He created His Universe, but it was not the negative emotions that we know, it was Desire; and so for anything to manifest, Desire and Power are the prime forces in action. The two pillars on the card represent the esoteric and the exoteric, the inner and the outer; Jachin and Boaz of II Chronicles 3:17 which represent the Law and the Word. When we say: “In God we live and have our being,” we are speaking of the High Priestess, for we live in a creative Power atmosphere from which we draw as much sustenance as we require. Verse 9 illustrates the letter, as the heart (subconscious) knew nothing but purity in the beginning.

The third letter is Gimel, and represents the Empress, who symbolizes the individual subconscious mind. She is the daughter of the High Priestess and is the productive side of each of us. There is a clue to this line, the 19th verse:

"I am a stranger in the earth: hide not thy commandments from me." Of course, it is true that there is a wide gap between the conscious and subconscious, and I often have a suspicion that the subconscious feels just as strange being in the body as do we about some of the things she does to us! Her particular symbolism represents the fact that her creative ability is her greatest power, and this represents our individual creative ability. She is filled with the potential of everything that we need in life. She sits very calmly, quietly waiting for directions from us, and is completely receptive if she is stirred, directed, impelled, when she knows that we really are definite in our commands. Until she does, she pretty much does things her own way, reproducing the old patterns in our subconscious.

Gimel, her letter, means Camel, and of all the animals in creation, the camel is the one that can stand the greatest hardship. It symbolizes that part of us that has the greatest endurance, the subconscious; it can go a long, long time without a change in conditions, as we all know. So Gimel not only denotes power and strength, it also indicates perseverance and endurance.

Daleth is identified with the fourth card, the Emperor, who represents the body and conscious mentality. He sits on a chair of stone which means that he is of the world, wordly, in it and of it; this is his kingdom. Actually, he symbolizes the son of Man; and it is through his own control over himself that he begins to make his life a semblance of what it should be. He must respect his union with his Empress, his subconscious, but he is the one who is the power in the outer world, who calls the turn. The first verse of this stanza "My soul cleaveth unto the dust . . ." indicates the physical body. He is the son of Man who becomes an Emperor as he learns Wisdom, therefore his prayer, his constant prayer, is for Wisdom.

Daleth means the Door; he is the door to the subconscious, and a door opens both ways; one can enter and one can exit. So, when the union between the two is completely balanced in our lives the passageway is cleared, and a two-way street of harmony exists between the mentality and subconscious.

Heh, the fifth letter, corresponds to the Hierophant, who sits on a throne with two figures kneeling before him. He symbolizes the Presence of God, and the figures are the conscious and the subconscious, the Emperor and Empress, who are

being instructed by Him. When you and I reach the stage represented by the last seven cards, we will find, too, that we have direct access to the Presence of God, Who lives within each of us. This card represents complete union with the Presence of God.

The letter Heh stands for the open window, or door, indicating that light comes through. When we have cleared our minds, consciously and subconsciously, to the degree that we can hear, or make contact with the Presence within, we can say that we are filled with Light. The crossed keys signify manifestation. Verse 33 shows the desire for understanding and knowledge, and is symbolized by Light.

In the sixth card of the Tarot, we again find the two figures, the Emperor and Empress, representing the conscious and subconscious. They are facing each other with the figure of the Angel Raphael (who signifies Love) blessing them. It shows perfect harmony between the two elements of the mind. The mountain peak in the background signifies a high level of consciousness, the point at which they solve the riddle of the Tree of Life. The corresponding Hebrew letter, Vau, meaning Nail or Link, is expressed in verse 41: "Let thy mercies also come unto me."

The Chariot (card 7) symbolizes the individual who has reached the peak of complete conscious contact with his God and expresses this in every department of his life. The Sphinxes indicate that he has, to a great degree, conquered the unknown; the riddles of life no longer exist for him. He runs his life by the process of his thought, hence no longer needs outside means to control the conscious and subconscious. He sits in the chariot with an air of complete authority. The figure 7 stands for integration, mysticism; the highest reaches of individuality in the human being. The letter is Zain which means Sword, the Power of the Word. Verse 49 is the key to this letter.

With card 8 we start the next group of cards which represent not the Principles but the Qualities the person on the Path must cultivate and demonstrate. Its title is Strength. We are to become strong and fearless. The woman on the card is opening the lion's mouth and the lion does not seem to object in the least. He rather likes it, it seems. The Hebrew letter is Cheth, meaning the Fenced Field, and this gives us a glimpse of the inner structure of man. We know, for example, that while we have a physical body that we can see with the

naked eye, there are three other bodies—the etheric, mental and spiritual, and it is with the etheric that we are dealing here. (The etheric is another word for the astral body and the subconscious mind). These bodies are more real than we ever dream them to be and their point of connection with us is through that very amazing part of the body called the Endocrine chain of glands.

Through our daily meditations we bring these glands into their true use, and they begin to function interiorly. For most people, their function is confined to the physical body. They develop in perfect order, starting with the first and ending with the seventh gland. Each time one of these glands begins to be activated, it is accompanied by the release of inner power in the human being. The card depicts the subconscious, in complete control, beginning to unleash the strength that is buried within it, and the lion does not resist. The Hebrew letter Cheth is called the Fenced Field because this Power is closed in until you and I make the effort to open it. Verse 64 illustrates this.

The Hermit, the ninth card, stresses the ability to be alone with ourselves and to enjoy it. However, this does not mean that we have to practice isolation our entire life, but that the quality of silence as well as solitude is required. The lamp symbolizes the Light of God, which shines through us when we are completely quiet. That is when we can hear the small still voice. The staff on which the Hermit leans represents the Law. He lives by the Law, and since he does, Wisdom has been given him. The Hebrew letter for this card is Teth, meaning the serpent, which is the symbol for Wisdom, acquired by raising the Kūḍalīnī. Verse 72 reflects this.

