

Hamilton Smith

**Comments on
the book of Psalms**

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Comments on the Psalms

By Hamilton Smith

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Preface

Like many young believers, I had difficulty in understanding the Psalms. On the one hand there was so much pastoral language and on the other, many calls for vengeance. I was greatly helped by J. N. Darby's introduction to the Psalms in his Synopsis of the Books of the Bible. Darby explained that the Psalms “express the feelings, not only of the people of God, but often ... those of the Lord Himself.” However, “a maturer spiritual judgment is required to judge rightly of the true bearing and application of the Psalms than for other parts of Scripture; because we must be able to understand what dispensationally gives rise to them, and judge of the true place before God of those whose souls' wants are expressed,” and this is often “difficult as the circumstances, state, and relationship with God, of the people whose feelings they express are not those in which we find ourselves.” This helps us understand how “They teach us thus that Christ entered into the full depths of suffering which made Him the vessel of sympathizing grace with those who had to pass through” the sufferings.

Those two features, the pre-eminence of Christ in many of the Psalms, especially His entering into the sufferings of others, and the dispensational import characterize this book on the Psalms by Hamilton Smith. In many ways, this is an unique volume with its clear teaching of the prophetic aspect of the book while at the same time including the practical lessons of piety which are essential for God's people in any age. Smith always brings out the moral beauty and suffering unique to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Hamilton Smith is a beloved English expositor of the Scriptures who died in 1943. He wrote on many different portions of the Bible but is probably best known for his character studies of Abraham, Elijah, Elisha, Joseph, and Ruth which have been published in several languages. Those familiar with his style will value his terse, pithy language in this book. One of his effective teaching methods is short, profound comparisons and contrasts. In this book, he helpfully expounds on the many quotations on the Psalms in the New Testament. For these reasons, I can recommend this volume especially to young Christians who are studying the Psalms.

Scripture quotations are from the King James Version. Those marked “JND” are from the Darby translation of the Bible.

Believers Bookshelf is thankful to be able to publish the first complete edition of the Psalms by Hamilton Smith. We are indebted to the John Rylands University Library of Manchester for providing a copy of the original manuscript. Portions of Psalms 1 through 105 appeared in the British periodical “Precious Things” from 1957 (volume 1) through 1962 (volume 7).

May this volume provide the reader with a greater understanding of the Psalms and of the empathy and sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ and His glory.

Lytton J. Musselman

Norfolk, Virginia, U.S.A.

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Book 1

Psalm 1

The godly man in the midst of an ungodly world, waiting for the government of God to deal with the wicked, and bring the righteous into blessing.

The moral character of the man who will inherit earthly blessing through the government of God.

The psalm sets forth principles that are true of those who fear God at any period during the rejection of Christ. Nevertheless, in its strict interpretation, the psalm has in view the godly Jewish remnant who find themselves in the midst of a nation in public revolt against God and His Anointed. It sets forth the moral traits of this godly remnant, and the governmental dealings of God, by which the wicked will be judged, and the godly established in blessing upon the earth. This moral character was seen in all its perfection in Christ Himself, who identified Himself with the godly remnant of the Jews. Thus, while the psalm does not refer to Christ personally, it presents Christ morally.

(v. 1) The ungodly are viewed as in the ascendant. They have their counsels; their way of carrying out their plans; and they sit at ease in the place of power, scornful of the authority of God. In such circumstances we have depicted the outer life, the inner life, and the prosperity of the godly man. His outer life is marked by complete separation from the world around. He has no part in its counsels, its ways, or its godless ease.

(v. 2) His separation, however, is not merely outward and formal; it is accompanied by an inner life of devotedness to God. His delight is in the law of the Lord; and the Word that he delights in becomes the subject of his meditation day and night.

(v. 3) Further, his life is one of dependence upon the unfailing sources of supply in God like a tree drawing its sustenance from the rivers of water. Moreover, this separation from evil, devotedness to God, and dependence upon God, leads to a fruitful life. It develops a beautiful character that is fruit in the sight of God. Further, before man, his profession of godliness, set forth by the “leaf,” is not marred, or withered, by any inconsistencies. Finally, he is blessed in all that he does.

(vv. 4-5) It is far otherwise with the ungodly. They may appear to be established in the place of authority, sitting at their ease. Nevertheless, in the government of God they will be driven away like the chaff before the wind. For the present the wicked may prosper, and the godly suffer, and thus the government of God may appear to have failed. This manifests the important principles that, for the full display of God's holy government, whether in blessing the godly, or dealing with the wicked, we must await God's intervention in judgment in the day to come. Then it will be seen that the ungodly will not stand in the judgment; whereas the godly will be established and come into display, and blessing, in the congregation of the righteous.

(v. 6) In the meantime the godly soul has the comfort of the secret approbation of the Lord. For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, and that which the Lord approves will abide — all other will perish.

Psalm 2

The counsels of God as to the Messiah, rejected of men, yet, appointed of God to carry out His government, whereby the wicked will be judged and believers brought into blessing.

The counsels of God as to the Messiah, made known by decree, and fulfilled by power, in spite of the counsels of men. “The vanity of resisting Him, and the blessedness of trusting Him.”

(vv. 1-3) The psalm opens by presenting a world in revolt against the authority of God. The nations are seen in a state of “tumultuous agitation” in opposition to God and to Christ, vainly seeking to throw off divine authority and restraint. They say, “Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.” Men seek to banish all public recognition of God in order to pursue their lusts which, conscience tells them, will not bear the light of God. The Spirit of God in Acts 4:26-27, applies this Scripture to the rejection of Christ by “the Gentiles, and the people of Israel.” This confederacy against God and Christ was formed at the Cross; it is still the principle that governs the world; it will be fully developed and meet its due judgment after the removal of the church to heaven.

(vv. 4-6) From a world in revolt we pass to the calm of heaven to learn God's thoughts of man's vain efforts. The great men of the earth — its political leaders, its scientists, its philosophers — may combine to cast off all recognition of God, but, unmoved by all their efforts the Christ of God “sits in the heav-

ens,” and holds man's revolt in derision. Men rage on earth; God laughs in heaven. Human ideas are employed to convey to us heaven's contempt of man's folly.

Moreover, God not only holds these efforts of men in derision, but the time is coming when God will “speak to them in his anger.” For long ages God has been speaking in grace, and keeping silent in the presence of man's rebellion against His authority. God, however, has not been indifferent to “all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.” The silence of God is going to be broken, and when God speaks it will be in anger, manifesting “His fierce displeasure and men will be silent in terror.”

Further God's counsels for the One that man has rejected will surely be fulfilled. In spite of all that men say, or do, God has set His King upon His holy hill of Zion. So surely will God's counsels prevail that He can speak of them as if already accomplished — “I have set my King upon my holy hill.” Divine power accomplishes divine counsels. Rebellious man will come under judgment, and God's Anointed will reign.

(vv. 7-9) In these verses we are permitted to hear the King speaking as He declares the decree of God concerning Himself. The decree tells us the glory of His Person, the extent of His inheritance, and the greatness of His power. He is the One born in time — “to-day,” and as such owned by Jehovah, as Son of God. This is not His eternal Sonship, but rather His relationship to God as Man begotten in time, by divine generation. Man said, “Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?” God says, “That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”

The decree then passes from the glory of His Person to speak of the greatness of His Kingdom. Men reject the claims of Christ in order to claim the inheritance for themselves (Mark 12:7). They act as if the earth was at their disposal. In their vanity they leave out both God and the devil. They forget that though the devil for a time may be permitted to give the kingdoms of this world to whom he will (Luke 4:5-6), yet God has kept the ultimate disposal of this world in His own hands; and that Christ has only to ask, and God will give Him the nations for an inheritance, and the ends of the earth for a possession.

Finally the decree warns us of the resistless power with which Christ will root out of His Kingdom all things that offend. The kingdoms of man will be broken, like a potter's vessel dashed in pieces, beyond all possibility of reconstruction.

(vv. 10-12) Founded on the warnings of the decree, there is an appeal to the great ones of the earth. Before Christ comes forth to reign in righteousness the nations are invited to submit to Christ, and be reconciled to the Son lest they perish when His anger is kindled but a little. Judgment indeed is coming for the nations, but there will be those amongst them who will put their trust in the Lord. Such will be blest.

While it is true that the Spirit of God applies the first three verses to man's rejection of Christ at the Cross, the full development of this rejection is yet future. Again heaven's derision over earth's vain efforts to cast off the claims of God does not express God's present attitude towards the world. Nor is the appeal to submit to the King the gospel that is preached today. For its complete fulfillment the psalm looks on to the day when the true Church of God has been removed from earth. Then the nations will combine to cast off the authority of God, and heaven will hold their efforts in derision. Then, too, the gospel

of the Kingdom will be proclaimed before the judgment falls upon the nations. Those who receive this gospel will be preserved for millennial blessing (Rev. 14:6-7).

Psalm 3

Confidence in the presence of enemies as the result of faith in God, when outwardly all is against the soul.

Confidence in God when outwardly all is against the soul; when the enemy is in power, and apparently there is no help in God.

(vv. 1-2) In Psalm 2, the world takes counsel “against the Lord;” in this psalm the godly man says, “Many are they that rise up against me.” Enemies on every hand, with no public intervention from God on behalf of the godly, become the occasion for the enemy to say, “There is no help for him in God.”

(v. 3) In spite of outward appearances, faith sees that the Lord is a shield for the godly; his glory, the One in whom he boasts; and who, in due time, will lift up his head, though for the moment the enemy seems to triumph (Ps. 27:5-6; Ps. 110:7).

(vv. 4-6) Having this simple faith the soul confides in Jehovah — cries to the Lord, and is heard. The result being he can lie down and sleep though the circumstances are unaltered. Moreover he can awake and face ten thousands of opposers and not be afraid.

(vv. 7-8) He looks to the Lord to arise and act on his behalf, anticipating the time when all his enemies will be set aside in judgment, and the Lord's people reach their final blessing.

The experiences of the soul, and the desires expressed, clearly show that, primarily, the psalm contemplates a godly Jew who is waiting for the earthly and millennial blessing, which will be reached through the judgment of the living nations. The Christian, whose blessings are heavenly, looks to reach his full and final blessing, not through the judgment of his enemies, but by the coming of the Lord to take him to heaven.

There are, however, principles in the psalm which can well be used by the Christian in meeting troubles, while passing through a world from which Christ is absent. There are times when we are called to face not single trials but many. The troubles and the troubles are “increased.” In the presence of

troubles, whether single or multiplied, the believer can find in the Lord his “shield.” This defensive piece of armor is held between a man and his enemy. Blessed when faith realizes that God is between ourselves and all our troubles. It matters not then if the enemy be multiplied to “ten thousands of people.” Be it a question of ourselves and the enemy, one is too strong for us: if it is a question of God and the enemy it matters not if it is one or ten thousand against us.

The One who is our shield against the enemy becomes a resource for ourselves. As we avail ourselves of this great resource — as we cast our cares upon the Lord, He fills our hearts with His peace. The effect of prayer is not necessarily to change our circumstances, but to change ourselves. In place of being distressed and distracted we are kept in peace and sustained in the trial (Phil. 4:6-7). This is blessedly seen in the experiences of the psalmist. In the midst of his trials he cries to the Lord, has the consciousness of being heard, with the result, that, though the trials continue as before, he is kept in peace; he sleeps and is sustained; he awakes to the full consciousness of the trial but can face it without fear.

Psalm 4

Confidence in the presence of enemies as the result of conscious integrity, and the experience of God's mercy.

Confidence in God, in the presence of enemies, flowing from the consciousness of integrity, and the experience of God's mercy in former troubles.

(v. 1) The psalm opens with a prayer that expresses the confidence of the soul in God. Conscious of a walk in separation from surrounding evil, the psalmist can appeal to God as One who knows the righteousness of his walk, and who is, at the same time, the source of his righteousness. Moreover his confidence in God flows from the knowledge of God's mercy proved in former trials. Experience had taught the psalmist that seasons of pressure had been occasions of soul-enlargement. Thus the soul is encouraged to look for God's mercy in present trials.

(vv. 2-5) Having stayed his soul in God, the psalmist turns, with appeals and warnings, to the ungodly. The expression “sons of men” indicates men of high degree, and alludes to the great ones of the earth who have rejected God's Anointed (Ps.

2:2). The King was Israel's distinctive glory. In rejecting the King, the sons of men had turned the glory of the godly remnant into shame. As a result the nation was given over to vanity and a lie. Their own counsels and ways would prove but empty deceptions. The rejection of God's Anointed leads to the strong delusion under the man of sin (2 Thess. 2).

Further they are warned that in opposing the godly, they are setting themselves against those whom the Lord has set apart for Himself, and whose prayer the Lord would hear.

Finally they are warned to “Tremble and sin not” (JND). Let them tremble before a righteous God and forsake their sins. Let the loneliness of the night watches be an occasion for self-judgment. And having repented of their evil let them offer sacrifices of righteousness, and put their trust in the Lord.

(vv. 6-8) The psalmist closes by unburdening his soul before the Lord. Looking at the prevailing evil and the apparent prosperity of the wicked, many would be tempted to say, “Who will shew us any good?” Faith, however, sees that the favour of God — the light of His countenance — enjoyed by a suffering remnant, is far better than the outward prosperity of the

wicked. The favour of God brings gladness into the heart which far exceeds the enjoyment of temporal blessings. In the enjoyment of this favour the soul can lie down in peace and security, untroubled by over-anxiety as to the evil of the world. The enemy, as in the last psalm, may number ten thousands, but “Jehovah, alone” can make the godly dwell in safety (JND).

Prophetically the psalm looks on to the circumstances described in Psalm 2 — the future apostasy against God and Christ — and describes the experiences of the separate man of Psalm 1 (cp. Ps. 1:1-2 with Ps. 4:3-4). Practically the principles of the psalm hold good for the Christian in passing through a vain world where evil is in the ascendant in that which professes the Name of Christ on the earth. When “evil men and seducers ... wax worse and worse,” unless confidence in God is sustained, the believer may be tempted to say, “Who will show us any good?” The way this confidence is preserved is very blessedly set forth in the psalm, so that the soul may learn, in the midst of failure on every hand, God has set apart the godly for Himself; He hears their cry; and He alone is able to sustain the soul.

