

# ***Contemporary Mystic Christianity*** **Bible Self-Study Supplement**

## **Songs of Adoration**

When the Initiate has arrived at the state presaged in the 119th Psalm there is but one expression adequate to voice it, and that is praise. Adoration must of necessity follow the contemplation of the glorious spiritual universe (which includes man himself) outspread before the vision of the seer.

Make a joyful noise unto God, all the earth;  
Sing forth the glory of his name;  
Make his praise glorious!

Such are the praises sung in the 66th Psalm. No longer is prayer merely a petition. The oneness of all is realized. No longer does the lamentation of the earlier Psalms find expression here in an appeal for strength to overcome or courage to preserve. There is no life but Spirit, no path but that which leads into an ever-increasing beauty. Consequently the most beautiful and inspiring of all the Psalms are those whose theme is praise.

## **The 19th Psalm — The Astrological Psalm**

The Hebrews, like the Chaldeans, looked upon astrology as a sacred science; not, indeed, worshipping the stars and

planets as such, but as the outward sign of the inward power or Attribute of Deity. Despite all efforts to eradicate this astrological influence from Holy Scripture it still remains, not always clearly discerned, but revealed by careful and thoughtful study. Thus every book in the Bible yields a beautiful astrological interpretation. It is one of a seven times involved meaning contained in the Scripture. This should in itself convince the most skeptical that there are great cosmic truths underlying the science of spiritual astrology. The speech of the stars is the music of the spheres which is audible to the interior hearing of the Initiate, as was understood and taught in the Pythagorean Mysteries. Yet even the uninitiated may read the starry script, however deaf he may be to the inner music which accompanies it.

The 19th Psalm is perhaps the clearest example among the Psalms of the astrological interpretation. There are others, but none in which the astrological content is so definitely marked. In it we recognize an apostrophe to the spiritual powers of the starry heavens as they were known to the ancient Wise Men, and as they are still known to Magi who are not recognized by the world.

Like the Chaldean and Persian Magi, the Hebrew mystic typified in David, learned through inner guidance and contemplation to hear the celestial voices, and translated

this knowledge into such glorious love songs of the spirit's exaltation that all the world has paused to listen.

The heavens declare the glory of God.  
And the firmament showeth his handiwork,  
Day unto day uttereth speech,  
And night unto night showeth knowledge.  
There is no speech nor language;  
Their voice is not heard,  
Their line is gone out through all the earth,  
And their words to the end of the world,  
In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun.

The voice of the stars is universal; it speaks to all mankind. On the sky is inscribed the glittering record of the past evolution, present status and future development of the entire human race. Wise is he who learns to comprehend its meaning and to follow its directions.

In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,  
Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,  
And rejoiceth as a strong man to run his course,  
His going forth is from the end of the heavens,  
And his circuit unto the ends of it.  
And there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

The Sun is the great central magnetic reservoir for the entire solar system. The Earth depends upon it for its life,

light and sustenance. Science deals with the physical power of the Sun, but in addition to this mundane knowledge, the New Age religion gives instruction about the spiritual powers which are likewise focused through the Sun. It is the love power emanating from the glorious Sun Spirit that sounds the dominant note in the music of the spheres. It is said that each dawn when the Sun rises in the east a particular tone is heard in the ethers — the keynote of that day — and in Goethe's Faust, Helena refers to this keynote as a "thunder-sound." It is the same wondrous power of love emanating from the Spirit in the Sun which holds the planets in their accustomed places, revolving in their orbits at just the right distance to receive the spiritual impetus necessary to their further progress and development. This power emanating from the spiritual Sun is known to academic science only as the law of attraction.

The Psalmist, who through spiritual Illumination understood the inner Reality of the exterior phenomena of the universe, sings joyously of the Supreme Lord manifest in the Law which controls the destinies of the universe with its myriad streams of evolving life:

The law of Jehovah is perfect restoring the soul,  
The testimony of Jehovah is sure making wise the simple.

The precepts of Jehovah are right, rejoicing the heart,

The commandment of Jehovah is pure, enlightening the eyes.

The commandments of Spirit are no joyless discipline laid upon an agonized heart: they are sources of the keenest happiness, the widest freedom:

More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold,  
Sweeter also than honey and the droppings of the honeycomb,  
Moreover by them is thy servant warned;  
In keeping them there is great reward.