The Wheel, the tenth card, tells us that man is a creature subject to the Law until he learns to control it. It is the same idea that Paul talks about when he says that the Israelites are the servants of the Law, instead of the masters they are supposed to be. The card shows the turn of the wheel, with three words symbolizing the Law. The Egyptian, Taro; the Hebrew, Tora and the Greek, Rota. The wheel is sometimes called Destinv or the wheel of Life. The four beasts of Ezekiel and of the Apocalypse are found in each of the corners. They again symbolize earth, air, fire and water, indicating these are the elements of our nature. The sword represents cutting through to Truth, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Yod, the letter for

this strophe, symbolizes the open hand, the Action of God. Verse 75 gives the Key.

The eleventh card is Justice who sits on her throne, holding her scales, and in her right hand is a sword. The sword indicates the choice is always our own, and the Law will bring the results.

The figure represents Justice, Fairness, Balance; and one of her finest attributes is that she refuses to be critical; she accepts responsibility. She realizes that in being absolutely just in her judgments, she cannot be critical of others. The fact that she follows the card of the Law, indicates that she has learned to use it. No matter what happens, she alone is responsible for what comes into her life; everyone else is blameless, as they are but instruments of the Law which she has consciously or unconsciously brought into action. She weighs everything that happens to her and releases the negative qualities of criticism, resentment, and personal hurt from her consciousness. She has attained Understanding and one might say that the synonym for her Restraint. Her letter is Caph, meaning the grasping hand and her key text is found in verse 84: "How many are the days of thy servant? When wilt thou execute judgment on them that persecute me?"

The Hanged Man of card 12 is suspended by one foot, arms out, forming a rather crude cross; yet the expression on his face is far from unhappy, and there is a halo around his head. He typifies "Thy will, not mine, be done;" the realization that there is a greater Intelligence than his at work. When he cannot see his way clear, he seeks the Wisdom and Guidance of God, even to the point of giving up that which he holds dear, no matter how difficult it seems. It symbolizes the compliance with the Will of God. The Hindu statement: "In submitting to God's will, I make it possible for God to do my will" expresses this idea exactly. The halo round the hanged man indicates that he has an extremely high state of consciousness, that in giving up the struggle he has found peace. His letter Lamed, means Goad, and Verse 94; "I am thine . . ." expresses his function.

The thirteenth card, Death, is a very strange one. It has no reference to physical death. The name of the card is actually Death and Resurrection. It denotes the giving up of the old man and bringing forth of the Christ man. It is the end of all things negative; the beginning of all things posi-

tive. It personifies the text: "I AM the resurrection and the Life." He carries a rose which is a symbol of eternal life and eternal newness. It is the complete annihilation of the old Adam. The skulls and feet are symbols of past activities. The two heads represent the conscious and subconscious.

Mem, its Hebrew letter meaning Water and the Womb, indicates a rebirth and can be expressed by the first verse of this stanza: "Oh how I love thy law." For it is the use of the Law, and the knowledge of the Law in conjunction with your own effort to use it consciously that washes away the old and brings forth the new.

Temperance, the fourteenth card, is probably the quality that is most difficult for the human race to acquire. It means Temperance, Balance, Equilibrium, that harmony that the Lovers represent to its highest degree. But, more than that, the faculty of discrimination is stressed, the ability to weigh things fairly and without prejudice. An angel stands with one foot on the water and the other on land and pours water from one cup to another without spilling—she must be completely balanced to be able to do this. It means that we cannot be swept by our emotions and lose sight of the Truth. On the other hand, we cannot become so cold, so hard, that we are completely devoid of emotions. We learn to appreciate things in their proper perspective. We must see the good as well as the wrong, and balance them properly, one against the other. Our Karma always follows our own discrimination.

Temperance corresponds to the Hebrew letter Nun, the Fish. "My soul is continually in my hand; yet do I not forget thy law," is written in verse 109.

The last seven cards, (numbers 15-21) symbolize the Major Experiences of the Soul.

The Devil, the fifteenth card, symbolizes the tremendous power within us, our creative energy, which derives its strength from our emotions. Because all life moves on a spiral, in an upward circular movement, when we reach the higher experiences of the soul, we recapitulate our previous experiences on a higher level. The greater our development, the more intensified the experiences become. We may see two persons going through a similar experience, with one of them being intensely affected by it, while the other might perhaps be only slightly shaken and get over it very quickly. This indicates a spiritual difference in the intensity of reactions in persons in similar circumstances. The Devil represents the point at

which the emotions have gotten out of hand, as they sometimes do, and the conscious and subconscious minds are wholly chained to its power. Most of us do not realize that our emotional drive is part of our subconscious and that it is the most powerful force in the world. It is our greatest asset when we learn to control and use it. If we do not, then we become completely enslaved by it.

The Hebrew letter corresponding to the card of the Devil is Samech, meaning Tent Peg, or that which holds. Verse 120 illustrates our fear of change.

The next card, the Tower, shows what actually does happen. It indicates that the individual has won control over himself, and is cracking the old forms, discarding what is no longer needed, including his negative thoughts and emotions. The Tower represents the individual who is remaking his world out of the old wreckage. Verse 128 illustrates this point. Its corresponding Hebrew letter is Ain which means the eye and the symbol is Separation.

We have now arrived at the *First Major Initiation*, known as the New Birth, and it is represented by the seventeenth card, the Star. This symbolizes the conscious realization and experience of the Presence, and might be termed being "face to face" with God. For the first time in his life the individual knows God is in him and he is in God. From this time on, it no longer matters whether he has problems or not, for nothing can shake his belief, his knowledge, that God is and that God is in him. He has experienced it. It is a tremendous experience, and one of the most beautiful that the human being ever encounters. Those of you who have read William Bucke's *Cosmic Consciousness* will remember his amazing research on the number of people who have had this experience, and his conclusion that one of the marks of its occurrence is that the individual's life takes a completely different turn. No matter what he has been doing, he drops it and turns to something else and his new endeavor will always be something in the service of God, usually in the field of art, teaching, healing, or philanthropy. There is a tremendous change in the personal attitude to life. The Hebrew letter attached to this card is Peh, meaning the Spoken Word, or the Power of the Word.