Psalm 5

Confidence in God, based on the knowledge of His righteous government, and immutable character.

An appeal to God, based on God's righteous government, and immutable character, to execute judgment upon the wicked, that the godly may enter upon their blessing.

(vv. 1-3) The psalm opens with an expression of the soul's daily dependence upon God. “In the morning will I direct my prayer to thee, and look up.” The appeal to God as “my King” involves the government of God, even as “my God” suggests the character of God.

(vv. 4-10) In the prayer that follows there passes before the soul the character of God (4-6); and need of the godly (7-8); and the evil of the ungodly (9-10).

The psalmist thinks first of God, for his prayer is based on the fact that the righteous character of God makes it impossible for God to pass over sin, and the government of God demands that God should judge the wicked. God's character is such that He cannot take pleasure in wickedness, or allow evil to exist in His

presence: hence in God's government the man that does evil must come under judgment, and the abhorrence of God (4-6).

As for the godly man, the psalmist recognizes that he can only enter into God's house — the presence of God — on the ground of mercy. Nevertheless, in the presence of his enemies, he looks to God to lead him in righteousness, and that God's way may be made plain before his face (7-8).

The ungodly are marked by corruption before men and rebellion toward God. Flattery is on their tongues; rebellion is in their hearts. The godly man looks to God to execute judgment upon them (9-10).

(vv. 11-12) The judgment of the wicked will be followed by the blessing of those who trust in God. In the meantime the favour of the Lord is a shield for the godly.

The psalm clearly indicates the distinct character of the earthly blessing of the godly Jew, in contrast to the heavenly blessings of the Christian. The Jew, having his portion on the earth, “looks for the removal of the violent and deceitful man, in order for his own comfort and rest. Not so the Christian. He leaves the violent man here and goes to heaven” (JND). This

accounts for the prayer for judgment upon enemies found in this psalm, and many others. The Christian is to pray for his enemies. The psalm, therefore, does not present Christian experience, though the righteous character of God, and the principles of His government, set forth in the psalm ever remain true.

Psalm 6

The exercises of a godly soul who identifies himself with the chastisement that has come upon God's people; though, by humbling himself, he shows his moral separation from the nation.

(v. 1) In the previous psalm the godly soul had owned that God had no pleasure in wickedness; now he recognizes that the nation has incurred the “anger” and “displeasure” of the Lord. While bowing under the rebukes and chastenings of the Lord, so justly incurred, he deprecates the Lord's displeasure and seeks His favour. The following verses give the soul's experiences in reaching the sunshine of God's favour.

(vv. 2-3) Having owned God's righteous dealings in chastisement, the soul pleads for God's intervention, first, on the

ground of mercy, and, second, on the ground that God cannot be indifferent to the distress of His own, He will put a limit to this distress. Therefore faith can ask, “O Lord, how long?”

(vv. 4-5) With increasing confidence the soul looks to the Lord to return in blessing, and deliver his soul from going down into death and the grave, that he might live on the earth for the praise of the Lord.

(vv. 6-7) Though submitting to the chastening of the Lord, the soul realizes that the unrepentant mass of the nation is opposed to him as his enemies. To stand alone in the midst of an opposing nation, as Jeremiah in his day, causes the soul acute anguish.

(vv. 8-10) Through these exercises the soul reaches the sense of the personal favour of the Lord. He realizes that the Lord is not unmindful of his tears; has heard his supplications; and received his prayer. This, however, he foresees will involve the shame and defeat of his enemies.

The exercises of this godly soul while prophetically setting forth the experience of the remnant in the midst of the guilty nation of the Jews in a day to come, has a bright expression in

the remnant who submitted to the baptism of John the Baptist. There, too, the Lord, by identifying Himself with the remnant, owned that the nation was under the rebuke and chastening of the Lord. Immediately the heavens are opened and the Father's voice expresses His infinite delight in the Lord. The repentant remnant, identified with Christ, enjoy this favour and escape the displeasure that rests upon the nation.

The principle of owning the chastisement of God's people, and casting ourselves upon the mercy of God, is right in any day of failure; and yet the experience of the psalm is clearly that of an earthly saint. The Christian looks for his blessing in resurrection, beyond death, in a heavenly scene. The psalmist looks for blessing on earth without going into death.

Psalm 7

The confidence of a godly man that commits the keeping of his soul to God, when suffering persecution for righteousness sake.

(vv. 1-2) The confidence of the soul in God when persecuted by an enemy that, blinded by hatred, acts in violence, without mercy and reason, like a lion.

(vv. 3-5) The expression of the soul's conscious integrity, and more, the consciousness of going beyond the requirements of righteousness by showing kindness to those who, without cause, were his enemies.

(vv. 6-7) Basing his appeal on the knowledge that God has commanded judgment for the wicked, the soul pleads that the time is ripe for God to act against the raging of His enemies, and for the sake of God's persecuted people. In result Jehovah would dwell in the midst of a praising people.

(vv. 8-9) The judgment of evil will establish the reign of righteousness among a people who will not be merely outwardly righteous, but morally in accord with the righteous God who “tries the hearts and reins.” The soul longs for the reign of the wicked to come to an end, and that the righteous man may be established.

(vv. 10-16) While waiting in the midst of abounding evil for the intervention of God, the godly soul is sustained by the knowledge of the character of God and His governmental dealings. God saves the upright in heart; God is a righteous judge; so far from being indifferent to evil, God is angry with the

wicked every day. God gives space for repentance, but if the wicked “turn not,” the sword of judgment is ready for its work in regard to the one who labours with iniquity, who conceives mischief, and utters that which is false. In the government of God the one that devises mischief will fall into the pit that he has dug for others.

(v. 17) The intervention of God in judgment upon the wicked will turn the prayer of the godly into praise.

In Psalm 6 there is the recognition of God's chastisement and, therefore, the appeal to the mercy of God. In this psalm it is suffering for well-doing, and hence the appeal is to the righteousness of God. Prophetically it sets forth the experience of the godly Jew under the persecution of Antichrist, who is distinctly in view in verses 14 to 16. Christ is the only One who in perfection suffered for well doing — “Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed Himself to him that judges righteously.” (1 Peter 2:22-23). The Christian is called to suffer for well-doing, and thus have the sympathy of Christ even as the Jewish remnant will in a day to come. Thus the Christian can in like circumstances

take up the confidence expressed in the psalm, without using the call for judgment upon his enemies (1 Peter 4:19).

Psalm 8

The psalmist, representing the godly remnant in Israel, anticipatively celebrates the universal dominion that God has counselled for the One that Israel rejected as their King.

The second psalm sets forth the rejection of God's anointed King and declares, that though rejected, He will lose none of His glories as the King. In God's time He will be established as King in Zion. Psalm 8, however, tells us that God has yet wider glories for His Anointed; and that the rejection of Christ as King, by Israel, becomes the occasion of disclosing to us these greater glories. Not only will He be King in Zion but His dominion will extend to “all the earth”; yea, His glory will exceed the glories of earth; it will be set above the heavens.

(vv. 1-2) The remnant anticipate the praise that will flow to their anointed King when He enters upon His wider glories as Son of Man. The praise commences with the despised remnant, figured by babes and sucklings. God takes up the praises of the

weak and despised to still all opposition to Christ, whether coming from adversaries within the land, the enemy without, or from the malice of Satan-the-Avenger (JND).

(vv. 3-9) The remainder of the psalm reveals, and exalts, the glories of the One who is going to reign over the whole earth as the Son of Man.

His glory is unfolded by contrasting the Son of Man with mortal man. Compared with the vast stellar universe (lit. 'feeble,' 'mortal man') man is very insignificant. Compared, however, with Christ — the Son of Man — creation becomes very small, for He is set over all the works of God's hands, and all is put into subjection to Him. It will not be with the Son of Man as with others who may be exalted to a place of authority, and yet those under them continually in rebellion and insubjection. The Son of Man will not only have dominion over all, but all will be perfectly subject to Him. Compared, too, with the angels, the Son of Man has a glory that exceeds the angels. It is true that for the suffering of death He was made a little lower than the angels but, in result, He is crowned with glory and honour far above angels. Thus when other names are forgotten His Name will be excellent in all the earth.

Psalm 9

A prophetic forecast of the effects of the coming of Christ to vindicate His rights, execute judgment upon the wicked, deliver His people and establish His reign in righteousness over the earth.

In the first eight psalms we have presented the principles of God's government (Ps. 1): the counsels of God as to His Anointed — the Messiah (Ps. 2), a world that has rejected God's Anointed, and ignores His government, with the consequent exercises of the godly (Ps. 3-7), until the day of Christ's glory as the Son of Man (Ps. 8).

The principles of God's government being established, we are permitted to see in Psalms 9 and Psalm 10 the circumstances in which the godly remnant will be found under the oppression of Antichrist and the godless nations, during the time immediately preceding the coming of Christ to reign.

(vv. 1-2) The godly Jew anticipating the deliverance from all his enemies by the brightness of the Lord's coming, recounts the marvelous works of the Lord, and celebrates the praise of Jehovah as the Most High.

(v. 3) The blessings of the psalm are introduced by the presence of the Lord, and the brightness of His coming in glory. In the days of His humiliation His enemies “went backward and fell to the ground” in His presence; in the day of His coming glory they will not only stumble at His presence, but will stumble and perish.

All that follows in the psalm is the result of Christ's presence. “Thy presence” is the key to the psalm.

(v. 4) The first effect of the presence of the Lord will be to vindicate the godly and maintain their cause. The temporary progress and triumph of evil, whether at the Cross, or during the absence of Christ, or, in a supreme degree, during the last days, might give the impression that God is either indifferent to evil, or powerless to stay its course. The presence of Christ in glory, and the consequent destruction of His enemies, will make it apparent that God has not been indifferent to the way men have treated Christ and those who are His. The remnant not only express what is true for themselves, but what is true of Christ, when they say, “Thou hast maintained my right and my cause.”

(vv. 5-6) Further effects of the presence of Christ will be the rebuking of the nations and the destruction of Antichrist. The word “wicked” in verse 5 and verse 16 is in the singular and refers to Antichrist, the enemy whose destruction will come to a perpetual end.

(vv. 7-10) Antichrist destroyed, and his reign over, the reign of Christ will be established. His reign will be a rule of righteousness for the whole world. The oppressed will find a refuge in Christ. Those who trust in the Lord, and seek Him, will find they are not forsaken.

(v. 11) Furthermore, the coming of Christ will call forth praise to the Lord in Zion, and a testimony to the Lord among the nations.

(vv. 12-14) This praise and testimony will be rendered by the persecuted and afflicted remnant, to whom the Lord will show mercy in lifting them up from the gates of death to show forth the praise of the Lord in the gates of Zion.

(vv. 15-17) In contrast to the godly, who are raised up for blessing, the nations sink down in the pit they have made. By their rebellion against Christ they have sealed their doom, and the

God to whom they refused to be reconciled is made known through judgment. Antichrist (the “wicked” of verse 16) and the nations that follow Antichrist (the “wicked” of verse 17) are turned into Sheol together with all the nations (those outside the sphere of Antichrist) that forget God.

(v. 18) The nations may forget God, but God will not forget the needy and the poor among the nations; their deliverance will be involved in the destruction of the wicked.

(vv. 19-20) In view of the deliverance of the godly the cry goes up for the Lord to arise and act in judgment.

Psalm 10

The expression of confidence in God on the part of the Jewish remnant in the time of their greatest distress, under the reign of Antichrist.

Prophetically the psalm presents the position of the godly Jew in the land of Israel, in the midst of an apostate nation, under the rule of Antichrist at the close of the age.

(v. 1) The distress of the remnant is occasioned, not only by the wickedness of Antichrist rising to its height, but also by the fact that, when it does so, he appears to prosper exceedingly while the godly are allowed to suffer. Moreover, God apparently hides His face as if alike indifferent to the prosperity of the wicked and the suffering of the godly.

(vv. 2-11) A description of the wicked man, his evil and his prosperity. The word “wicked” throughout this passage is in the singular. The use of the singular would show that the description given is characteristic of any wicked man, though doubtless it will have its full expression in one man — the Antichrist. Thus the passage is a description of the character of the Antichrist, without being a distinct prophecy of him personally.

(1) His attitude towards men. The wicked persecutes the poor man that fears God. On the other hand he blesses the covetous man that the Lord abhors. (vv. 2-3).

(2) His attitude toward God. He has no fear of God; God is not in all his thoughts. (v. 4).

(3) His ways are without conscience of right or wrong. God's judgments as to right and wrong are far above out of his sight. (v. 5).

(4) His success over all his enemies leads him to imagine that he carries a charmed life, so that he will never be moved or come into adversity. (v. 6).

(5) His language is marked by violence, deceit and vanity. (v. 7).

(6) His acts are marked by craft, behind which there lurks the violence of a beast. His victims are the godly — the innocent and the poor. (vv. 8-10).

(7) His triumph over all these enemies, and the apparently defenceless people of God, deceive him into thinking that “God has forgotten: he hides his face: he will never see it” (v. 11).

(vv. 12-15) The faith of the godly in this terrible trial. They appeal to God to show His hand — “lift up thine hand.” They plead for God's intervention; first, because of the suffering of His afflicted people; second, because God Himself has been

condemned. For the wicked has said in his heart, “God will not require it.” The suffering of God's people, and the vindication of God's character, call aloud for God's intervention in judgment. (vv. 12-13).

In spite of outward appearances faith knows that God has seen all the evil; God will require it with His hand; God is the Helper of the defenceless. (v. 14).

Hence the direct appeal of God to break the wicked, and root out all his evil. (v. 15).

(vv. 16-18) Anticipating God's intervention, the godly celebrate with praise His answer to their appeal. In result the judgment of the wicked, summed up in Antichrist, will introduce the everlasting kingdom of the Lord — “The Lord is King for ever.” As to the godly, their prayer will be answered, their heart established, their sufferings over, and no more will they be terrified by “the man of the earth” (JND).

Psalm 11

The resource of faith in a world that is out of course — the wicked prospering and the righteous oppressed.

(v. 1) In the presence of opposition the soul trusts in the Lord and hence the suggestion of human prudence to flee from conflict is refused.