How should it be possible for any who have caught even the smallest glimpse of such glory to do other than wear the crown of humility? For him there can be no vainglory in regard to even the most brilliant accomplishments possible to men.

Who can discern his errors?  
Cleanse thou me from hidden faults.  
Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins;  
Let them not have dominion over me;  
Then shall I be upright,  
And I shall be clear from great transgression.

David closes this beautiful hymn with the following noble prayer, which should be considered as a mantram, the use of which awakens the ego to true communion with spiritual Law. It is the perfect prayer for the aspirant to the Christ Mysteries, and may well begin and end the labors of the day. It possesses a potency undreamed of by the neophyte until he experiences it through faithful repetition of its phrases coupled with an earnest and sincere endeavor to live them:

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart

Be acceptable in thy sight,

O Jehovah, my rock, and my redeemer.

### **The Hallelujah Chorus**

In Psalms 145-150 (Tahillah) the Adoration motif is continued in the Hallelujah chorus of David, as the new-born in the sunrise of the New Day. The chorus of Psalms begins with a song of the Angel of Jehovah, and concludes on the high note of the heavenly Hierarchy of angelic hosts and ministers: "We see the face of God."

*Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,*

*And thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.*

*Jehovah upholdeth all that fall,*

*And raiseth up all those that are bowed down.*

*The eyes of all wait for thee;  
Thou openest thy hand,  
And satisfiest the desire of every living thing.*

*Put not your trust in princes,  
Nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.  
Happy is he . . . whose hope is in his God:  
Who made Heaven and Earth,  
The sea and all that in them is;  
Who keepeth truth forever;  
Who executeth justice for the oppressed;  
Who giveth food to the hungry.*

*Jehovah looseth the prisoners;  
Jehovah openeth the eyes of the blind;  
Jehovah raiseth up them that are bowed down.*

*It is good to sing praises unto our God;  
For it is pleasant, and praise is comely.  
He healeth the broken in heart,  
And bindeth up their wounds.  
He counteth the number of the stars;  
He calleth them all by their names.  
His understanding is infinite.*

*Praise ye Jehovah from the heavens:  
Praise him in the heights.  
Praise ye him, all his angels:*

*Praise ye him, all his host.  
Praise ye him, sun and moon:  
Praise him, all ye stars of light.  
Praise him, ye heaven of heavens.*

*Sing unto Jehovah a new song,  
And his praise in the assembly of the saints.  
Let them praise his name in the dance:  
Let the saints exult in glory.  
Let the high praises of God be in their mouth,  
And a two-edged sword in their hand.*

*Praise God in his sanctuary:  
Praise him in the firmament of his power.  
Praise him according to his excellent greatness.  
Praise him with timbrel and dance:  
Let everything that hath breath praise Jehovah.  
Praise ye Jehovah.*

Note in the above verses selected from the five Hallelujah Psalms (145-150) the reference to the dance as an expression of praise to God; that is, of devotion. In the earliest Mystery Temples the dance was a sacred ceremony having as its object to imitate the motion of the stars. Sophocles, in an ode to Pythagoras, for example, refers to this sage as the author and director of the dances of the gods. The dance acquired such perfection in his school that



the entire Pythagorean philosophy could be displayed by its means.

One of the most famous of Grecian Temple dances was that which was sacred to The Four (Fire, Air, Water, Earth). Only specially prepared persons could participate in the ceremonial of the Sacred Four. Another dance, the astrological significance of which is obvious, was the Dance of the Labyrinth, ascribed to the hero Theseus who slew the Minotaur. Still another was the powerful dance of the Eumenides, the spirits of Good Fate, and a dance portraying the love story of Venus, Mars and Vulcan.

In the early Christian Church also, albeit it is not generally known, dancing once formed an integral part of the ritual, special provision being made for the dancers to perform in the choir, and it is said that the bishops were designated Praesules because they led the dance on Feast days.

The two Christian countries most concerned in the development of the Christian dance are Spain and France. Even so late as the middle of the eighteenth century there were vestiges of religious dances in the Spanish cathedrals, also in Portugal and Roussillon. The Mozarabic Mass at Toledo was famous for its dancers. The Mozarabs of Spain were people not Arabic by blood but who adopted the

Moorish ways of civilization and translated the Mass into Arabic.