The *Second Initiation*, the Baptism, is symbolized by the eighteenth card, or the Moon. Baptism signifies water, and you will find that the Second Initiation intensifies, objectifies,

and clarifies all that has gone before. The person who goes through it emerges with much more strength and power and an even greater realization of the Presence of God. The psychological and physiological changes that occur in the human body during this stage of growth take place in the Endocrine chain of glands. Its Hebrew letter is Tzaddi, signifying the Fishhook. The 14th verse is the key.

In the *Third Initiation*, which is symbolized by the nineteenth card, the Sun, we come to the stage in which the "child of God" is changed into a Son of God. We have reached our spiritual majority. This is accompanied by a phenomenon that is quite physical in character as well as psychological and spiritual. Spiritual power which is encased at the base of the spine, and is etheric in nature, is unleashed, and as it rises in the spinal column, certain psychical and physiological reactions occur. During this occurrence the pineal gland is activated and then makes union with the pituitary. It is called the "Mystic Marriage." When this stage is reached, we can then begin to know our past lives; we have now reached the place where we are sufficiently developed to be able to face the evil as well as the good in our lives. It is a time when we know the answer to our problems; why we reincarnated, why we meet the people we do in our lives; why we behave in certain ways, because we now see the whole picture. Then we also realize that it is a most merciful God Who so created us that we are not able to see this until we have the understanding, strength and detachment to take it. This experience is also symbolized by the "Third Eye" of antiquity. Koph, meaning Light, is the Hebrew letter for this card, and is symbolized by the 149th verse.

The twentieth card is Judgment, which shows a coffin with the conscious and subconscious beside it. It symbolizes the Crucifixion. The individual temporarily loses his money, his friends, sometimes even his health, until he reaches the point where he cries: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me" (Matt. 27:46), for he lives in darkness. He has come to the "Dark Night of the Soul," as the mystics term it. It depends entirely on the individual how long this lasts. Sometimes, it is a period of some weeks, sometimes months, or even a couple of years, but, if he persists—and he always does—he comes through. It is then his personal Easter Sunday. He is resurrected, and all things are made new. Everything that he had before, as it was with Job, is restored to him multiplied. He has finally reached the point where he does not have to

reincarnate again, unless he chooses to do so. In one sense he has become completely detached; he is no longer the victim of his emotional problems; he is no longer in fear of the body aging. He is detached, he is kind, he has a very great love of the race and a very great compassion, and so he often weighs the problem of whether to return to help his younger brethren along the path and, nine times out of ten, he does. Resh, meaning Face, is the corresponding Hebrew letter and the 153rd verse exemplifies it.

His return is symbolized by the twenty-first card, called the World. He rules. The figure on the card is free and gay; he has no chain around him, only a wreath of garlands. He is completely free from the bondage of the flesh. The world is his garden and he works in it. The Hebrew letter for this card is Schin and means Fang or Tooth, and its meaning is the power to infect - wisdom. Verse 165 is the key here.

Then follows the picture of the Alpha and Omega, the Fool, the Presence within, the Resurrected Initiate, the Ruler of his world, symbolized by Tau, the twenty-second letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Verse 172 is the illustration for this.

Another way of telling the story of the Tarot and of giving the explanation of the 119th Psalm is to realize it is really the story of the Fool who reincarnates in the flesh, becomes voluntarily imprisoned and is ultimately freed. This is the meaning of Alpha and Omega—the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.

We have now reached that section of the Psalter in which the psalms are categorized in the following manner: The pilgrim psalms represented by hymns 120 and 134; the psalms of David which take in the three, and then the psalms of praise, which are also Davidic and which include those up to Psalm 145. The last five in the book are known as the hallelujah psalms. Since there is a certain repetition to be found in these psalms, we will deal with only those of specific interest—but they are all very lovely.

PSALM 120 is a song of degrees, and like all those psalms that fall under this heading, is designed specifically for meditation purposes. These hymns (which include Pss. 122, 126, 128, 129, 133, 134) are believed to give the greatest impetus to the soul intent on surmounting its particular problems, and we see that most of them end—if they do not begin—on an extremely positive note.

PSALM 121, a pilgrim's song—one of a collection pur-

ported to have been sung on the way back from exile to Jerusalem—is actually a dialogue between the conscious and the subconscious. It is a discussion between “I” and “me” regarding the Presence of God, and is one of the most beautiful in the entire Psalter. The “hills” are, of course, always a symbol of the individual trying to reach a higher state of consciousness.

PSALM 123 is also one of the pilgrim psalms, which starts out as an individual prayer but quickly turns into a congregational lament. On the one hand the Hebrews feel that they have erred in some way—which is not made clear in the words of the psalm—and on the other that they are being looked down upon by their enemies. They therefore come to the conclusion that their calamities are the result of their not being true to their concept of God, and so they appeal for mercy. This shows that above all else, the early Hebrews believed that God was very patient and understanding, and so merciful that he would forgive them time and time again. And they were quite correct in their belief.

PSALM 127 says very simply that without God, man's labor is vain. It is the beginning of the teaching of reverence for God rather than putting one's faith in a deity Who is a God of Punishment. When we understand and love God and put Him first in our lives, then life begins to have meaning. The first verse is, of course, very well known: “Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.” It ties in very beautifully with Paul's statement: “. . . know ye not that your body is the temple of the Living God . . .” (I Corinthians 6:19). The psalmist then comes to the conclusion that unless we recognize the fact that God dwells within us, we are living in a fool's paradise.

The last line in verse 2 “. . . for so he giveth his beloved sleep,” tells us that it is useless to fuss, that if we are in tune with God we will sleep “the sleep of the just,” or in our 20th century language, there will be no fear or worry to disturb our rest.