(vv. 2-3) Verses 2 and 3 set forth the character of evil with which the godly are faced. The opposition is not open but working “in darkness” (JND). The upright in heart, and the foundations of their faith, are being secretly attacked. In the presence of these hidden dangers, what are the righteous to do?

(v. 4) The answer is found in verse 4. The Lord is the resource of the righteous; His holy temple is on earth; His throne is in heaven. The temple speaks of His dwelling place, and, however desolate and desecrated it may be, faith still recognizes that God has a place on earth. His throne — speaking of His government — is still in heaven where no evil can enter. He still rules over all. The effort of man is to rid himself of the presence of God on the earth and to throw off His government from heaven. In spite of these efforts the House of God and the Throne of God — the foundations of all blessing for men — remains (vv. 5-7). During the reign of Antichrist, however, the government of God is not in outward display. Evil abounds, the wicked triumph, and the godly are tried. Nevertheless faith

knows that God hates the wicked and the violent, and that His favour is toward the upright. This will be made manifest by the judgment that will shortly fall upon the wicked, however, for the moment, the Lord refrains from dealing with the evil, and uses the circumstances to try the righteous for their blessing and His glory.

While the psalm looks on to the future trial of the godly under the reign of Antichrist, the principles apply to God's people at any time during the absence of Christ, when evil, like the leaven the woman hid in the meal, is working secretly undermining the foundations of the Christian faith. Nevertheless the confidence of the believer is that the Holy Spirit is still on the throne in heaven. The known character of God assures the believer that God must, in due time, deal with the evil and bring His people into blessing, though for the time He uses the evil for their good.

Psalm 12

The Lord, and His words, the resource of the righteous in a day when the faithful fail from among those who profess the name

of God, and when lawlessness and wickedness prevail on every side.

This psalm presents a contrast to Psalm 11. There, the evil is working in secret: here, it flaunts itself in public. The two conditions may be found together. A work of evil may be secretly undermining all that is of God while, at the same time, there may be a public display of the lawlessness of man.

(v. 1) The godly man appeals to the Lord, spreading out the evil of the times before the Lord. The soul is tried by the lack of “the godly” — those who fear God; and the “faithful” — those who can be relied on to maintain the truth among the people of God.

(vv. 2-5) The words of man betray their true character as marked by self-exaltation and self-will. They seek their own exaltation by flattering others, and boasting of themselves — speaking proud things. They express their self-will by refusing all authority: they say “who is lord over us?” As ever the man who is loudest in claiming liberty to speech and liberty of action for himself, is foremost in refusing liberty to others. He is the oppressor of the godly. Nevertheless the godly realize that

the Lord will deal with the wicked and preserve the poor and needy.

(vv. 6-7) The words of the Lord. In contrast to the vain, flattering and boastful words of men, the godly have the pure words of the Lord in which there is no admixture of dross. Relying on these pure words the righteous are assured that they will be kept and preserved from this generation — those marked by the lawless spirit of the age — even though the wicked walk on every side in a day when godliness is at a discount and “vileness is exalted” (JND).

Psalm 13

The faith of the godly remnant in circumstances in which they are apparently forgotten by God.

In the course of this group of psalms (11-15) the distress of the godly soul deepens. In Psalm 11 he sees the “foundations” going; in Psalm 12 the godly man ceases and the faithful fail from among the children of men; in this Psalm (13) the soul reaches the deepest point of distress, for the circumstances would make it appear that God Himself has forgotten the soul.

(v. 1) Though tried by evil without and fears within, the grace of God sustains the soul. Hence the cry, “How long?” This is the language of faith that clings to God, knowing that He will put a limit to the trials of His people, and the evil of the wicked. Faith can ask, “How long wilt thou forget?” in the midst of circumstances which seem to say, “For ever.”

(v. 2) Under the pressure of the circumstances the soul turns in upon itself — taking counsel in its own soul apart from God. The weary reasonings of the mind bring no relief. The result of self-occupation, as ever, is to fill the heart with sorrow, and to give the enemy an occasion to triumph over the soul.

(v. 3) Relief is found in prayer which turns the soul from self to the Lord, with the immediate result that the eyes are lightened — the spiritual vision is cleared. Turning in upon self darkens the heart with sorrow; looking out to the Lord lightens the eyes.

(vv. 4-5) With eyes enlightened the soul sees clearly the aims of the enemy, and that the resource of the godly is found in the mercy and salvation of the Lord. Occupied with himself he can only see his weakness and the power of the enemy in relation to himself. Having turned to the Lord, he sees the enemy in re-

lation to the Lord. Whereas the heart was filled with sorrow when occupied with its own reasonings (v. 2), now the heart rejoices in view of the mercy and salvation of the Lord.

(v. 6) Having turned to the Lord, the faith of the soul realizes and trusts in the loving-kindness of the Lord, and not in personal merit, nor in the justness of his cause. This brings relief so that the soul passes from the distress caused by occupation with circumstances to rejoicing in view of the Lord's salvation. The joy of his heart finds an outlet in the praise of his lips. The soul breaks forth in a song to the Lord, because the Lord has dealt bountifully with him. Occupied with the enemy's works he was plunged into deepest distress. Occupied with the Lord's bountiful dealings he breaks forth into song.

Psalm 14

The resource of the godly when the evil of the world, in the last days, rises to a climax in the sight of God who is about to execute judgment.

The foundations are undermined in Psalm 11; the faithful fail from among men in Psalm 12; God apparently forgets, and is

as One hidden in Psalm 13: the climax of evil is reached by the fool and the workers of iniquity coming to the forefront in Psalm 14.

In a few brief words this psalm brings before us the awful condition of the world during the reign of Antichrist when outwardly all moral foundations are gone; when the faithful cease; when God is hidden; when utter apostasy prevails, and sin lifts itself up against God.

(v. 1) The characteristic man of this terrible time will be “the fool” — the man who has no fear of God. In his heart he says, “No God”; and his corrupt and abominable life manifests the thought of his heart.

(vv. 2-3) The climax of wickedness being reached the world is ripe for judgment, and God looks down upon the children of men as about to act in judgment. It is not simply that all is under the eye of God, which is ever true, but this is the look that precedes judgment. The Lord came down to see before the judgment at Babel. Again He looked towards Sodom before its destruction (Gen. 18:16); and yet again we read that the Lord looked upon the host of the Egyptians before their overthrow

(Ex. 14:24). God sees that the wickedness of man is such that there is no other way to vindicate His majesty save by judgment. None are left among the children of men that seek God. All are gone aside; all became filthy. “There is none that does good, no, not one.”

(v. 4) God has looked upon this scene of unparalleled wickedness; now He speaks. He asks, “Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge?” Has man become stupid like the beasts? (cp. Isa. 1:3). The way men treat the people of God answers the question. They ill-treat God's people in utter indifference to God, just as they eat bread without reference to God. Moreover man pursues his way in utter independence of God — they “call not upon the Lord.” Thus the world is proved to be ripe for judgment by its own absolute corruption and filthiness; by the way it treats God's people, and by its utter independence of God.

(vv. 5-6) Nevertheless, when God speaks it becomes manifest that God is in the generation of the righteous. Then men will begin to fear, and the godly will realize that the Lord is their refuge.

(v. 7) Anticipating God's speedy intervention, the godly celebrate the joy and gladness that will flow from the deliverance of His people.

Psalm 15

The character of the preserved remnant of the Jews, who will share in the blessings of Jehovah's dwelling, and Jehovah's government — the “tabernacle” and the “hill” — when the Lord shall reign from Zion.

(v. 1) The question is raised, who will be preserved through the persecutions and sufferings of the reign of Antichrist to enjoy the millennial blessings that will flow from the tabernacle and the holy hill of Zion? The Psalm answers this question by presenting the moral features of the godly.

(v. 2) First his personal character is presented. He is marked by upright walk, righteous acts, and pure speech.

(v. 3) Secondly, his relation to his neighbours. He does not slander with his tongue; he does no evil to his companion; he refuses to “take up” a reproach against his neighbour. “Take

up” has the sense of “adopting” the reproach in order to propagate it.

(vv. 4-5) Thirdly, his attitude towards evil men. A depraved person, whatever his position or natural abilities, is condemned.

Fourthly, his attitude towards the godly. Those that fear the Lord he honours, whatever their social position.

Fifthly, his attitude towards the world. In his business relations he will not go back on his word, and refuses usury and corruption.

The one that bears this character will never be moved. He will, according to the first verse, “abide” in God's tabernacle, and “dwell” in God's holy hill.

Psalm 16

Christ identifying Himself with the godly in Israel, expressing the life of faith before God.

Psalm 16 is a prophetic description of the Lord Jesus in His lowly path through this world. He is viewed not in His divine

equality with God, though ever true, but in the place of perfect dependence as the servant of Jehovah. It presents the inward life of faith before God, rather than the outer life seen before men. It is a life that has God for its object, so that it is a life lived to God, as well as before God.

(v. 1) Christ takes a place as Man, and expresses His perfect dependence and confidence in God. “Preserve me, O God,” is the language of dependence: “In thee do I put my trust,” is the expression of confidence.

(v. 2) Christ not only takes the place of Man, but He takes the place of the Servant. He can say to Jehovah, “Thou art my Lord.” His goodness — His perfect obedience as the Servant — was not in order to give Him a place before God, or in order to secure benefits for Himself, but for the benefit of the saints. He became a Servant to serve others in love.

(v. 3) Christ, in His lowliness, not only takes the place of Servant, but, in grace, He becomes the associate of the godly remnant — the excellent of the earth — in whom He finds His delight.

(v. 4) Christ, though in grace the companion of the godly, was absolutely faithful to God. He would not hear of any god but Jehovah. In perfect faithfulness to Jehovah, He refused all that can be called “another god.” He was the separate Man.

(vv. 5-6) Christ in His pathway through this world was not only separate from all that can come between God and man, but His heart was satisfied with Jehovah. The Lord was His portion; and while passing on to the earthly inheritance that God had purposed for Him, He tasted, in the cup, the joy of the inheritance by the way. In the sense of the favour of the Lord, He could say, “The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places.”

(v. 7) Christ, in the path that leads to the inheritance, could bless Jehovah for His counsel. Instructed by the counsel of Jehovah, His own inmost thoughts gave Him light and instruction.

(v. 8) Guided by the counsel of Jehovah, and with Jehovah always before Him, He ever found in God His support.

(vv. 9-10) Thus supported, Christ could rejoice even in view of death, and pass through that dark valley with unclouded hope,

knowing that His soul would not be left in Hades, nor His body suffered to see corruption (Acts 2:25-28).

(v. 11) Christ saw the path of life beyond death, in resurrection, that leads to the right hand of God, where there is fullness of joy and pleasures for evermore (Heb. 12:2).

Psalm 17

Christ identifying Himself with the godly in Israel, in the maintenance of righteousness in the midst of evil.

Psalm 16 presents Christ as treading the path of life before God. Psalm 17 presents Christ as treading the path of righteousness in the presence of the temptations of the devil, and the deadly hostility of men. Psalm 16 is the inner life before God; here it is more the outer life before men. Only Christ trod this life in perfection, though others are associated with Him (see verse 7, “them,” and verse 11, “us”).

(vv. 1-3) The cry to God by One who can appeal to be heard on the ground of His perfect integrity. Only Christ could take such ground in an absolute way. His words came from unfeigned lips. Everything in Him was equal, or right, under the searching

eye of God. His heart was proved, only to make manifest that His secret thoughts never went beyond His words. He did not say one thing and think another (JND).

(vv. 4-5) The men of this age, by their works, have fallen under the power of the devil, and receive their portion in this life. Christ walked in dependence upon God, and His Word, and thus was kept from the works of men, and the paths of the destroyer. The devil would have given Him all the kingdoms of this world if he could have moved the Lord from the path of dependence. Christ refused the portion in this life (v. 14), to receive a better portion in resurrection (v. 15).

(vv. 6-9) The perfectly upright One, because of His righteousness, finds many that rise up against Him. They are deadly enemies that would fain destroy Him (Luke 4:29; Luke 6:11; Luke 19:47). Having refused the works of man and the temptations of the devil, and taken the path of dependence, Christ can look with confidence to God to intervene on behalf of Himself and the godly remnant associated with Him. The perfect integrity of His way gives perfect confidence in God, and the sense of His preciousness to God, so that He can say, “Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings.”

(vv 10-12) In contrast to the righteous One, verses 10 to 12 present the character of the men of this age that rise up against Christ and His own. They are marked by selfish luxury that makes them indifferent to the sorrows of others, and pride that exalts themselves. They watch the righteous One and those associated with Him in order to cast them down, and secretly plot their destruction (Mark 3:2-6; John 11:53; John 12:10).

(v. 13) An appeal to God to thwart the secret plots of the enemy; to judge the wicked, and deliver the righteous. The wicked are but the sword of God for the accomplishment of His government. It is easy then for the sword to be turned aside from the godly and used for the destruction of the wicked.

(vv. 14-15) The character of the wicked having been presented in verses 10 to 12, we learn now their portion in contrast with the portion of Christ, the righteous One. Men are described as of this world, or “age,” a word that signifies the transitory character of this world as belonging merely to time, and therefore passing away with the lust of the world. Their portion is in this life and in the natural things given by God. As for Christ, He not only had no portion here, but He refused to accept one either from the destroyer (Luke 4:5-8) or from man (John

6:15). He could say in the language of Psalm 16:5, “The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance.” His portion is in the resurrection sphere — in the presence of God — as He can say, “I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.” Such is the glorious end of the path of righteousness.

Psalm 18

Christ identifying Himself with the sufferings of Israel, and the ground of all God's dealings with Israel, whether in past deliverances from Egypt or in the last great deliverance that will introduce the millennial reign of Christ.

In this Psalm the circumstances in David's life — his sufferings and his victories — are used to present Christ and the deliverances wrought for Israel through His sufferings and victories.

(vv. 1-3) The Psalm opens by presenting Christ in the circumstances of the godly remnant in Israel. He is seen as the One who is devoted to God — “I will love thee, O Lord;” dependent upon God — “In whom I will trust;” and calling upon the

Lord when surrounded with enemies — “I will call upon the Lord.”