The fine arts were a part of all early Temple Mysteries, and were not excluded from Christianity until the era of extreme Protestantism and Puritanism, although certain individuals and sects fought all these seemingly "worldly" practices very bitterly from the earliest times. Thus the dominant Western Church rejected the paintings of the Gnostic artists. Many portraits of Christ were in existence, and while we do not know the facts as to their authenticity, they would be invaluable today as indicating the impression early devotees had of the Christ. They were destroyed by order of the Roman Church. It is difficult to see any reason for this, although we have a corollary in the persecution which a like attitude led to in relation to the Holy Grail poetry in the fourteenth century when the Order of the Temple was destroyed. So closely associated in the popular mind were the Grail legends and the Order of the Temple that the Church could not allow the Grail literature to remain unchallenged and we have scarcely more than relics of it today, most of what remains having been adapted to the Church doctrines and heretical elements carefully expunged or made to conform.

Sculpture, music, drama, architecture, poetry and painting all rose with the Mysteries. The earliest form of

writing was poetry, which was religious in character and was thought to have magical properties. Thus the word "charm" originally referred to the poems of ancient bards, whose words were believed to contain a magical potency. Such fundamental truths are not to be lightly cast aside. Skepticism may seem to obscure them, but they only slumber for an age, and then reappear in greater power and splendor. The persecution of the Gnostic Mysteries by the orthodox Church was circumvented by the Schools of the Minstrels in medieval times, whose poetry celebrated the same Mysteries. Whether we consider the Cycles of the Holy Grail with their attendant Arthurian Mysteries or the love lyrics of the troubadours celebrating the Mystic Marriage, we recognize afresh the touch of the Gnostic Masters. The Medieval Passion Play is the reappearance of the Mystery Drama of earlier ages, such as were once performed in the inner courts of the Temple.

Most of the sacred legends were first done in rhythm, if not rhyme, and then set to music. The Temple teachers well knew the value of certain rhythms in inducing heightened periods of consciousness. Thus Church music arose, although at the present time much of it is not suited to lifting the vibratory tone of the body and in some instances it is definitely deteriorating in its effect upon the nerve centers. The Mystery rituals were sung or chanted in a carefully selected rhythm to harmonize with the individual

or racial vibration and purpose to be achieved, and we are still able, despite the problems of translation, to recognize this fact in many Psalms.

## **The 23rd Psalm: The Crown of the Psalms**

The Psalms of praise may be defined as the triumphant chants of one who has found the pearl of great price, having surrendered his all to the Eternal Life.

Like the magnificent 119th Psalm, the 23rd Psalm has an outstanding astrological significance; but it is a chant of the Earth and its blessings, an invocation of the Earth Spirit rather than an invocation to the Sun Spirit as was the 119th Psalm. The 119th Psalm was a paean to the Sun and Stars; the 23rd celebrates the sweet and lowly, but equally important, rites of the Mystic Earth.

This Psalm is divided into twelve distinct parts corresponding to the twelve signs of the Zodiac, which as we know denote in their turn the twelve spiritual Attributes of Deity destined to be awakened in man, and the twelve cranial nerves which become avenues of power as the body is transformed into the Tree of Life which grows within the New Jerusalem. By the development of the Tree of Life, the head is enhaloed with radiance, and the twelve sacred flowers bloom in the perfected body of the God-man, who

shall have his dominion at the end of the present Day of Manifestation.

The motif of the 23rd Psalm is fittingly described as a musical parable of a good shepherd and his sheep. Esoterically, the shepherd symbolizes the Initiate and refers to the highest qualities of Aries, which are purity, sacrifice and transmutation. All names used in the Bible containing Ra, Rama or Ram convey a like meaning and refer to sanctuaries of prayer or to the homes of shepherds (spiritual teachers). Ra was a Sun God of Egypt. The Shepherd King-Initiates first came to Earth as teachers of mankind when the Sun by precession entered Libra, and ushered in the deeper phases of spiritual light belonging to its opposite, Aries.