It actually brings out four different points about the man who puts God first in his life. The first one is that unless he believes that he is the child of God, he is going to encounter difficulties in his life; the second is that if he is going to worry and fuss he is not going to get anywhere, but if he realizes that the Love of God is with him, that God cares

for him, he knows that his problems will be worked out, and there will be no fear; the third point is that unless he believes in God all things are in vain; and fourthly, children are a heritage that do not issue from parents but from God. This last point is based on verse 3: "Lo, children are a heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is his reward," and on verse 4: "As arrows are in the hand of the mighty man; so are children of the youth." When a couple has children, they do not have them because they want them, but because of their Karmic pattern which brings to them the souls that they need or who need them in order to work out their problems together. This is the first place in the Old Testament where this idea comes to the surface.

PSALM 130 is a very beautiful and unusual psalm for it reflects one of the rare instances in which the psalmist's difficulty, whatever it is, is not considered to be caused by outside enemies. It is the prayer of a man who once had contact with God and has now lost it. He feels that he has committed a sin which has cut him off from God, Whom he apparently knows very well. So we find a poignant sense of separation from God and a deep desire for the restoration of the contact. We sometimes refer to this sense of separation as the "Dark Night of the Soul" and it describes the psalmist's condition very accurately. (There are, as has been indicated previously, degrees of intensity in all inner experiences. Frequently, new students will suddenly find that they seem to be unable to meditate. This is usually due to the subconscious going through a "digestive" period and is, in a small way, similar to this experience. Its most acute effect, of course, is during the Fourth Initiation.) He is not interested in making a physical sacrifice—he has gone beyond that stage in his development—but he feels that until he gets back his contact with God, it will be impossible for him to be happy.

The Interpreter's Bible heads *PSALM 132* a "Song for the House of David." and states that it is a liturgical, processional hymn. Now, it certainly is a psalm of David and was written at a time when he had overcome his afflictions, as it refers to finding a place to build the tabernacle, but it expresses more than that. The Ark also represents the psalmist's body, and consequently, as the prayer proceeds, we find that through the first ten verses it is David who makes the prayer. Then, through the desire and sincerity of his prayer—for David is a soul who knows God—the Lord within him answers him. The last 8 verses are the lovely words of the Lord.

The *135th PSALM* is undoubtedly a song of praise, and it is interesting to note that as we near the end of the Psalter, more and more of the psalms take the form of hymns of praise. I remember that when people wrote in to Emmet Fox for help, he used to tell them to take Psalms 148, 149, and 150 and to meditate on them. They are all songs of praise and thanksgiving and do not say very much else. We rarely realize the importance and wisdom of doing this, if—and it's a big if—we have the consciousness for it. We get so entangled in our striving for the right formula of words to say when we have a problem that "we do not see the forest for the trees." Yet, when we get a feeling of complete gratitude and harmony and bless God for His Goodness or say "Thank you, God," we need nothing further. We arrive at a sense of complete confidence that nothing can ever touch us in Truth and Reality but the direct action of God, and that God is Love. But just to *say* it will not do us any good. This psalm tells us in detail how we should praise Him. It stresses God's greatness, His mighty deeds, His vindication of Israel, and points out the futility of idolatry.

PSALM 137 is a ballad written while the Israelites were in exile. While in the past they had not been loath to use a little magic on some of their enemies, they had by now reached the place where they had outgrown that phase. Instead they turned to God, and expected Him to handle their difficulties. In this song, the psalmist starts with the misery of living in captivity, and puts a curse upon himself if he should ever forget his country and his God. Then he curses his enemy.

In *PSALM 138*, David has written a song of praise and thanksgiving in which he reminds himself of his glorious and miraculous deliverance. Probably one of the most beautiful texts with which we ever deal, and one which is much used in all metaphysical work, may be found in verse 8: "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands." If we dwell, not on our problems, but on the perfection of the Omnipresence and Omniscience of God we shall suddenly find that we are no longer involved with our problems, but that we are completely swept up by the magnitude of the Mind of God.

PSALM 139, is a psalm of David and, to my mind, one of the most beautiful sections in the whole Bible. It was written by a man who not only had a tremendous understanding, but

was also very "human." I must point out here that one of the great dangers of finding spiritual understanding is that one can almost become inhuman. That is why Jesus, in the Lord's Prayer, said: "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," for the moment people get a smattering of Truth, they almost inevitably get the feeling that they are better than their fellowmen. That is one of the reasons that the Hebrews had such a rough time. They believed that they were the "chosen people" yet God never chooses anybody—we choose Him. And so we find, in our own experience, when we have the "touch of God," as one might call it, that there is a tendency to feel that we are superior to others. Whatever else you do, do not fall into this trap. It can be spiritually costly. We are where we are because of our particular stage of evolution, and so is every other human being. What happens to us at this stage is the result of our efforts, for we are in Truth and have the privilege of applying Truth in our lives.

Dr. Fox often used to make me smile, for almost every time he read a chapter from the Bible, he would say: "This is my favorite." Now, I find myself doing the same thing! It happens that when you read something and identify yourself with it, it becomes part of you, and of all the psalms, the 139th is the one that means the most to me.

Some of them contain much of the old Hebrew theology, but not the 139th. It is a mystic's song to God and there is no interest in theology, no interest in what has been, of what will be. It is the song of a man who has met his God and is overwhelmed by reverence and love, which is the essence of true humility. Anyone having this experience is quite convinced that he is the most unworthy of persons, no matter what the world may think of him. This is followed by an intense joy - a feeling of "aliveness" that is beyond the power of words to describe.

When I ask a student to write out some of the psalms for me in his own words—and, I often do this—I sooner or later ask for the 139th Psalm, and I am always fascinated by the results. Of course, Biblical language is sometimes very difficult to understand, but I count on two things - first, on the student's treatment for Divine Wisdom, and second, that the literary beauty of the psalm will fill him with a sense of its magnificence. To me, as I have said so many times, the use of words is the greatest of artistic creations—not that I underestimate the other forms of artistic expression—but the ability to paint word

pictures, to paint the diagram of the soul in words is, I think, the greatest gift of all.