(vv. 4-6) The trial deepens for, in verses 4 to 6, Christ is seen compassed by the sorrows of death, surrounded by the floods of the ungodly, with the grave and the snares of death before Him. From the midst of His distress He calls upon God and is heard. This introduces the great theme of the psalm. All deliverance for Israel turns upon Christ having entered into their sorrows, and in this place calling upon the Lord. Deliverance for others depends upon a perfect One having taken up their cause, and calling upon God. His deliverance, and the deliverance of those identified with Him, is in answer to His call. The Psalm does not present the atoning sufferings of Christ, but His sufferings from the hands of men even to death. These are sufferings that the people of God have to meet, and into these sufferings Christ enters in perfection and voices in perfection the cry of God's people and is heard.

It is true that the atoning sufferings of Christ are absolutely necessary for the blessing of men. Nevertheless, in the ways of God in government on earth, He delivers and blesses with earthly deliverance on the ground of His delight in the godly.

We see this principle illustrated in the history of Sodom. Abraham asks God to spare Sodom from temporal destruction if ten righteous men could be found in the city; and God was prepared to do so.

(vv. 7-15) In these verses we are taken back to the deliverance that God wrought at the Red Sea to learn the first great result of Christ having entered into the sufferings of God's people. The judgment upon Pharaoh and his host is described with the use of magnificent figures drawn from the convulsions of nature — earthquakes, fire, wind, thick clouds, hail and lightning.

(vv. 16-19) Into these sorrows Christ had been. Hence the spirit of God passes from Israel's deliverance at the Red Sea to Christ passing through death when surrounded by the floods of ungodly men. God sent from above, and Christ can say, “he took me;” “he drew me out of many waters;” “he delivered me from my strong enemy;” and “the Lord was my stay.”

(vv. 20-24) These verses present the ground on which Christ is heard in the day of His distress, and delivered from all His enemies. It is in answer to His perfect obedience to the law. Thus there passes before us the path of perfect obedience that He

trod upon earth. The answer will be seen in His exaltation and triumph in His millennial reign. Thus Christ can say, “The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness: according to the cleanness of my hands has he recompensed me.” Christ alone answered in an absolute way to the righteous requirements of God. He only could say absolutely, “I have kept the ways of the Lord”; “I did not put away his statutes from me”; “I was also upright before him.”

(vv. 25-26) The principles of God's earthly government are clearly set forth in verses 25 and 26. In the government of God we reap what we sow. We find mercy if we show mercy; and will be righteously rewarded if we act righteously. This shows that the blessings of the psalm are not the answer to atonement, but the reward of piety.

(vv. 27-28) As the result of Christ's identification with His suffering people there will be, in the righteous government of God, deliverance for “the afflicted people,” and judgment for the proud. Moreover, the godly will be enlightened, and enabled to overcome every obstacle.

“I kept myself from mine iniquity,” verse 23, presents a difficulty in applying this part of the psalm personally to Christ. It is evident that the Lord could not speak of “mine iniquity” as referring to indwelling sin. It has been suggested that the Lord could use such language in reference to His special temptations that lay before Him in the path He had to tread (JND). Others have suggested different translations such as, “from perverseness being mine” (FWG), or “have kept myself from iniquity” (Perowne).

(vv. 30-42) In these verses we pass on to the future to see Christ in the exercise of victorious power subduing all His enemies. The power by which He overcomes every enemy is ascribed to God (vv. 30-36). In the might of His power Christ pursues His enemies until all are subdued under His feet, and driven away like the dust before the wind (vv. 37-42).

(vv. 43-45) Christ delivered from all His enemies is seen in the glorious reign that follows upon His victories, He is set over all, and all are brought into subjection to Him.

(vv. 46-50) Christ using His victories, His exaltation, and the subjection of all His enemies for the exaltation and praise of God.

Psalm 19

The testimony of the creation to all the world, with the special testimony of the law to Israel.

(vv. 1-6) The first portion of the psalm presents a testimony to the power and wisdom of God rendered to the whole world. Three parts of the creation are used in this testimony. First the heavens, with the vast expanse; second the continual testimony of day and night; third the rising and setting of the sun.

The Spirit of God has thus taken the parts of creation which man cannot corrupt. The earth has been given to man and, in as far as it has been corrupted, it ceases to give a true testimony to the glory of God. The heavens remain uncorrupted, and the three parts of creation brought before us give a universal testimony to the habitable parts of the earth. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and to the end of the world.

(vv. 7-11) The testimony of creation is followed by the testimony to God's abhorrence of sin rendered by the law, especially appealing to the nation of Israel, and to the conscience of man. The testimony of the law is presented as that which is “perfect” — giving a perfect rule of life for man on earth. It is “sure,” “right,” “pure,” “enduring;” of priceless value, and carrying a great reward to those who are subject to its precepts.

(vv. 12-14) The prayer of the godly to profit by these testimonies that appeal to the conscience. The soul desires to be so searched by the Word that it may discover that which God alone sees to be sin; that it may be kept from presumptuous sins; and, thus cleansed and kept, be acceptable in words, and heart, to the One who is his Redeemer.

Psalm 20

The testimony of Christ — the faithful witness — in the midst of an evil world.

This psalm reviews the whole history of Christ in His path of suffering through this world. They see in Him the faithful witness for God, and that all their blessing is secured through

Christ. Hence their only plea before God is Christ; His sacrifice and His petitions. It is no longer the witness of creation, as in Psalm 19, but the witness of a living Person — God's Anointed — come down into the midst of an ungodly people, and suffering at the hands of men.

The psalm anticipates the recognition by the godly Jews that the suffering and rejected Christ is the Anointed of God — their Saviour. Simeon, in the gospel day sees in Christ God's salvation, while at the same time he recognizes that He will be rejected of the nation — One that is “spoken against” (Luke 2:34). Simeon and those associated with him represent the godly remnant of the latter day, and anticipate their experiences.

(v. 1) The godly identifying themselves with the rejected Christ, see Him “in the day of trouble” surrounded by His enemies, and look to Jehovah to defend Him.

(v. 2) They see the trouble deepen. Gethsemane is reached, and they look to Jehovah to send Him help and strength (Luke 22:43).

(v. 3) The cross comes into view, and the godly desire that the great sacrifice may go up as a sweet savor to Jehovah.

(v. 4) On the ground of the accepted sacrifice, they look to Jehovah to answer the desires of the heart of Christ.

(v. 5) The godly, realizing that their blessing is bound up with the deliverance of Christ from death by the intervention of God, express their joy and confidence in God. They say, “We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners.” Owing that all blessing depends upon Christ, and not upon themselves, they say, “The Lord hear thee”; “defend thee”; “send thee help”; “strengthen thee”; “Remember all thy offerings”; “Accept thy burnt sacrifice”; “fulfill all thy counsel,” and “fulfil all thy petitions.”

(vv. 6-9) The assurance of faith that Christ will be heard, and that Jehovah will intervene with “the saving strength of his right hand,” and deliver His Anointed in resurrection power, gives the remnant the confidence that all His enemies will be brought down, and His own raised up. Thus Christ, risen and exalted, becomes the resource of His people.

Psalm 21

The testimony of the living Christ, exalted over all His enemies.

In this psalm we have the full answer to the desires expressed by the godly in Psalm 20. There Christ is seen as the faithful witness for God in the midst of His enemies; here He is seen as the witness for God in exaltation over all His enemies (v. 1). Christ in exaltation becomes a witness to the power and salvation of Jehovah. The godly can say, “The King shall joy in thy strength, O Lord; and in thy salvation.”

(v. 2) Further, His exaltation is a witness that every desire of the heart of Christ was in accord with the thoughts of God, for the godly say, “Thou hast given him his heart's desire, and hast not withholden the request of his lips.”

(vv. 3-6) Moreover, the exaltation of Christ is a witness to God's infinite delight and satisfaction in the One whom men rejected. Gazing upon Christ in glory the godly can say, “Thou hast met him with the blessings of goodness; thou hast set a crown of pure gold on his head” (JND). At the hands of men His days were shortened; at the hands of God He is given

length of days for ever and ever. They heaped upon Him shame and dishonour; God has given Him glory, honour and majesty. Men surrounded His path with trial and sorrow; God has blessed Him for ever, and made Him exceeding glad with divine favour.

(v. 7) This exaltation and blessing is viewed as the direct answer to the faithfulness of Christ when suffering from the hands of men. “For,” say the godly remnant, “the king confides in Jehovah, and through the loving-kindness of the Most High he shall not be moved” (JND).

(vv. 8-12) In verses 3 to 7, the righteous government of God is borne witness to by the exaltation of Christ. It is only righteous that the One who was the faithful witness for God in the midst of evil should be exalted to a place of glory. In verses 8 to 12, the righteous government of God is borne witness to by the judgment executed upon the enemies of Christ. It is only righteous that those who have rejected Christ — the perfect witness for God — should come under judgment (John 16:9-11). The One whom man rejected is appointed to execute the judgment (Acts 17:31). “Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies.” “Thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee.” Not only

will the wicked be dealt with, but the “fruit” of their evil will be destroyed from the earth. The utter impotency of all those who oppose the Lord will be manifested. The evil they intended, and the mischievous devices they imagined, they were unable to perform.

(v. 13) Finally the exaltation of Christ, involving the judgment of His enemies will lead to the praise of God by the godly, “So will we sing and praise thy power.”

Psalm 22

Christ, as the holy Victim, suffering the forsaking of God when making atonement on the Cross.

The psalm has a pre-eminent place in the Book of Psalms, inasmuch as it presents the righteous ground on which every blessing, described in all other psalms, can be made good to the redeemed.

(v. 1-2) The first two verses present the great theme of the psalm — the atoning sufferings of Christ. In the course of the psalm other sufferings pass before us, but only to lead up to this, the deepest of all sufferings, the forsaking of God.

Here then in the opening verses we lose sight of men, and the sufferings they inflicted upon Christ as the holy Martyr, and are permitted to learn His sufferings at the hand of God as the spotless Victim, when made an offering for sin. In the Gospels we have the outward history of this great work: here we are permitted to learn the feelings and thoughts of Christ when accomplishing the work.

Thus there comes before us One who is absolutely forsaken by God. In His distress there is no help for Him in God. The words of His groaning call forth no response from God. His cry receives no answer from God. The night season brings Him no rest from God (JND). Nevertheless, the One who is thus forsaken is the only absolutely righteous One on earth. Furthermore, this righteous One, though forsaken, maintains unshaken confidence in God. He can still say, “My God,” and in the consciousness of His own perfection can ask, “Why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?”

(v. 3) That God should forsake a perfectly righteous man in his distress is entirely contrary to the ways of God with men. Yet we are assured there can be no unrighteousness with God. Thus

we learn from the lips of Christ Himself that on this solemn and unique occasion, God was perfectly righteous in forsaking the absolutely righteous One; for the Lord can say, “But thou art holy.” Thus the One who is forsaken by God is the One who entirely vindicates God. These words, however, do more than assure us of the holiness of God in forsaking Christ on the cross. They tell us of the deep necessity for Christ to be forsaken when bearing sins, if God's holiness is to be met, and man to be blessed.

Thus in this great psalm the cross is before us not as setting forth the wickedness of man that calls for judgment; but as setting forth the atoning work of Christ which maintains the glory of God, secures the blessing of the believer, and lays the basis for the fulfillment of all God's counsel.

In His perfect life of obedience Christ glorified God by setting forth perfect goodness. In His death He glorified God by being made sin and bearing the judgment due to sin, and thus for ever declaring that God is a holy God who abhors sin, and cannot pass over sin.

Moreover, by bearing sins and the judgment due to sin, and being made sin and enduring the penalty of sin, Christ secures the eternal blessing of the believer.

Further, by the atoning work the righteous basis is laid for the fulfillment of all God's counsel. God has counselled to dwell in the midst of a praising people. Here the praise of Israel is more in view, yet the same work that will enable God to dwell amidst a praising people throughout millennial days, will enable God to dwell with men, and to own them as His people, even as they will own Him as their God, in the new heaven and earth, throughout eternal ages (Rev. 21:1-3).

(vv. 4-5) The unparalleled case of a righteous man being forsaken is made more manifest by contrasting the ways of God with all others who have put their trust in God. All history proved that the fathers who trusted in God were delivered. Righteous men may have indeed suffered martyrdom, but never before had a righteous man been forsaken by God.

(vv. 6-7) In contrast to the fathers, here is One who is treated as being less than a man. He is left to endure the fullness of man's contempt expressed in a sevenfold form. (1) He is esteemed as

less than a man — “a worm”; (2) as of no value — “no man”; (3) He is held in contempt — “a reproach of men”; (4) He is despised by the Jew — the “despised of the people”; (5) He is an object of man's sneering ridicule — they laugh Him “to scorn”; (6) He is an object of insult — “they shoot out the lip” at Him; (7) He is the object of mockery — “they shake the head saying, He trusted in the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.”

(vv. 9-11) Nevertheless, the One whom men despised, and God forsook, was the only absolutely righteous Man: One who from the moment of His coming into this world was marked by perfect confidence in God, for He could say, “Thou didst make me trust, upon my mother's breasts” (JND). Moreover He was perfectly dependent, for He could add, “I was cast upon thee from the womb,” and perfect in His subjection, for He says, “Thou art my God.” And yet the only One whose confidence in God, dependence upon God, and subjection to God, was absolutely perfect from the beginning to the end of His life on earth, is found in deepest trouble with “none to help.”

(vv. 12-15) The verses that follow present the trial as still from God, though viewed more especially as coming through the in-

strumentality of man. In verses 12 to 15 the deadly hatred of the Jewish nation is in view. In verses 16-20, the Gentile opposition to Christ is seen. Finally in the first part of verse 21, it is the power of the devil the Lord has to meet.

Like a bull using its great strength when blinded with passion, so the leaders of the Jewish nation, blind to reason and indifferent to right, with unrestrained violence and rage, used their position of power in deadly opposition to the Lord. As a roaring lion, bent upon the destruction of its prey, so they were determined upon the death of Christ.

Nor is the Lord spared any physical suffering, for in this terrible position the Lord has to taste every form of trial. The utter prostration, and straining of every member of the body, and the thirst, all pass before us.

Yet, in all this trial, the Lord looks beyond man, who is the immediate occasion of these sufferings, and sees the hand of God. He can say, “Thou hast laid me in the dust of death” (JND). It is not simply the wickedness of man that is before His holy soul, but rather the holiness of God, who is using man to carry out His will.