These Priest-Kings bore a staff like a shepherd's crook (the Christian Cross). The early Pharaoh who befriended Joseph belonged to this line. As the ages passed, the esoteric truths were lost by all save the few. The masses returned to the old Taurean religion which had degenerated into unspeakable perversions. To the line of the degenerating Pharaohs belonged that one who persecuted Moses and held the Israelites in cruel bondage.

Beneath the story of the shepherd's day and his work, the 23rd Psalm conceals truths of the Way of Initiation. A life is but a day in God's great school of evolution: "A thousand

years with the Lord are but as a day." Only the light of the Ancient Wisdom could inspire this song of the soul's attainment in which the environment and vicissitudes in the life of a simple shepherd are set forth in accurate parallelism to the development and unfoldment of the powers of the Initiate.

The Church uses this Psalm to exemplify a life perfect in faith and trust. The esoteric Christian discovers in it a key to the deeper understanding of Initiation. We will consider this from the standpoint of spiritual astrology.

Jehovah is my shepherd: I shall not want. This verse deals with the power of the sacrificial lamb, Aries, the cosmic fire force slain since the foundation of the world for the sake of man's evolution. The same truth echoes down the centuries and finds memorable utterance by the Christ when he said: "Blessed is he that doth hunger and thirst after righteousness, for he shall be filled."

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: Thus sings the Initiate of the constant provision of nourishment, rest and security by cosmic Law. This relates to the protective, principle of Taurus, which is the feminine expression of the power of Venus, or love. The lifting to this communion dissipates all fear of poverty, disease or failure, for there is a constant contact with the Divine. Across the centuries the

gentle voice of Love is forever calling: "All that the Father hath is mine."

He leadeth me beside the still waters: The literal translation of this verse is "He leadeth me beside the waters of quietness," which recalls the Master's words: "If you drink of the waters of eternal life [Initiation] which I bring unto you, ye shall never thirst again." The esoteric accent here is on the still waters. It has been said that the material universe is the "outer crust of mind", and it is because the mind, ruled by Gemini, is torn hither and thither between Spirit on one hand and the sense-ideas on the other that nature reflects discord, both in the microcosm and in the macrocosm. When the ego centers itself without faltering in Spirit alone, the waters of the mind become still, for they are no more stirred by the tempest of the airy Gemini.

He restoreth my soul: The sphere of the soul is Cancer, the mystic door into the new consciousness of life. In the original Hebrew, the word here used for soul means life. "Ye must be born again," admonishes the Master, "if ye would enter the kingdom of heaven," an entry eventually to be made through Initiation rather than under the sword of the last enemy, death.

He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake: This is the victorious chant of self-mastery by

one who has become a King-Priest. Its astrological significator is the fiery Leo, home of the Sun, the royal kingly sign. It symbolizes One who descended from His heavenly throne to become the servant of man, garbed in the fashion of the Cross, who came bearing the Message as yet but dimly understood: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me."

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me: Not death, but the subtle lure of the sense life is the valley of the shadow which imperils every neophyte. The power of purity developed within, the idealism of Virgo, sings in this verse: "I will fear no evil for Thou art with me." The Christ referred to this attainment in His Sermon on the Mount, when He said: "Blessed are the pure in heart for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me: The staff is again the spiritual power gained through lifting the spinal spirit fire to the head, the result of which is regeneration. This is the same staff which Moses lifted from the ground to become the Brazen Serpent, symbol of the true path of wisdom. The rod is the spur of pain which stimulates the Quest.

"Before the feet can stand in the presence of the Masters, they must be washed in the blood of the heart."



The staff and the rod symbolize the scales of Libra, the balance to measure the soul's attainment, the trial-gate at which is tested the soul's intrinsic worth.

In His- wondrous comprehension of the travail of the Path, the Christ gave His most blessed promise: I go, but I will send the Comforter unto you who will lead you unto all truth."

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: In the original Hebrew, the word here translated table means "something spread out." Esoterically, it is the aura that has been expanded through high aspiration and pure living, which protects from the beasts of the lower nature; the redemptive power of Scorpio, wherein the scorpion is transformed into the eagle. The carnal man becomes the man celestial.

It is here that the Master tells us: "My yoke is easy and my burden is light." The yoke that is easy is chastity, and the burden that is light is the regenerated life. That life becomes the true light of every man who cometh into the world.