Nothing gives a more simple or complete expression of the relationship between God and man that this hymn. The psalmist commences with the acknowledgment that God knows everything that he does, even those things of which he himself is not aware. We know, of course, that this is true, for He is known as the Silent Watcher, and no matter what you or I may be thinking of at any given moment, the Presence of God knows it. Even when we try to rationalize ourselves out of a predicament, the Presence knows this also, and sometimes gives us an unpleasant jab, known as a twinge of conscience. In the first four verses the psalmist acknowledges the Omniscience of God. He knows that this Omniscient Being is also a personality, for he has had direct contact with Him. He expresses his humility before God by saying that such knowledge is too wonderful for him and so exalted that he cannot understand it.

He follows by saying: "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" (verse 7), and puts into words the realization which you and I accept intellectually. No matter where we go—New York, California, Europe—God is there. Wherever we are on this plane or on any plane, there God is too, so that actually there is no death—there is merely the effect of change. God is All in all, and there is no place in the whole of Creation where He is not; if that were not so, there could be no creation. The psalmist stresses God's Omnipresence with the words: "If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me" (vss. 8-10). As Moses put it so simply and beautifully: ". . . The place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (Exodus 3:5). The Presence of God is within you and me—forever and always, no matter where we are, or whether or not we realize it.

The psalmist continues, realizing that as he was drawn back into the vortex of the physical plane through the act known as conception, he was immediately—in Spirit—a perfect form and that the perfection of that spiritual form began to manifest in the fetus. His body was an image in the Mind of God and slowly but surely came to full development in the "lowest part of the earth" (the womb). He describes

God as the Originator, the Maker of everything that is. He then moves from the body to the Spirit and gives expression to the tremendous privilege he knows has been given him in his contact with God. He tells us that there is a place in meditation that we describe in metaphysics as the state where "the thought and the thinker are one," the place that we all are striving to reach. He finds that he has attained it, and he thanks God for the privilege.

Then he speaks about his enemies, but these are not the ones we actually encounter in the psalms. These enemies are his doubts, his fears, his greed, his pettiness, for even the greatest mystics have been subject to them and have had to fight against them constantly. Therefore, he asks God's aid in getting rid of his shortcomings, and then finally ends with the great mystic's prayer: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (vss. 23-24). You see, when a person achieves the contact, he becomes painfully aware of the work that is still to be done.

PSALM 140 is quite different in tone from the previous one. It is the very typical plea for deliverance from an evil man who might have been David's other self or his particular enemy. There is nothing very involved in it.

PSALM 141 is a very beautiful plea of the spiritually elevated heart, a plea for understanding, right judgment and wisdom, and David makes it quite clear that the battlefield is in his own heart, or his subconscious mind, as we term it. The book of Proverbs says: "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he," and further advises: "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." This psalm is a prayer for a clean heart.

PSALM 142 was written during the period when David was being pursued by Saul. While he was hiding in a cave a spider spun a web across the opening so that Saul could not find him. It was written just before David's deliverance.

In *PSALM 143* David states that his soul thirsts for God. A realization of unworthiness is very much present and he reminds himself of what God has done for him in the past. It is the prayer of one who has come to the "Dark Night of the Soul," and who is now reminding God of the days when there was contact and pleading for grace.

PSALM 144 is a prayer of invocation, an individual as well as a congregational psalm. It is again a reminder of past glory and a prayer for its continuance.

PSALM 145 is the last of the Davidic psalms and a very beautiful song of praise.

PSALM 146 is the first of the five hallelujah psalms, extolling the goodness of the Lord.

PSALM 147 is a liturgical hymn praising God as the Creator and Sustainer of Man.

PSALM 148 is a song of praise in which the whole creation is called upon to praise the Creator.

PSALM 149 is a new song, celebrating a fresh experience of God's mercy. The two-edged sword in verse 6 refers to the power of life and death which we all have in our thought.

In *PSALM 150*, the final psalm, everything that has breath is urged to praise the Lord.

I hope that you have enjoyed going through the psalms. I am sure we all have our favorites, and I think there is not one from which we could not get something. But for serious study and work I would like to suggest the following verses for meditation: Psalm 2, verse 7: "Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee;" the 8th: "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 hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet" (vss. 4-6); the 18th: "For thou wilt light my candle: the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness" (vs. 28); the 23rd, 24th and 27th Psalms in their entirety; the 46th: "Be still, and know that I am God" (vs. 10); the 82nd: "I have said ye are gods" (vs. 6); the entire 107th; and also the 139th.

I think that these are the highlights of the psalms, and you will find that you will reach extremely high levels of consciousness in each of them. Meditation is a completely personal experience and what will "spark" one person, will not necessarily "spark" another—so there are 150 to browse through to find those which are for you, if the ones I have mentioned here do not suffice. The psalms are a small Bible in themselves—and, as such, everyone can find his need answered.

The book of Psalms has often been called the "Small Bible" and that it is. No matter what the problem may be, the means of solution can be found here.

M. M.

PROVERBS

Solomon was considered the wisest man in the Old Testament, and it is therefore not strange that the book of Proverbs was attributed to him. (In fact, his reputation was so firmly established and long lived that for centuries after, a sort of plagiarism in reverse was practiced—teachers and wise men took proverbs of their times, and even their own sayings and attributed them to Solomon!) And yet his actions, as presented in the history of his life, are far from convincing proof of his wisdom. With the exception of King Saul, he seems to have done more foolish things than any of the other kings of Israel. He actually did write certain chapters of the book of Proverbs, but not all the proverbs associated with his name were from his pen.

Now, there are three types of wisdom. There is the wisdom of shrewdness, there is the wisdom of the intellect, and there is the wisdom that we call Divine. (The first we often call sophistication; the second, education and the third, Illumination.) And it is possible for the truly devout—for you and for me—to contact that Divine Source and to receive enlightenment from the fountain head of All Wisdom. Though there is no mention of it in Solomon's biography, he too, must have contacted that Source at times.

This particular book, which is composed of 31 chapters, most of which are quite short, belongs to the Wisdom literature of Israel, of which some of the Psalms, Job, and Ecclesiastes are also part.