(vv. 16-18) In verses 16-20 the Gentile opposition to Christ passes before us. Like dogs, acting without heart or conscience, they deliver to death One whom they own to be innocent. Having pierced His hands and His feet, with brutal callousness that knows neither shame nor feeling, they stare upon Him, and gamble for His clothes.

(vv. 19-21 A) Twice in the course of the psalm the holy Sufferer has appealed to God not to be far off from Him in His sufferings (v. 1 and v. 11); now for the third time He turns from His persecutors and His sufferings, and looks beyond men to God, and can say, “But thou, Jehovah, be not far from me” (JND). Thus it becomes plain that if the opposition of men is brought before us, it is not so much to show the fearful evil of men that, in other psalms, calls for judgment, but rather to show that even in the suffering caused by men the Lord was without help from God. Thus the utter abandonment of the cross, in view of atonement, is brought before us. Nevertheless, in the forsaking the trust of Christ in God remains unshaken. While the sufferings inflicted by man are felt with all the perfect sensibilities of Christ, yet they are taken as coming from

God (v. 15). Thus God alone is the One to whom the Sufferer looks for help and deliverance.

A threefold deliverance is sought; first from the sword of judgment, then from the power of man, and lastly from the power of Satan — the lion's mouth. Nevertheless, the judgment must be borne before deliverance can come. The word of the Lord by the prophet must first be fulfilled, “Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, says the Lord of hosts” (Zech. 13:7).

(v. 21 B) Thus every form of suffering has been endured — the enmity of the Jews, the shameless opposition of the Gentiles, the malice of Satan, and above all the forsaking of God when making atonement. Then when all is over, when the great work of atonement is accomplished, and the extreme point of suffering is reached, set forth by the horns of the buffaloes, the cry of the Sufferer is heard, and the answer comes. Christ can say, “Thou hast heard me.” The resurrection was the proof to man that Christ was heard, and the work accepted. Nevertheless, Christ Himself was conscious of being heard and accepted directly the atoning work was completed. Therefore at once, we learn from the Gospels, the language of perfect communion

was used by the Lord. No longer does He say, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” but, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit” (Luke 23:46).

At once we pass on to resurrection ground, and in this, the second half of the psalm, we have the blessed results of Christ's work on the cross. The sufferings of Christ on the cross have a twofold character. He suffered as the patient Martyr at the hands of men; He suffered as the spotless Victim under the hand of God. The martyr sufferings call down the judgment of a holy God who cannot be indifferent to the insults heaped upon Christ; hence the psalms that present His martyr sufferings, such as Psalm 69, speak also of judgment upon His enemies. His sufferings as the holy Victim open the way for blessing to man. Thus in this psalm we have a river of grace flowing from the cross and widening as it flows.

(vv. 22-24) This blessing is connected with the declaration of the name of God. We know that this is the Father's name, that reveals the Father's heart and all the blessings counselled in His heart. This name is declared by Christ in resurrection to the few disciples that He had gathered round Himself on earth, of whom He speaks for the first time as His “brethren,” in the

message which said, “Go to my brethren, and say to them, I ascend to my Father, and your Father; and to my God and your God” (John 20:17).

A little later, when the disciples were assembled behind closed doors, the Lord appears in the midst of the congregation, and fills the disciples' hearts with gladness — He leads the praise. Nor is the blessing confined to the few assembled with the Lord in their midst. It is for all the godly in Israel who fear the Lord. They are to know that God has accepted the great sacrifice. “He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither has he hid his face from him; but when he cried to him, he heard.” We may feebly appreciate the great atoning sacrifice, but our blessing depends not upon the measure of our appreciation but on God's perfect appreciation of, and infinite satisfaction with, the work of Christ.

(vv. 25-26) The river of grace widens still further, for now we pass on to “the great congregation.” This is all Israel regathered and restored for millennial blessing. Christ will lead their praise, and fulfill every promise that had been made. Then indeed the meek will eat and be satisfied, the Lord will be

praised, and no more will there be broken and empty hearts, but hearts that shall “live for ever” in the fullness of joy.

(vv. 27-29) Furthermore, the blessing widens to embrace the ends of the earth, and all the kindred of the nations. They will remember what Christ has accomplished on the cross, and they will turn to the Lord and worship. The One who was rejected by men will rule among the nations. The blessing will reach every class, the prosperous — the fat upon the earth; those who are in extreme need — ready to go down to the dust; and the poor who lack means to keep alive the soul.

(vv. 30-31) Finally the blessing will flow on through millennial days to coming generations. His righteousness — manifested in the atoning sacrifice, the exaltation of Christ, and in providing a feast of blessing — will be told to a people that shall be born. And the whole great company of the redeemed will delight to own that.

“He has done it.” This vast river of blessing that was seen as a small stream amongst a few disciples on the resurrection day, that has flowed on through the ages, and will yet flow through millennial days widening in its course to embrace all the ends

of the earth, and extending to generations yet unborn, has its pure sources in the atoning sufferings of Christ — “He has done it.”

The answer to the cry “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” uttered in darkness on the cross, will come from the midst of a vast host of praising people, brought into everlasting blessing, as they look back to the cross and say, “He has done it.”

Psalm 23

Christ, as Shepherd, the confidence of the godly while passing through this world.

The 22nd psalm presents Christ on the cross meeting the claims of God, and making atonement for His people. Psalm 23 presents Christ meeting the daily needs of His people, and leading them through a wilderness scene. The primary application is to the godly remnant of Israel who will be brought through every trial into millennial blessing in connection with Jehovah's house on earth. The ways of God with Israel, and the blessing into which they are brought, are, however, typical of

the higher blessings that belong through grace to the Christian. Hence the psalm is full of instruction and comfort for our days. The great theme of the psalm is the confidence of the godly in Christ, the Shepherd, founded on the experience of what He is in all circumstances.

(v. 1) The psalm opens with the assurance of the godly that the Lord is his Shepherd. All that follows in the psalm flows from this assurance. The One who died for the believer is known as the One who lives, and cares for the believer. In this confidence the wilderness journey is faced and the varied needs are met.

First, there are “wants” connected with this scene, but, confiding in the Lord, the believer says, “I shall not want.”

(v. 2) Secondly, there are not only daily wants in connection with this life, but also spiritual needs in connection with the divine life. These spiritual needs the Shepherd delights to meet. He satisfies the soul in green pastures, and leads beside the still waters.

(v. 3) Thirdly, there may, alas, be failure, and, if not actual sin, dullness of soul as the result of contact with things here. Never-

theless the Shepherd restores the soul, and leads in paths of righteousness for His Name's sake.

(v. 4) Fourthly, death may have to be faced. The soul may have to pass through the valley of the shadow of death. Even so the Shepherd is there to direct with His rod, and support with His staff.

(v. 5) Fifthly, there are enemies that oppose. The Lord is greater than all our enemies, and can support us in their very presence; anoint us with blessings, and make our cup run over.

(v. 6) Sixthly, there is the future path, that may cause apprehension. The experience of what the Shepherd has been in the past gives unquestioning confidence as to the future. “Surely,” says the psalmist, “goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.”

Seventhly, there is eternity before us. But this has no dread for the one who can say “The Lord is my shepherd,” for with the utmost confidence the soul can say, “I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.”

Psalm 24

Christ as the King of glory, associating His people with Himself, as He enters upon His reign over the whole earth.

In Psalm 22 Christ is seen as the spotless Victim suffering for His people. In Psalm 23 He is seen as the Shepherd leading His people through a hostile world. In Psalm 24 Christ is presented as the King associating His people with Himself in His reign of glory.

The psalm very blessedly sets forth the threefold ground on which Christ takes possession of His kingdom. First, as Creator (vv. 1-2); secondly, in answer to His intrinsic perfection (vv. 3-5); thirdly, on the ground of His mighty work at the cross (v. 8).

(vv. 1-2) The kingdom of Christ will extend over the whole world and all that dwell therein. His first claim to all is that He is the Creator of all — “He has founded it” (cp. Rev. 4:11).

(vv. 3-6) Moreover, the kingdom of Christ will be the answer, not only to His rights as Creator, but to the intrinsic perfection of His life. The question is raised, “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord or who shall stand in his holy place?” The hill

— Mount Zion — speaks of the reign of righteousness established in grace. The holy place speaks of the temple, and access to God in worship. Who then is morally fit to reign over men from Zion, and who can approach God in His temple?

The answer is given in verse 4. It can only be one who, in his walk and ways, is right with God and his neighbour. The one who, in God's sight, has clean hands and a pure heart, and who has not deceived his neighbour. Who but Christ ever loved God with all His heart, with all His soul, and with all His mind? And who but Christ ever loved His neighbour as Himself?

Will all this perfection receive no answer, and have no recompense in the coming glory? Surely it will, for we read in verse 5 of such, “He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.” If, however, Christ alone answers in perfection to these requirements, there is a generation that has also walked in godly fear, and that seek God. They, too, will be associated with Christ in His reign. This generation will be found in the godly remnant of Israel, as well as in a Gentile company of believers, of whom it is said, they “seek thy face (in) Jacob.”

(vv. 7-10) The closing verses of the psalm celebrate the entry of Christ, as the King of glory, into the sanctuary in the midst of His people. The question is raised, “Who is this King of glory?” The answer tells us of the glory of His person and His work. He is Jehovah, strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. For His people He gained the great victory at the cross, over every enemy. Thus we have not only His creatorial claims to the kingdom, and not only His rights as the perfect Man, but also the righteous ground of all blessing for His people, the mighty victory of the cross.

Again the question is raised, “Who is this King of glory?” And now we learn He is not only the Lord mighty in battle, but He is “The Lord of hosts.” He is the One who associates the vast host of the redeemed with Himself. He is the One strong and mighty that maintained the holiness of God and gained a great victory for His people at the cross. He is the One who, as the Shepherd, led His people through the wilderness journey, and He is the One who, as the King of glory and the Lord of hosts, will bring His people into the millennial blessing of the kingdom.

Psalm 25

The confidence of the godly remnant is the goodness and righteousness of the Lord, manifested by the confession of sins, and the unburdening of the heart before God.

In former groups of psalms there had been set forth the experiences of the godly in circumstances of trial, and in the presence of their enemies, in the coming day of antichrist. In this and the following psalms, the experiences of the godly remnant are again presented, but with a difference. Between these psalms and the former, Christ has been presented in Psalms 20—24, and therefore the exercises of soul depicted in this fresh series of psalms are the outcome of the knowledge of the grace of God acting in righteousness on the ground of the work of Christ. Thus the exercises take a more spiritual form, and for the first time there is the confession of sins.

(vv. 1-3) The psalm opens with the expression of subjection to the Lord — “Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul;” confidence in the Lord — “I trust in thee;” and dependence upon the Lord — “wait on thee.” There is the assurance that such will never be ashamed.

(vv. 4-7) This expression of confidence in the Lord is followed by the prayer that the soul may be guided and led in a way that is in accordance with God's own nature. Thus it is the soul speaks of “thy ways;” “thy paths;” “thy truth;” “thy tender mercies;” “thy loving kindnesses;” “thy mercy” and “thy goodness.”

(vv. 8-10) In verses 8 to 10 the soul recognizes that all God's dealings with sinners are according to His own nature, and therefore will be in goodness combined with uprightness: as we should say in the clear light of Christianity, grace reigns through righteousness. Those who receive the blessing are the meek and the obedient.

(v. 11) On the ground of these ways of God with sinners, the soul confesses its sins, and appeals to God for pardon on the ground of all that God is — “thy name's sake.”

(vv. 12-15) Led by the Spirit the godly soul anticipates the answer to the confession of sins. He who owns his sin is one that fears God, and will be led in the way of God's choice. He will enjoy soul prosperity; inherit earthly blessing; know the secret of the Lord and escape the snares of the enemy.

(vv. 16-22) In the closing verses there is the unburdening of the heart before the Lord. Desolate, heart burdened, and in deep soul exercise; afflicted, pained and conscious of failure; surrounded by enemies that hate with cruel hatred, the soul, as in the beginning of the psalm, again expresses its confidence in God — “I put my trust in thee”; and its dependence upon God — “I wait on thee”; and again looks to God that it may not be ashamed while waiting for God to redeem Israel and end all his troubles.

Psalm 26

The integrity of the godly man inviting the searchings of God, that, separate from sinners, he may worship at God's altar, and witness to God's wondrous works before the world.

In Psalm 25, there is confidence in the grace and righteousness of God with the consequent confession of sins. The result is seen in this psalm. Sins confessed, there is the consciousness of integrity before God; separation from evil associations; worship and witness.

(vv. 1-2) Conscious of uprightness of heart, the godly man trusts in the Lord, and invites the Lord to search his thoughts and affections, so that proved and tested by the Lord, all self-deception in his motives and affections may be purged away.

(vv. 3-5) The psalmist then states the grounds on which he invites the searchings of the Lord. First, the loving kindness of the Lord is before his soul. He realizes that there is grace with the Lord to meet all that the searchings of the Lord may discover. Secondly, his practical ways are such as become a godly man: he can say, “I have walked in Thy truth.” Thirdly, he had maintained practical separation from sinners.

(vv. 6-8) In verses 6 to 8 the psalmist speaks of the results that flow from walking in the truth, and in maintaining separation from evil. First, he can, with clean hands, approach God's altar for worship; secondly, he can bear witness before the world of all God's wondrous works.

(vv. 9-10) Separation from evil, devotedness to God, and witnessing for God will call forth opposition from sinners and violent men, with their evil devices and corruptions. Thus the soul prays to be kept from such.

(vv. 11-12) Thus kept from evil, walking in integrity, redeemed from his enemies, and with the mercy of God surrounding him, the godly man, standing in an even place, would bless the Lord in the company of God's people.

Psalm 27

The confidence of the believer when surrounded by enemies, and the exercises of his soul in the presence of the Lord.

In the first portion of the psalm (1-6) there is great confidence in the presence of enemies because of what the believer has found in the Lord — light and salvation. In the second portion (7-14) there is deep exercise of soul in the presence of the Lord because of what the believer finds in himself.