Thou anointest my head with oil, refers to the power of Sagittarius, the sign of the higher mind. Oil symbolizes wisdom and healing, and the reference here is made to the awakening of the two most important spiritual organs of the

head, the pineal and pituitary glands. As the shepherd anoints with healing oil those sheep whose heads have been torn and bruised through the hard day, so the Great Shepherd also has promised man comfort as he proceeds on the long pilgrimage through materiality, the purpose of which is the spiritualization of both mind and body: "Come unto Me all ye who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

My cup runneth over: The cup, the power of Capricorn, the Christed power born within is the Grail Cup, which everyone who truly follows in His steps discovers within the body. This cup may be seen when the disciple's body is studied with extended vision; it contains the waters of eternal life from which he learns to partake freely. Such a one rises superior to the laws of disease and age. He has found the Tree of Life seen by John in his sublime vision on Patmos. Through the power of this mystic cup which runneth over is born a deeper understanding of the Master's statement: "I am come that they might have life and have it more abundantly."

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: Goodness and mercy — the two columns of the new temple of the body; the two urns held by the zodiacal man, Aquarius. When these two columns, or powers, are erected within man himself, he then can give forth and

receive only goodness and mercy. To such the Master speaks: "I am the Good Shepherd and the sheep know My Voice."

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever: The supreme goal is attained. The secret of conscious Eternal Life has been learned, and the building of the glorious, deathless body of the Adept has been consummated. This ideal the Master intimated in His words: "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up again"-an old mystic formula of Initiation which He knew would be understood by all Initiates through the ages to come.

When this realization is attained, the Quest is ended. The Initiate dwells in the house of the Lord (high, spiritual consciousness) forever. This is the culminating ideal of the current Piscean Dispensation.

### **The Troubadour of God – Saint Francis of Assisi**

Before leaving the Psalms, we turn for a moment to that most beloved of medieval saints, Francis of Assisi, who liked to think of himself as a troubadour of God. He comes near the middle of the great medieval song cycle which, yielded the cherished Mystery literature of the Middle Ages, culminating in Dante's Divine Comedy, which closed the door on one of the world's epic periods. As Francis, a mystic Initiate, experienced more and more of the Christ

Illumination, he composed a Psalm, "The Canticle of the Sun," consisting entirely of stanzas of Praise, which sparkle with freshness and joy.

O Most High, Almighty, good Lord God, to thee belong praise, glory honour and all blessing!

Praised be my Lord God with all His creatures, and especially our brother the Sun, who brings us the day, and who brings us the light; fair is he, and shining with a very great splendour: O Lord, he signifies to us Thee! Praised be my Lord for our sister the Moon, and for the stars, the which He has set clear and lovely in heaven.

Praised be my Lord for our brother the wind, and for air and cloud, ccilms and all weather, by the which Thou upholdest in life all creatures.

Praised be my Lord for our sister water, who is very serviceable unto us, and humble, and precious, and clean.

Praised be my Lord for our brother fire, through whom Thou givest us light in the darkness; and he is bright, and pleasant, and very mighty, and strong.

Praised be my Lord for our mother the Earth, the which doth sustain us and keep us, and bringeth forth divers fruits, and flowers of many colors, and grass.

Praised be my Lord for all those who pardon one another for His love's sake, and who endures weakness and tribulation; blessed are they who peaceably shall

endure, for Thou, O Most Highest, shall give them a crown!

Praised be my Lord for our sister, the death of the body, from whom no man escapeth. Woe to him who dieth in mortal sin! Blessed are they who are found walking by Thy most holy will, for the second death shall have no power to do them harm.

Praise ye, and bless ye the Lord, and give thanks unto Him, and serve Him with great humility.

In this exquisite song may be glimpsed the love power which Francis expressed, and which was made manifest to his vision in the starry golden aura of the Christ — a glory which was reflected in himself as in a mirror and which produced the stigmata visibly upon his body. The outraying of sincere devotion is always characterized by golden fire flashing from the etheric heart, but whereas in ordinary people it is a momentary flashing which quickly dies down, in the saint it is an everburning light enclosing the whole man in a fiery golden star.

This is the Star of Glory in which the sainted Initiate walks, and in which he ascends from the body to serve with his Divine Exemplar, the Christ, in the interior realms of Spirit.

— ***Corinne Heline***