As one studies Bible symbolism and Bible history, it is interesting to discover the great similarity of thought—not necessarily of Judaic origin—in the Hebrew writings and those of the neighboring countries. There are sections, particularly in the Proverbs, that are duplicated almost verbatim in the Babylonian, Phoenician and particularly in the Egyptian scriptures, as well as in the Wisdom literature of the Arabians, and of the country known as the Land of the Edomites. This is particularly evident in the book of the great Egyptian scribe of the eighth century B.C., Amen-em-ope.

The religious instruction of Israel was in the hands of their prophets, their priests and their wise men. The most prominent and dramatic of these were the prophets, not only

because they spoke with resounding authority, but because they were the ones who were always threatening, warning, and prophesying that if Israel did not repent, tribulation would be her lot. The priests set the rituals, taught obedience to the Law, and encouraged piety to the best of their ability. The third group, the wise men, might be called the philosophers of Israel. They were concerned not with oracular pronouncements, nor with prophetic announcements, and even less with the Law and ritual. They believed very simply that God was Divine, man was His child, and that it was supreme wisdom to live according to His Law. This wisdom, they believed, was not the fruit of piety nor was it acquired under threat but through human experience and growth. Their approach was unique and was actually the beginning of the philosophy of the Hebrews. The Wisdom literature stresses ethical principles and practice. It warns of what is in store for the person who does not live according to its precepts and stresses his gain in obeying its teachings. It reveals a certain immaturity of thought, since it stresses rewards rather than altruistic behavior. It enjoins one to be good to one's neighbor for the purpose of avoiding punishment, and never thinks about the concept of Love towards him, although Moses told them, ". . . Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself . . ." (Leviticus 19:18). However, this is an improvement on the concept of "an eye for an eye," and there are many sayings in Proverbs that are both beautiful and wise, and many that are familiar to us.

Judaism is the only religion that teaches that God may be found through Joy. Jesus taught it, but Christianity does not. Here the normalcy of a religious life is taught, though it must be admitted that through the centuries this concept became overlaid with ritual, "For the letter killeth but the Spirit giveth life" (2 Corinthians 3:6).

When the wise men first began to teach, they instructed strangers and young people who passed through the town gates, or the people of the town who came to listen to them. In time they gravitated to the center of their town, and were what might today be called, "soap-box orators." Finally they set up schools and taught in their houses. They also had private students who were accepted only if they showed great promise of development. They had great popular appeal and attracted many followers or disciples. The wise men discussed their ideas and interpretations of the Law, not from the esoteric point of view, but from its literal meaning. This was the beginning of what we know today in Jewry as the Wisdom of the

Talmud. The Torah is the Law, and the Talmud is the Commentary on the Law.

Proverbs is totally without reference to mysticism. There are a few texts that are definitely occult in concept, but its teaching is primarily pragmatic in the sense that it can be applied here and now. It is based on the Law of give and take; it tells you that if you obey Proverbs you shall have a good life. It is a completely individual appeal, and the greeting, "My son," is addressed to you and to me. It might be considered the beginning of individualism for the Jews of that era—around 900 B.C.—and they believed completely in the integrity of the human being. They believed in the existence of God; that He was All Powerful; and that man should live in accordance with His Law. Living up to the highest that one knew was considered an individual responsibility, and resulted in many material advantages for the person who practiced the teachings of Proverbs. It is a book of Ethic.

The Hebrew word for proverb is "mashal," and may also be translated as "to be like," "likeness," or "comparison." Proverbs may, therefore, actually be called the Book of Likeness or the Book of Comparison, for it gives the individual a standard with which to compare his behavior. If he falls short in any way, it shows him that it is to his advantage to bring himself in alignment with its teachings.

The Hebrew word for Wisdom is "hokhmah," and its root meaning is very interesting; it means "firm," "fixed," "immovable." It may therefore be said that this is a book of immovable Truth of a completely practical nature. And that is precisely what the book of Proverbs is.

The book of Proverbs personifies the principle of Wisdom. Wisdom is referred to as a woman and there are many sections that speak very beautifully of her knowledge and what is to be gained by worshipping her. In chapter 8:22 she says: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old," and continues in verses 30-31: "Then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was His daily delight rejoicing always before Him; Rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth; and my delights were with the sons of men." Further along in the Bible, towards the end of the Old Testament, she is depicted as sitting on the throne with God the Father, the Logos. I do believe that the aspect of Wisdom is next in importance to Love, the greatest of all aspects—for if we do

not have Wisdom we do not have the ability to know what Love is. You will remember that the first personification of Wisdom is found in Job when the Voice of Wisdom speaks, and reflects all that is Wise, Good, True, and Beautiful.

The Book of Wisdom is sub-divided into seven sections. The first is called "The Excellence of Wisdom" (1:1-9:18); the second, "The Proverbs of Solomon" (10:1-22:16); the third, "The Sayings of the Wise" (22:17-24:34); the fourth, "Second Collection of Solomon's Proverbs" (25:1-29:27); the fifth, "The Words of Agur" (30:1-33); the sixth, "The Words of Lemuel" (31:1-9); and the seventh, "The Good Wife" (31:10-31).

As far as the authorship of the book is concerned, Solomon probably wrote sections I, II, and IV, though this does not necessarily mean that he wrote all of the proverbs ascribed to him in these sections. Chapters 8 and 9 are considered one of the oldest sections of Proverbs and show a strong Phoenician influence.

Section III parallels the writings of the great Egyptian scribe, Amen-em-ope. All that is known about Agur and Lemuel is that they probably were rulers of an Arabic tribe to the east of Palestine. The author of the acrostic, "the Good Wife," may have been a Hebrew and, I am sure, a person who must have had a great deal of experience with women! These sections were added to the book of Proverbs at a later date than those of Solomon.

The book opens with the old Judaic concept that: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Chapter 1:7) indicating a reverence and respect for the Law. It then begins to develop its ethical concepts. One truth that is strongly stressed and is repeated time and again, is that the man who lives in awe of the Lord, who walks in His footsteps, is blessed. The idea that the supernatural is something to be feared is also used in this book to keep the Israelites in line, but here the threats are less forcefully expressed than in the preceding books of the Old Testament or those that follow.