(v. 1) The first verse presents the ground of the believer's confidence. He can say, “The Lord is my light and my salvation,” and “the Lord is the strength of my life.” He has “light” from the Lord in the midst of the prevailing darkness; he knows the Lord will, in His own time, deliver him from all his enemies; in the meantime he has the support of the Lord.

(vv. 2-3) Having thus the Lord as his “light,” “salvation,” and “strength,” the believer is confident in the presence of his enemies, whether they came as individuals attacking the soul like a beast without conscience; whether they come as “an host;” or whether the attack is prolonged, as in “war.”

(v. 4) Set free from the fear of enemies, the believer can, with singleness of desire and purpose of heart, seek to dwell in the presence of the Lord, to “behold” His beauty, and “inquire” of Him.

(vv. 5-6) Thus set free from the fear of enemies and enjoying the presence of the Lord, the believer is supported in the time of trouble — “hidden” and “kept” (JND). In the future, when the trouble is passed, he will be publicly exalted above all his enemies to use this place of glory for the praise of the Lord.

(vv. 7-10) In the verses that follow we have the exercises of the believer in the presence of the Lord. In the presence of the enemy he learned the strength of the Lord; in the presence of the Lord he realizes his own weakness. Encouraged by the Lord to seek His face, the soul turns to the Lord, there to realize his own sin that merits the anger of the Lord. Nevertheless he

learns the evil of his own heart in the presence of the grace that can meet it all, for has not the grace of the Lord said “Seek ye my face?” Though his sin calls for forsaking, yet grace will not forsake, though nature may (cp. Peter in Luke 5:8-11).

(vv. 11-12) Made conscious of the Lord's grace the believer seeks to be taught the Lord's way, and to be led in an even path, that there may be nothing in his walk to give the enemy an occasion for reproach. Many indeed there are that are against the believer, ready to falsely accuse and violently oppose.

(vv. 13-14) Nevertheless, in spite of the wickedness of man, the soul has faith in the goodness of the Lord to bring the believer into the land of the living, beyond the time of trouble. For a while he may have to wait for the fullness of blessing, and during the waiting time the Lord will strengthen the heart.

Psalm 28

The desire of the believer to be kept in separation from a world that is going on to judgment.

(vv. 1-3) In the midst of a wicked nation that is going down to the pit, the godly Jew appeals to the Lord to hear his cry that he

may not be drawn away with the wicked, or deceived by the fair show they may make — speaking peace to their neighbours, but with mischief in their hearts.

(vv. 4-5) The godly Jew looks for judgment on the wicked. This judgment will fall, first, because of their sins — the works of their hands; and, secondly, because they slight the works of the Lord.

These are the abiding principles of God's ways in judgment. God cannot pass over sin, but God has made provision in the death of Christ to put away sin. If men neglect God's provision in grace they will fall under God's hand in judgment. This judgment, however, is not only on account of their sin, but also because of their neglect of Christ (Heb. 2:3).

(vv. 6-8) The godly soul has the consciousness that the Lord has heard his cry. He trusted, was helped, and rejoices. The ground of his confidence is Christ, for he can say that the Lord is not only the strength of the godly, but “He is the saving strength of his anointed one” (JND). Thus the godly avail themselves of God's provision in grace and plead the Anointed

One — Christ — who has intervened and suffered on their behalf, and was saved out of all His sufferings (Ps. 22:21).

(v. 9) If the Anointed One has been saved out of His sufferings, those for whom He suffered will be saved. Therefore the psalmist can with confidence say to God, “Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance.” Though for a time they may have to pass through suffering, and appear to be cast down, yet, even so, God will feed them and finally lift them up for ever, in contrast to those who go down to the pit (v. 1).

Psalm 29

Encouragement for the godly when opposed by the great ones of the earth. The One who cares for them is mightier than the mighty ones of this world.

The 29th Psalm is not a prayer of the faithful, nor an unfolding of their distress, nor the expression of their exercises. It is a definite testimony to the strength and glory of the Lord, for the encouragement of His people when they find themselves oppressed by the mighty powers of this world in the last days.

(vv. 1-2) The psalm opens with a summons to the mighty ones of the earth to acknowledge the Lord: to give Him “glory” and “strength,” and to worship Him “in the beauty of holiness.”

The literal meaning of the word used for the “mighty” is “gods,” a word, we are told, never by itself meaning “God,” but always “the gods” (Ex. 15:11; Dan. 11:36). It refers not to angelic beings, but to those mighty men who are responsible to God as His representatives in government upon the earth (John 10:34-35). Such have invariably failed, first by seeking to rule in their own strength, and secondly by using their place of power for the advancement of their own glory. Thus Nebuchadnezzar, the first head of the Gentile powers, boasts of the might of his power and the glory of his majesty, to his own ruin (Dan. 4:30-31). So, in the near future, the last Gentile power, trusting in his own strength and glory, will be called upon “to worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” In spite of the judgment that will fall upon the nations, we know that men will not repent to give God glory (Rev. 14:6-7; Rev. 16:9). This refusal to give God glory will lead to the final overwhelming judgment of the living nations at Armageddon.

(vv. 3-9 A.) This great and overwhelming judgment of the day of the Lord is presented under the figure of a storm that sweeps through the land of Israel from North to South. It brings before us the irresistible power of the Lord in judgment. We hear the voice of the Lord in the roar of the waters and the thunder of the waves as the storm breaks upon the shore and bursts in all its fury upon the mountains of Lebanon and Hermon, breaking in pieces the mighty cedars. The forked lightning is followed by the roar of the thunder as it rolls away into the wilderness of Kedar. Behind these destructive forces of nature there is the mighty power of God that will overwhelm the nations in the coming storm of judgment. Isaiah in describing the judgment that ushers in the day of the Lord, uses like figures. He speaks of the cedars of Lebanon as representative of the great ones of the earth. He too, says the Lord will “shake terribly the earth” in the day of His judgment (Isa. 2:12-13, 19).

(v. 9 B) In the latter part of verse 9 we are carried beyond the storm into the perfect calm of the temple of the Lord, there to find that everything says glory (JND). This, however, is the glory of the Lord. In His temple the glory of God is displayed.

(vv. 10-11) The closing verses give the blessed result for those who have been into the temple and worshipped the Lord in the beauty of holiness. Such realize that whatever the storms of this world, the Lord is above them. However great the might of the mighty ones, the Lord is mightier. They may be mighty for a time; Jehovah is “King for ever.”

The One who is mightier than the mighty can give strength to His people and keep them in perfect peace.

Psalm 30

The deliverance of Jehovah on behalf of the godly when in the depth of their distress.

The blessings of Israel, in contrast to those of the Christian, are mainly earthly and material, rather than heavenly and spiritual. In the days of their prosperity Israel has trusted in their material blessings rather than in the God that gave them. The godly man in this psalm gives the experience of his history and the exercises of his soul by which he learned that all true blessing is the result of the favour of the Lord.

(vv. 1-3) The opening verses give the result of his experiences, the remaining portion of the psalm the experiences by which this end is reached. The psalmist is brought to praise the Lord, because in the depth of his distress — when surrounded by enemies and brought near to the grave — he was lifted up above his foes, and kept from going down to the pit.

(vv. 4-5) Others are called to rejoice with him; for though the Lord may chasten His saints, for their good, it is only for a short while. “A moment is passed in his anger, a life in his favour” (JND). The night of weeping will end in the morning of joy.

(vv. 6-10) The verses that follow give the experiences of the psalmist. In the day of his prosperity, trusting in his circumstances, and in forgetfulness of God, he had said, “I shall never be moved.” He learned, however, that if his circumstances were as firm as a mountain, it was entirely owing to the favour of the Lord. The Lord had but to hide His face, and in a moment he found himself in trouble in spite of the apparent security of his circumstances.

In his prosperity he had forgotten the Lord; in his trouble he remembered the Lord, cried to the Lord, and made supplication. He found that in the presence of death prosperous circumstances were of no avail. In that sore strait only the mercy and help of the Lord would avail.

(vv. 11-12) In his distress he learned the deliverance of the Lord, who turned his night of sorrow into the morning of gladness, to the end that he might “sing praise” and “give thanks” to Jehovah.

Psalm 31

The confidence of the godly man when in the depth of distress that he will be delivered from all his enemies by the righteousness of God.

The psalm voices the confidence of the godly remnant in Jehovah in the midst of their distress in the last days, when, for a time God is silent to their cry, and apparently they are left in the hands of their enemies. Into these sorrows Christ fully entered, and hence there are expressions used by the Lord, though there is no literal application to the Lord.

(vv. 1-5) The godly man looks to the Lord for deliverance from all his enemies, trusting in the righteousness of God. God, being absolutely righteous, becomes the rock on which faith can build, the defence against the enemy on which faith can depend. God being his rock and defence, he looks to God to be led and guided in conformity with His Name, to be delivered from every secret snare by the strength of God, and to be kept in his spirit, for he is one of God's redeemed.

(vv. 6-8) The confidence of the godly soul was not in any of the senseless superstitions of men, but in the Lord Himself and in His mercy: in One who had seen his affliction and known the troubles of his soul. In this confidence he realizes that so far from being shut up in the hand of the enemy, he stands before God in a place of freedom of soul.

(vv. 9-13) Nevertheless, as to outward appearance, the soul is shut up in the power of the enemy. The circumstances of this trial are spread out before the Lord. His whole body is afflicted by the trial; his life is spent in grief; his years with sighing; his strength fails because of his distress (“iniquity” can better be translated “misery” or “distress”).

In relation to others he is a reproach among his enemies. His neighbours and acquaintances avoid him, for fear of sharing his reproach and trial. They prefer to forget him and treat him as a broken vessel that is flung aside as useless. He is slandered by many; the object of terror on every side; while some take counsel against him to destroy him.

(vv. 14-18) Notwithstanding this deep distress, the soul trusts in the Lord, knowing that his times are in the Lord's hands. Therefore he looks to God for deliverance from his enemies, and for the favour of God to shine upon him. He prays that, calling upon the Lord, he may not be ashamed, and that the wicked, who have treated the righteous with contempt, may be silenced in shame.

(vv. 19-22) The closing verses present the answer to the cry of the godly soul. He discovers that however dark the circumstances, the goodness of God is “laid up” for them that fear God, though for a time, apparently, the sons of men are allowed to have their way. Yet, whatever the outward circumstances, God can keep His people in the secret of His presence and preserve them from the strife of tongues, and finally show His marvellous kindness. Under the pressure of circumstances the

soul had said in haste, “I am cut off from before thine eyes.” Nevertheless, in the time of deepest trial, when God apparently was silent, the voice of his supplications had been heard.

(vv. 23-24) As a result of his experience, the soul calls upon all the godly to love the Lord, to be of good courage and hope in the Lord.

Psalm 32

The blessedness of the man whose sin is forgiven, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

The full confession of sin to God, leading to forgiveness, is the leading principle of this psalm. As Christians we know that on the ground of the death of Christ — the precious blood — this principle is true whether it be eternal forgiveness in the case of a sinner drawing nigh to God, or governmental forgiveness in the case of a failing child drawing near to the Father. In the psalm, the forgiveness is strictly the governmental forgiveness of the godly remnant in Israel.

(vv. 1-2) The opening verses give the theme of the psalm — the blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven and

whose sin is covered. The blessedness is not that there is no sin, but that it is covered — not imputed. The sin is not denied, or excused, or belittled — that would be guile; it is fully confessed.

(vv. 3-5) Verses 3 to 5 give the experiences of the psalmist by which this blessedness was reached. When the soul kept silent, refusing to confess his sins, God's hand was heavy upon him; day and night conscience gave him no rest. At length, under the pressure of God's hand, there is full confession. Sin is acknowledged to God, nothing is hid from God, with the result all is forgiven.

(vv. 6-7) The results of knowing God as a forgiving God follow. For that reason — because God is a forgiving God — the godly can ever turn to God in confidence, in a time when He can be found. There is a time coming when men will seek God but He will not be found. Today is the acceptable time when, on the ground of Christ's work, He may be found. But grace rejected will lead to judgment, when God will be no longer found of men, but men will be found out by God.

Turning in confidence to God the psalmist realizes how safe he is even though surrounded by enemies and difficulties like a flood of great waters. Acquainted with God as a forgiving God he confides in God and finds Him to be One that shelters from the storm, preserves from trouble, and gives “songs of deliverance.”

(vv. 8-11) Furthermore the one that prays to God finds not only preservation, but guidance for the way. God guides in His way and with His eye upon us as One that is deeply interested in His people. Moreover God gives intelligence in His mind so that we should not be as the horse or mule, without understanding. They are indeed guided but with no intelligence on their part. If in the way that God would have us to tread we shall be compassed about with mercy; and uprightness of heart will lead to gladness in the Lord and joy.

Psalm 33

The godly in Israel called upon to celebrate the intervention of God on behalf of the nation.

The psalm celebrates the full deliverance of Israel from every enemy, and makes manifest that this deliverance will not be brought about by the counsels of man, by victorious hosts, or human strength, but by the Lord Himself.

(vv. 1-3) Seeing that deliverance comes from the Lord, the righteous are called to “Rejoice in the Lord,” to “praise the Lord,” and “sing to him a new song.”

(vv. 4-5) This great deliverance makes manifest how “right” are the “word” and the “works” of the Lord. His word and His works declare His character; “He loves righteousness and judgment,” and goodness is combined with His righteousness.

(vv. 6-9) By His word He brought the creation into being. All the earth, with all its inhabitants, are called to own Him as the mighty Creator.

(vv. 10-11) Moreover His word and His works bring the counsels of the heathen to nought, and make manifest that the counsels of the Lord will not only be fulfilled, but will stand for ever.

(vv. 12-17) How blessed then the nation whose God is the LORD. They may have failed greatly, but God having chosen Israel, will carry out “the thoughts of his heart” in regard to the nation. Men may oppose but God has seen all the sons of men. He knows their hearts: He considers their works. Men trust in their kings, their armies, and their “much strength,” but the Lord disposes of all according to His counsels.

(vv. 18-19) In the meantime the eyes of the Lord are upon those that fear Him, and that hope in His mercy. He will deliver such from death, and preserve them through times of need.

(vv. 20-22) The psalm closes with the response of the godly to the goodness of the Lord as manifested in His Word and works. They wait for the Lord, and rejoice in Him.

Psalm 34

The experiences of the godly remnant, expressed by the psalmist, through which they learn to submit to God in all circumstances, and thus bless the Lord at all times.

The praise of this psalm flows from a saint whose will has been broken. He has faced fears (v. 4); his way may have been dark

(v. 5); he had been encompassed with troubles (vv. 6-7), and even want (vv. 9-10), but, having a broken and contrite spirit, his will was not at work secretly rebelling in thought against his hard lot. Hence there is no irritation and anger — the sure sign of self-will. Thus he finds the Lord better than all his fears.

(vv. 1-3) The first three verses give the theme of the psalm. The godly man blesses the Lord, boasts in the Lord, and exalts the Lord, and does so “at all times.” This praise at all times is the distinguishing thought in the psalm. It is easy to praise the Lord when circumstances are favourable, when there are no fears to assail and no clouds in the sky; when there are no troubles to crush nor dangers to confront. To bless the Lord “at all times” — in dark days or fair — is an experience that can only be known by the saint with a broken and a humble heart (v. 18). It is this the psalm so touchingly unfolds.

(vv. 4-7) The following verses present the circumstances in which the psalmist learned to praise the Lord at all times. “Fears” assailed him; the dread of evils that looked imminent pressed upon him. But he sought the Lord and found deliverance from all these fears (v. 4).

Darkness seemed to enshroud the path of God's people; but they looked to Him and were lightened (v. 5). “Troubles” pressed upon this poor man; but he “cried and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles” (v. 6). Dangers beset the people of God. All the unseen powers of evil are against them; but even so, they find the angel of the Lord encamps round about them that fear Him, and delivers them.

(vv. 8-10) Having learned what an intimate friend he has found in the midst of his trials, and thus gained an experimental acquaintance with the Lord, he is able to call upon others to taste and see that the Lord is good, to “fear the Lord” and “seek the Lord” and thus find that those who make the Lord their resource, will not “want any good.”

(vv. 11-18) The blessings, however, of which the psalmist speaks call for a distinct character of walk (vv. 11-17), and a right condition of soul (v. 18). This leads the psalmist to mark out the path of peace through a world of turmoil. If we would know this path then let us (1) keep the tongue from evil: (2) the lips from guile — uttering fair words with an evil motive; (3) let us walk in separation from evil, and (4) do good; (5) let us seek peace and pursue it. Those treading this path will realize

that the eyes of the Lord are upon His people and His ears open to their cry. He is not unmindful of their sorrows: He sees them all. He is not indifferent to their cry; He hears the faintest whisper (v. 15).

Moreover the Lord is fully acquainted with all the evil, for the face of the Lord is against them that do evil (v. 16), and in the end of God's ways, the remembrance of the evil doer will be cut off, while the righteous will be delivered out of all his troubles (vv. 16-18).

Further there is not only a right path to tread but a right condition of soul suited to the path. This is found in “a broken heart,” and “a contrite spirit.” However correct the outward path may be it is not enough if we are to find true blessing in a day of trouble. If in the midst of trial there is irritation and anger, be it only in thought, it is the sure sign of self-will at work. The spirit may rebel in the trial, chafe at the perversity of men who pursue evil and refuse the right. The godly soul wishing it to be otherwise, may grow impatient and become disturbed in spirit because the way it knows to be right is not taken. When however the heart is broken by reason of the evil and entirely submits to all that God in His government allows, then — the

will no longer at work — it will find great blessing in the trial, and will bless the Lord “at all times.”

(vv. 19-22) Moreover if the righteous man thus finds great spiritual blessing, it does not follow that in an evil world he will not suffer. For, “Many are the afflictions of the righteous.” Nevertheless, the Lord, in His own time and way, will deliver the godly out of his afflictions. In the meantime He will keep His saints — “He keeps all his bones.” Judgment will overtake the wicked: they shall bear their guilt (JND); the Lord will redeem His servants, and none that trust in Him shall bear guilt.

Psalm 35

An appeal to God to deal with the enemies of His people according to the way the enemy has dealt with the godly.

(vv. 1-3) The psalm opens with an appeal to God that He would deal with the wicked according to the way they had dealt with the righteous. “Strive, O Lord, with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me.” The soul prays that God would actively intervene against his persecutors, and on behalf of the one who is persecuted.

(vv. 4-10) In verses 4 to 10 the psalmist sets forth his plea for the destruction of his enemies. They have sought after the life of the godly man; they devise his hurt; they have hidden a net in a pit for the destruction of his soul. All this have they done without cause. When destruction comes upon them, the righteous will rejoice in God's salvation; and the Lord will be exalted. It will be said, "who is like to thee."

(vv. 11-16) In the verses that follow, 11 to 16, the psalmist spreads out before the Lord the circumstances and behavior of the godly man in this trial. False witnesses laid to his charge things of which he was innocent. They rewarded him evil for good. In these hard circumstances there was no expression of indignation on the part of the sufferer; no reviling, no rebellion against the circumstances. On the contrary there was submission before God — "I humbled my soul with fasting;" and grace to the persecutors — "I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother." Nevertheless the enmity of his persecutors "ceased not;" and their enmity being all in vain, they gnashed upon the godly with their teeth.

(vv. 17-18) Having spread out his cause before the Lord, the godly man enquires, "Lord, how long wilt thou look on?" He

knows there must be a limit set to the persecution. Faith looks to the Lord to rescue the soul from the destructive violence of the wicked. Then will the godly praise the Lord in “the great congregation” — restored Israel; and “among much people” — the Gentile nations.

(vv. 19-28) In the verses that follow the psalmist pleads for the Lord's intervention on two grounds. First, because of the unrighteousness of the wicked; secondly, in order to maintain righteousness — whether it be the righteousness of the Lord (v. 24), or the righteous cause of the godly (v. 27).

The unrighteousness of the enemy is manifest in that they hate the godly without cause (v. 19). They stir up strife against those who are for peace — the “quiet in the land” (v. 20). They bear false witness, loudly professing to have seen some evil in the godly (v. 21).

The Lord, however, has seen the wickedness of these enemies, and cannot be indifferent to evil. Therefore the soul pleads that the Lord should intervene and judge the cause of the godly according to His righteousness, and not allow the wicked to triumph over one whose cause is righteous (vv. 22-26).

The Lord's intervention would result in the exaltation of the Lord and the prosperity of His servant, who would become a witness to the righteousness of the Lord, and a leader in His praise (vv. 27-28).

Psalm 36

The character of the wicked contrasted with God and the blessedness of those who trust in God.

(vv. 1-4) The psalm opens with a description of the wicked. Their known character makes it impossible to trust in their statements. Their lives show that they act without fear of God; their boastful words, even when their iniquity is found to be hateful (JND), prove they have no conscience before men.

(vv. 5-7) In contrast to the wicked, the known character of God invites the fullest confidence of the sons of men. The heavens, with the sun and moon, are a continual witness to the mercy of God (Matt. 5:45). The faithfulness of God to His own Word is witnessed by the bow in the cloud (Gen. 9:16). His righteousness is as stable as the mountains, and His judgments are as

profound as a great deep. God's preserving care is over all His creatures — “man and beast.”

Moreover His loving-kindness has been revealed to man. Therefore, in spite of their sin, the children of men can put their trust under the shadow of His wings.

(vv. 8-9) The blessedness of those who put their confidence in God. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of His house; they will drink of the river of His pleasure — all the blessings that God has purposed in His heart for man. In His light they see light — the light of all that God is gives light to all else, for those that are in the light.

(vv. 10-12) A prayer for the continuance of His loving-kindness to those that know God; for preservation from the wicked who, it is foreseen, will fall to rise no more.

Psalm 37

An exhortation to the godly to trust in the Lord, and not allow themselves to be disturbed by the passing prosperity of the wicked.

(vv. 1-2) The first two verses present the theme of the psalm — a warning to the godly not to fret in spirit because of the present prosperity of the wicked. Like the grass they will soon be cut down.

(vv. 3-11) Faith in the Lord is the way of escape from this snare. Thus the word to the godly soul is, “Trust in the Lord”; “delight thyself also in the Lord”; “Commit thy way to the Lord”; “Rest in the Lord”; and “wait upon the Lord.”

Instead of fretting let the godly trust in the Lord, and he will find that while the wicked “shall soon be cut down,” the one who trusts will dwell in the land and be fed.

Instead of fretting because of evil doers, let the believer delight in the Lord, and he shall be satisfied.

Instead of being stumbled and turned out of the right way by reason of the prosperity of the wicked, let the godly commit his way to the Lord. However rough it may be at the moment, the Lord will maintain the godly in the way, and make manifest the righteousness of the one who keeps in the way.

Instead of being impatient because for the moment the wicked man prospers in his way, let the soul rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him. Resting in the Lord the soul is preserved from anger and wrath when he sees the prosperous way in which the desires of the wicked are brought to pass. To fret would only lead the soul into evil. In the Lord's own time the evildoers will be cut off, and those that wait upon the Lord will inherit the land.

Moreover it is not for long that patience will have to be exercised, it is but a little while and the wicked will pass away and the meek be established in blessing.

(vv. 12-15) Verses 12 to 15 present the Lord's attitude toward the wicked. Over-occupied with the prosperity of the wicked, we may fret and become angry and impatient; the Lord, however, derides the wicked who plot against the just, for the Lord sees that his day is coming when, in the government of God, the wicked will fall by the very violence that they have used against the upright. They that take the sword will perish by the sword.

(vv. 16-20) The following verses present the Lord's attitude towards the godly. The little of the righteous is better than the abundance of the wicked, for with that little there is the support of the Lord — He “upholds the righteous.” The Lord knows their days, and has secured an eternal inheritance for them. And though on the way to the inheritance they may have to pass through times of trial and days of famine, yet they shall not be confounded and left to want. The wicked shall perish and consume away.

(vv. 21-38) Verses 21 to 38 present the way of the godly, their present portion, and their end, in contrast to the wicked.

The wicked take without mercy, and come under the curse; the righteous shows mercy, gives, and is blessed (vv. 21-22).

The steps of a godly man are established by the Lord. He may fall, but he will not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholds him (vv. 23-24).

The needs of the righteous man are met, and more than met, so that he is able to dispense to others. Let, then, the godly depart from evil and do good seeing that the Lord forsakes not His

saints but preserves them for ever and brings them into the land of His choice; whereas the wicked will be cut off (vv. 25-29).

“The mouth of the righteous proffers wisdom and ... judgment,” (JND), from a heart that cherishes the law of God. His steps shall not slide, for the Lord will not leave him in the hand of those who watch for his destruction. Therefore let the godly wait on the Lord and keep His way, knowing that he will inherit the land, while those who seek his downfall will be cut off (vv. 30-34).

The wicked man may, indeed, for a time make a great show of prosperity — like a green bay-tree — yet he will pass away and not be found. The perfect man may pass through trial, but his end is peace, whereas the end of the wicked is to be cut off (vv. 35-38).

(vv. 39-40) However right the walk and ways of the godly, let them ever remember that their salvation is of the Lord. He is the strength in trouble, and help in time of need, and the deliverer from the wicked of all that trust in Him.

Psalm 38

The godly soul forsaken by lover and friend, and reproached by enemies, when suffering, under the chastening of the Lord, for his own sin.

Psalms 38—39 present the governmental dealings of the Lord with a believer as the direct result of his own sin and failure, and not, as in many other psalms, as the outcome of the sin of the nation. These experiences of the soul under chastening doubtless set forth the exercises of the godly remnant of the Jews in a latter day, while containing important principles applicable to a failing saint at any time.

(vv. 1-5) The soul fully recognizes that, on the one hand, his sufferings come from the Lord, and, on the other, are the direct outcome of his own sin. He can say “Thy hand presses me sore;” and the chastening is “because of my sin;” and “mine iniquities” and “my foolishness.”

(vv. 6-8) The failing saint is allowed to feel and express, the misery, humiliation, and feebleness of his condition as the result of his sin. He has to say “I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly;” “I am feeble and sore broken.”

(vv. 9-12) Nevertheless his faith is not allowed to fail. The soul finds its resource in the Lord. He takes comfort from the fact, that, if his sin is before the Lord, so also his “groaning is not hid” from the Lord. He turns to the Lord when his own strength has failed him (v. 10); when lovers, friends and kinsmen forsake him (v. 11), and when his enemies take occasion by his fall to reproach him, seek his hurt, speak mischievous things, and imagine evil devices against him.

(vv. 13-15) Whatever the enemy may say or do, the godly soul is dumb and cannot utter any reproof, for he is conscious that he himself has sinned. He therefore leaves himself in the hands of the Lord, who can, if He sees fit, answer the enemy — “In thee, O Jehovah, do I hope: thou wilt answer O Lord my God” (JND).

(vv. 16-20) The enemy, with no love for good or hatred of evil, takes occasion by the slip of the godly to rejoice in his fall and to magnify himself. As for the godly, his sin has made him realize his own weakness, as one ready to halt. He is ever conscious of his sin over which he grieves. His enemies take occasion by his sin to persecute him; not, however, because of his failure, but because he follows that which is good.

(vv. 21-22) All may have forsaken him, but his confidence is that the Lord will not forsake him. He looks to the Lord for help and deliverance.

Psalm 39

The silence of a godly soul, in the presence of the reproaches of the wicked, when under the chastening of God for his sin.

(vv. 1-3) In the presence of the wicked the soul remains dumb. Seeing that he is being chastened of God for his own failure it was not fitting that he should reply to their reproaches, even though he knows their motive to be hatred of the godly. He might have retorted; it would, however, have led him into sinning with his tongue. Thus he restrained himself, and held his peace, even from speaking good. Nevertheless, when keeping silence, his heart burned within him.

(vv. 4-6) When at length he speaks, it is to the Lord. His own failure, and the wickedness of men, who take occasion by the failure of the saints to exalt themselves, bring home to the godly soul the frailty of man. He would fain learn through this trial the shortness of life, the weakness of the flesh, and the

vanity of the world. It is but a vain show, in which men put themselves to infinite trouble to heap up riches which they have to leave.

(vv. 7-11) The godly soul looks beyond the “vain show” to the Lord, the One for whom he waits, and in whom is all his hope. To the Lord he looks for deliverance from his transgressions, as well as from the reproaches of the foolish that they have entailed. He dare not defend himself for the Lord had sent the stroke. He who sent it can alone remove it. Under the rebuke of the Lord all the comeliness of man withers like the fleeting beauty of a moth.