CHAPTER I states that the purpose of the book of Proverbs is "that men may *know* wisdom and instruction and understand words of insight" (RSV). To "know" anything in the real sense of the word, is to absorb it, to make it part of oneself, to *be* it. If we *really* know a thing, there is never any doubt within ourselves, we just know it, it is part of our

being. It is not a question of acceptance, it is. Taken in the Bible's sense—and in Genesis it is written that Abraham “knew” Sarah and she conceived a son—it means an intermingling of knowledge with being. And so the book of Proverbs tells us that when we know these things, we become them.

The word “instruction” has a very interesting root meaning in Hebrew. It means “discipline,” the discipline that goes with training ourselves in following the teachings of the wise men. We discipline ourselves to obey the commandments put before us and to become one with them. The Hebrew word for instruction, “musar” has another meaning which I am not too keen on giving—it means “chastisement.” But, I suppose, it is perfectly normal to say that we do have to take ourselves in hand, and that we do have to forbid ourselves certain things when we know they are wrong. We all have to keep our thoughts positive in order to achieve what we desire, and sometimes it is even necessary to discipline ourselves to attain this. It is therefore quite evident that the application of the teachings in this book is based on individual responsibility. The Wisdom is set before us, but nobody is going to apply it for us. We may read it, learn it, but if we do not absorb it and make it part of ourselves by practicing it, it is not going to be very effective. These truths have to be assimilated in the same manner that we assimilate our food, and we have to discipline ourselves to do so.

The Hebrew root of “understand” means “to separate,” to “divide,” that is to say, to distinguish between right and wrong. This is somewhat different from our idea of its meaning. It indicates that we have to take ourselves in hand when we study the book, that we have to absorb its teachings. We need the ability, the will-power, to choose to follow the teaching, and to practice its precepts.

CHAPTER 2 is quite straightforward and not difficult to understand. “Discretion” is used in its regular sense, “to be careful.”

In CHAPTER 3 there are two verses with which I think we are all familiar: “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths” (vss. 5,6). These texts are frequently used in metaphysical work. To me, it means that we should never look at the outer picture and take it as final. Our own intelligence is limited, but if we trust in the fact that God is with us; if we know that there

is the Perfect Pattern within us even though we can only see a wall before us, by keeping our mind firmly fixed on the Presence of God, we know that the wall will crumble. Our trust is in That which we cannot see.

CHAPTER 4 is the wisdom of the scholar for the scholar, and there are two particularly beautiful texts in it. The first is the seventh verse: "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: with all thy getting get understanding." Wisdom is that which comes from the Divine Source Which knows all; and understanding means the disciplining of ourselves to hold to the true line of action and knowledge. The other is the twenty-third, which says: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." As you know, "heart," is the Bible term for the subconscious.

CHAPTER 5 is obviously a discourse on marital life, and warns very definitely against any degree of licentiousness. It could, of course, be interpreted that the wife represents the soul, and that the strange woman is one's wrong desire, but I am very much of the opinion that it refers to the practical, everyday code of living. It is a discourse on the commandment: "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14).

CHAPTER 6 consists of a series of warnings. The first five verses deal with thoughtless application of the Judaic Law which required the assistance whenever possible for one in financial straits. However, this became a rather casual and dangerous practice by generous persons who guaranteed loans when the borrower was in no position to repay. In those days the thorough system of credit checking we have today was not in existence, and the pledge was "stricken by hand" (verse 1) or as we would say today, "sealed with a handshake." Consequently the nation was plagued by a number of bad debts that resulted in laws being passed to punish delinquents. The teachers of the wisdom therefore warn against such misguided generosity. They further point out to the guarantor the wisdom of paying off the loan himself, or if he does not have the money to do so, to refrain from becoming involved in the transaction at all.

Verses 6 to 11 are an admonition against laziness, and state the price of indolence. It seems as pertinent today as it was in 900 B.C.

Verses 12 to 15 are a warning against perversity.

The seven deadly sins are listed in verses 16 to 19 and deadly they are, even today.

Because of poor arrangement, the warning against adultery and its price, which starts with verse 20, is carried through Chapter 7.

CHAPTER 7 deals with the seduction of an immature, inexperienced youth by methods still effective today. He lacks understanding, and you will remember, according to the Hebrew root that means "to distinguish," "to be able to perceive," or as we would say, to discriminate. It goes without saying, of course, that if we ourselves also practiced discrimination, we would never get into difficulties either.

CHAPTER 8 was written in praise of Wisdom and the reader is exhorted to seek her out, for she is accessible to all and well worth winning. The only requirements are a discerning mind and a willingness to make the effort; God will not do it for the individual. That is the pivotal point of the Wisdom teachings. In other sections of the Bible it is taught that God will come to the aid of a person who makes a sacrifice, but in this book there are only two references to it (15:8 and 21:3) and in both cases the value to God of a sacrifice depends upon the spirit in which it is made.

In CHAPTER 9 there is again an invitation to seek out Wisdom. The 10th verse is very well known among metaphysicians, as well as non-metaphysicians: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the Holy is understanding." It is one of the most beautiful texts of the Bible. People have believed through the ages, and still do, that man must fear God. However, few people have a true conception of what this really means. The root meaning of the word fear is "awe," "veneration," "adoration," and "a desire to be like, to become like That which Is". And so you find that the desire to emulate, to find, God is the beginning of having a firm, fixed way (understanding), and with that comes the ability to discriminate, to separate the wheat from the chaff, to continue in the path that the soul knows is the right one.

CHAPTER 10, 11, and 12 are simple and direct and do not require comment.

CHAPTER 13 (verse 13) is one of the few places in which the Word—it should actually be capitalized in the passage—is mentioned in the Wisdom teaching. "Who despiseth His Word shall be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded." The real meaning of "commandment" is that of a proverb that expresses an aspect of the teaching. However,

what the text really means is that when you or I go against what we know is the Eternal Truth, we get into the usual difficulties.

In CHAPTER 14 the reader is once more admonished, advised, cajoled, as well as threatened in an effort to get him to follow the teachings of Proverbs.

CHAPTER 15 is divided into four sections and covers the concepts of self-respect and consideration of others. It opens with a text that is probably one of the best known in the Bible: "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger." The first section is devoted to kindness in speech, and we are admonished to choose our words carefully. One of the things that the race does not seem to realize is that the power of speech is a God-given privilege. We are in the habit of bandying words about, sometimes humorously, sometimes caustically, frequently slanderously, and not very often in the way that they were intended to be used. Our words have power and are the symbols of ideas.

In the second section the courteous reply is stressed; if we are well mannered towards others, we will soon find that we will receive the same kind of treatment in return and experience an improvement in our personal relations.

The next section, the third, stresses the wisdom of silence. To paraphrase Lamentations, "there is a time to live and a time to die, a time to speak and a time to keep quiet." Silence is still the most difficult quality to learn, and we are cautioned in this section that there is a time when we should refrain from speech—not, of course, because of surliness or our part, but because there are things that are best left unsaid.

The value of silence is of primary importance to us. It is only when we learn to be completely silent within ourselves that we find that which we are really seeking—we find God. It is only when we have complete inner quiet, that we actually can feel His Presence.

The first 7 verses of CHAPTER 16 deal with religious concepts, which is a rather unusual departure for this book. The name of the Lord is mentioned in each of the seven verses, and then the author returns to a consideration of ethical behavior and its effect on the good life.

CHAPTER 17 is quite straightforward and does not require explanation. To the teachers of Wisdom anyone who did not have a knowledge of the Law of God, or did not obey it when

he did have it, was a complete fool. The teachers of Wisdom looked upon everyone who did not study with them or live according to their tenets as an absolute idiot, and they frequently used the statement "A man is a fool if . . ."

The first verses of CHAPTER 18 state that through sensual desire a man can completely separate himself from any intuitive guidance and intelligence without being aware of having done so. Once he realizes this and changes his motivation, he can regain his contact with the Presence within. Verse 19 I take literally, for it is true that there is nothing more violent than family feuds. It is relatively easy to patch up quarrels between friends, for there is more leniency and tolerance between them than there is within the bosom of a family.

CHAPTER 19, a repetition of ideas in other chapters.

CHAPTER 20 speaks out against excessive drinking and is, I believe, often used by Alcoholics Anonymous.

In CHAPTER 21, we find a slightly different drift of thought, namely that God controls the action of the king. In those days the king was considered not only as the symbol of God in action, he was also thought to be completely wise. In this chapter his wisdom is attributed to God.

CHAPTER 22 stresses the desirability of the "crown of a good name," and this certainly applies as much today as it did then. There is nothing in the world more valuable than a good name and reputation. A friend of mine used to say that the only way to live a good life was to make sure you never did anything you would object to seeing headlined in the newspapers.

In verse 6 there is a rather odd phrase: "Train up a child." This does not mean training a child in the conventional meaning of the word, but refers to the dedication of a child to the paths of righteousness. The subconscious is in its most open and formative state in the first seven years of a person's life, and ideas that are absorbed during that period are tenaciously held and very difficult to displace.

The sayings of the wise start in this chapter (v. 17) and continue through Chapter 24:34. The sayings are subdivided into 3 sections in the following manner: the first, Chapter 22:22 through 23:14; the second 23:15-24:22; and the third 24:23-34, and are preceded by an introduction (22:17-21). They give advice on how to live.

The first three verses of CHAPTER 23 comment on table manners. In the 7th verse it says of us: "For as he thinketh in his heart so is he: Eat, drink, he saith to thee; but his heart is not with thee." The first half of the verse is quite familiar to most of us, but as we never use the second half I suppose it is as unfamiliar to you as it is to me. It refers to table manners and gluttony. The first section of the verse: "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he," refers to the fact that what you say or do does not matter as much as what you think unconsciously. Whether it is a question of table manners or a deep subconscious resentment, the same law works in proportion to the importance of the idea.

In CHAPTER 24 there are two verses (3 and 4) that are extremely well known: "Through wisdom is a house builded; and by understanding is it established: And by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all pleasant and precious riches." If you have a really difficult problem, meditate on these words, and you will find that they are a powerful "metaphysical regenerator," for what does wisdom mean? "Firmness," "a fixed state." Therefore, through a firm, fixed state of mind a house is built so that its foundations are firm. And this is brought about by understanding, which means discrimination, discernment. "Wisdom" therefore stands for the Superconscious. "understanding" for the subconscious, and "knowledge" for the conscious use of choice. These are the three levels from which a demonstration manifests. When we want to make a demonstration we *use* the Wisdom that has been implanted in us, and the understanding of it, to consciously state the thing that we need. Knowledge is conscious thought, intellect. The subconscious discriminates once it accepts the idea.

The second collection of Solomon's proverbs starts with CHAPTER 25. The first part of it (25:1-27:27) consists of a commentary on worldly wisdom, while the second half (28:1-29:27) is more of a religious dissertation. As far as this chapter is concerned, there is not anything in it that needs special comment.

The same may be said of CHAPTERS 26, 27, 28, and 29.

CHAPTER 30 consists of Agur's personal reflections (1-14) and his numerical sayings (13-33). None of the names in verse 1 appear elsewhere in the Old Testament with the exception of the word "Ithiel" which is found once in Nehemiah. These are not Hebrew but Arabic names, and *The Interpreter's Bible* believes that this chapter was incorporated into the book of

proverbs by the early scribes because of its words of Wisdom. The numerical sayings are rather pungent but the entire chapter has great vitality.

CHAPTER 31 is also by an author of Arabic origin, and of King Lemuel nothing is known beyond this fact. His mother must have been a very wise woman.

The book of Proverbs can rightly
be termed a handbook for
right living. It is a manual
for "men of good will".

M. M.

Thank you, and God bless
you.

Mildred Mann

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 16

THE BIBLE SERIES

A METAPHYSICAL
AND SYMBOLICAL
INTERPRETATION OF

The Bible

by

Mildred Mann