(vv. 12-13) Having owned his sin and weakness, the soul looks to God to hear his prayer; to let his tears speak before God, that he may be spared and recover strength, before he leaves the scene of his pilgrimage.

Psalm 40

Christ personally entering into the sorrows of His people, proving, for their encouragement, the deliverance of Jehovah on be-

half of one who submits to God, and waits patiently for His help.

(vv. 1-4) The opening verses present the great theme of the psalm. Christ, having waited patiently for the Lord to deliver Him from the horrible pit of suffering into which He had entered for the will of God and the blessing of His people, is heard, delivered, established on firm ground, and a new song put into His mouth.

The result being that many will be encouraged to trust in the Lord. The path, taken by the Lord, meant, indeed, that in this world He was poor and needy (v. 17). Nevertheless blessed is the man who, encouraged by the example of this poor and needy Man, puts his trust in God and does not look on the outward appearance. Nor does he respect the proud.

(v. 5) Furthermore the ways of God with Christ make manifest how wonderful are the works of God, and His thoughts to us-ward. As we look at Christ become incarnate, manifesting a faithful witness for God in the world, entering into our sufferings; waiting for God; delivered and brought on to firm ground beyond all suffering, we see God's thoughts to us-ward.

(vv. 6-8) The unfolding of these thoughts to us-ward commence with the incarnation of Christ. He comes according to the eternal purpose of God to do the will of God. Christ having come, the whole Levitical system is set aside as neither meeting the desires of God nor the needs of men. In the place of these ineffectual sacrifices, Christ comes in the body prepared for Him, to do the will of God.

(vv. 9-10) In His path of service Christ was the faithful witness. He perfectly carried out the will of God in the midst of Israel — the great congregation. There He was absolutely faithful to Jehovah. He did not refrain His lips, or hide the truth in His heart for fear of consequences. He could say, “I have preached righteousness”; “I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy loving-kindness and thy truth.”

(vv. 11-12) Christ looks to Jehovah that He might be preserved by the loving-kindness and truth that He had so faithfully declared, for, as the result of His faithful witness He was opposed by those who, in their hatred, sought to destroy Him, as He can say, “innumerable evils have compassed me about.”

(vv. 12-13) Moreover the accomplishment of God's will led Christ into yet deeper sufferings. It is God's will that His people should be diverted through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ of everything unsuited to God. If this will is to be accomplished, Christ must bear the sins of His people. Here then we see Christ confessing the sins of His people as His own, and bearing the burden of them.

This passage does not carry us as far as Psalm 22, which speaks of bearing the wrath of God which the sins deserve — a work of the first necessity and which alone has been wrought by Christ, and in which none other can share. The 40th Psalm speaks of the confession and burden of sins, which others can know, though only fully entered into by Christ. It is right that the believer should confess and feel the horror of his sins; still he will ever feel how imperfectly he has confessed them: how feebly he has felt their horror. Nevertheless, for our comfort, we know they have been fully confessed, and the burden of all their horror has been fully borne. Confessing our sins as His own, the Lord could say, “Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up.” In this sore trial He be-

came the perfect pattern for others, inasmuch as He looked only to the Lord to deliver and help Him.

(vv. 14-16) The verses that follow distinguish the godly remnant in Israel from the Christ-rejecting mass of the nation. Those who rejected the faithful witness of Christ in life and in death will be put to shame. Those who seek the Lord and His salvation will rejoice and magnify the Lord.

(v. 17) Thus the Lord closes His path in this world as One that is poor and needy. Yet, having perfectly fulfilled the will of God, He has the assurance that God thinks upon Him, and will be His help and His deliverer. This leads to the glorious end stated in the opening verses. Christ is heard, delivered, established on resurrection ground, as the Leader of a new song “to our God.”

Psalm 41

The humiliation of the godly but despised remnant in the midst of an ungodly nation. Christ's identification with the remnant and hence their blessing.

(vv. 1-3) The blessedness of the man who considers (or “understands”) the position of the godly remnant in Israel — here referred to as “the poor.” Christ, as we know from the Gospels, fully entered into this position, and tasted their sorrows (See Matt. 5:3; Luke 6:20). Therefore there are expressions in the psalm which are used by Christ, though the psalm as a whole cannot be applied exclusively to Him. Nevertheless, seeing that Christ so perfectly entered into the position and sorrows of the poor of the flock, the blessedness consists, not only in considering the poor remnant, but very especially in recognizing Christ as the poor Man, who identified Himself with the godly.

It must indeed be blessed to pay attention to those who, like the poor of the flock, and like Christ who became poor, are the special care of the Lord. Such will be delivered in the time of trouble, preserved, kept alive, and blessed in the land, when delivered from all their enemies. They will be strengthened in weakness, and healed of their sicknesses.

(vv. 4-10) The verses that follow describe in detail the humiliations to which the godly in Israel have to submit from an ungodly nation. First, however, the soul casts itself upon the

mercy of the Lord owning his sins that have called down the chastisement of the Lord.

His enemies, taking occasion by this chastisement, express their hatred of the godly, desiring his death. Nevertheless, they act with utter hypocrisy, visiting the godly to seek evil against them, fancied or real, and then spreading it abroad. They plot secretly against the godly man, devise mischief, malign him, and maliciously anticipate for him a speedy end. He is betrayed by one who affects the closest friendship — a trial which the Lord had to face (John 13:18).

(vv. 10-12) In the presence of these humiliations the Lord is the resource of the godly man, to whom he looks for mercy and deliverance. He realizes the favour of the Lord, seeing the enemy is not allowed to triumph over him. He is upheld in his path of integrity and set before the face of the Lord for ever.

(v. 13) Seeing that Christ has so blessedly entered into the sufferings of the godly, the glorious outcome of all God's dealings with His people will be that the Lord God of Israel will be blessed from everlasting to everlasting.

Book 2

Psalm 42

The experience of a godly man, expressing the confidence in God of the believing remnant of the Jews in the latter days, when cast out of Jerusalem.

The great theme of the psalm is the faith of the soul in God Himself. Cast out of the land, and cut off from the blessings of the sanctuary, the soul clings to God as its only resource, when all else is gone.

(vv. 1-2) The distressing circumstances create a soul thirst for God — the living God. As the water brooks revive the panting hart, so the soul looks to God as the life-giving One, to revive his soul; while waiting for the time when he will appear before God in His sanctuary.

(vv. 3-4) The sorrows of the godly man arise from his being surrounded by scoffers when cut off from his privileges. Scoffers take occasion by circumstances, in which the soul is apparently forsaken, to continually raise the taunt, “Where is

thy God?” Moreover the soul is distressed as it sees the enemy in possession of the temple, where, in past days, it had worshipped God in company with His people. Privileges once enjoyed are valued more deeply now that they are lost.

(v. 5) However, the memory of the enjoyment of past blessings leads the soul to rebuke its present despondency; and encourages it to hope in God for the future. What God is in Himself, not what we may chance to feel Him in this or that moment to be, that is our hope. “My soul ... hope thou in God.” Looking beyond the present gloom the godly man can say, “I shall yet praise him for the health of his countenance.” The enemy is against him, but the face of God is toward him; and if God be for him who can be against him?

(vv. 6-8) Nevertheless, present circumstances are such that the soul is cast down, though it ceases not to remember God from the dreary mountain places beyond Jordan, to which it has been banished. There his calamities are compared to floods and waves allowed by God to overwhelm his soul. Nevertheless the godly man looks on to the coming day when Jehovah will command His loving-kindness. In the meantime his night will be relieved by praise and prayer (cp. Acts 16:25).

(vv. 9-11) In the assurance of the coming day, the godly man stays his soul upon God as his rock. He may have to meet storms of opposition from enemies that oppress and reproach him, as they continually say “Where is thy God?” but no storm can move or shake the Rock in which he trusts. The circumstances may lead him to cry, “Why hast thou forgotten me?” Nonetheless, God being his rock, he can again rebuke the natural tendency to despondency by saying, “Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God.” Then with renewed confidence the soul can add, “I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.” The favour of God’s countenance (v. 5) becomes the health of the countenance of the godly man.

Psalm 43

The godly man looking to God to be delivered from his enemies, and brought back to the sanctuary, in God’s holy hill, for the praise of God.

(vv. 1-2) The great theme of the last psalm is the longing of the soul for the living God. In this psalm the earnest desire of the godly man is to be delivered from his different foes — “an un-

godly nation,” the Jews; “the deceitful and unjust man” — the Antichrist; and “the oppression of the enemy” — the Gentiles.

Feeling his utter weakness, he realizes that God is the God of his strength. Nevertheless his outward circumstances, as driven out of the land, make it appear that he is cast off by God.

(vv. 3-4) He seeks that he may not be deceived by the surrounding gloom, or judge according to appearances; but that he may be led by the light and truth of God. Judging according to circumstances and sight, he would be led far from God. Guided by God's light and truth he would be led to God's “holy hill,” and God's “tabernacles.”

This then is the desire of his heart, that delivered from every enemy, and led by light and truth, he may at last be found at God's altar as a worshipper in God's tabernacle.

(v. 5) Encouraged by this prospect he again rebukes his despondency, and the anxieties which disquiet his soul. He encourages himself to hope in God, whom he will yet praise. Then will his face shine in the full enjoyment of the favour of God.

Psalm 44

The faith of the godly remnant, counting upon what God has done for His people in the past and acknowledging God as their King, looks to God to arise for the help of His people and to deliver them from all their enemies.

(vv. 1-3) The godly remnant, though cast out of the land, and under the oppression of their enemies, cling in simple faith to what they have heard from their fathers of God's mighty works on behalf of His people in the past. In those days it was not by their own power that God's people were brought into the land, and their enemies dispossessed. It was God's right hand, and God's arm, that brought them into blessing, because God was favourable to His people and delighted in them.

(vv. 4-8) Now, when again the enemy is in possession of the land, and God's people are cast out, the believing remnant claim God as their King, and look to Him that, once again, through His power they may be delivered from their enemies. Their trust will not be in their bow or sword, but in the God who in times past had saved them from their enemies. In God will be their boast, and His Name will they praise for ever.

(vv. 9-16) They recount before God the present condition of God's professing people, and God's ways with them, so utterly in contrast with His former ways. Not only are they cast off, defeated, spoiled by their enemies, and scattered among the heathen; but it is God Himself, who formerly wrought on their behalf, who has cast them off, and turned their backs before their enemies, and scattered them. They own that God's hand in government is upon them; that God has sold His people into captivity, and made them “a reproach,” “a scorn,” “a derision” and a “byword.” Thus the godly soul is continually face to face with the confusion and shame of God's people; for the voice of those that reproach and blaspheme is ever raised against them.

(vv. 17-22) Nevertheless, in the midst of all their confusion and shame, the godly can plead their integrity. They have not forgotten God. In the presence of the reproaches and blasphemy of the enemy they can say nothing, for they are conscious of the utter failure of the nation: but in the presence of God they can still plead that they have not forgotten God, nor turned aside from His covenant or His ways.

They are “sore broken,” and lie under “the shadow of death;” nevertheless they have not forgotten the name of God, nor

stretched out their hands in appeal to a strange god. Had they done so God would have known it, for “He knows the secrets of the heart.” Thus they appeal to the perfect knowledge of God. So far from turning to a strange god, they are suffering all the day long, and are exposed to death, because they cleave to the true God.

(vv. 23-26) They appeal to God to awaken on their behalf, and cast them not off for ever. They plead their own deep need and His exceeding grace. They are in affliction and oppressed, bowed down and crushed; but with God there is help and loving-kindness.

This psalm unfolds deeply important principles, applicable to God's people in any day of ruin. First, in an evil day, we should ever judge of the power and goodness of God by the way He acted for His people in the beginning of the dispensation; and beware of judging of God by the low condition in which they may be found by reason of their failure (vv. 1-3).

Secondly, in spite of all their failure, His people should trust in God as the One who alone can bring deliverance, and beware

of seeking to remedy their condition by their own efforts (vv. 4-8).

Thirdly, in a day of failure it becomes God's people to bow under the chastening hand of the Lord, looking beyond all second causes, and recognizing that God Himself has allowed them to become a reproach and a byword (vv. 9-18).

Fourthly, in spite of all failure, and the consequent chastening of the Lord, let them never surrender the truth; or think for one moment that failure relieves from responsibility to obey the Word, or to walk in God's appointed way. It is still their privilege, and responsibility, in a day of ruin, to keep the covenant, walk in God's way, cleave to His Name, and suffer for His sake (vv. 17-22).

Finally, while owning their failure, let them look to God alone to “arise for their help” (vv. 23-26).

Psalm 45

A song of the Beloved, in which Christ is presented in answer to the appeal of the godly in Psalm 44. He is seen in His moral perfection; as the One mighty in battle; and finally as the King

reigning in righteousness, with restored Israel under the figure of a queen.

(v. 1) The heart of the singer is “welling forth with a good matter” (JND). It is more than full, it is overflowing, for the theme of his song is the King in His beauty. His words are no mere recital of what others have said: he speaks of the glories that he himself has discerned in the King. His tongue is the pen of a ready writer. An empty heart will mean a silent tongue. An overflowing heart will lead to a ready tongue; for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

(v. 2) The psalmist, addressing the Beloved, and voicing the feelings of the earthly bride, can say, “Thou art fairer than the children of men.” The King surpasses all others in beauty and moral excellence. Moreover His moral perfection filled His lips with grace. “Grace is poured into thy lips.” The grace of His words is the outcome of the love of His heart. “Therefore,” says the psalmist — because of His intrinsic worth — “God has blessed thee for ever.” Others are blessed through His work and worth; He, alone amongst men, is blessed because of His own intrinsic excellence.

(vv. 3-5) However excellent the King, yea, because of His moral perfection, He has been opposed by the enmity of men, who will not submit to His claims as the King. His throne, therefore, can only be reached through the judgment of His enemies. Thus the godly man appeals to the King to gird on His sword for the day of battle. Not only is the King morally perfect, but He is all powerful — a “mighty One.”

With the girding on of the sword, the day of His humiliation is passed; the time to put on His glory and majesty has come. When He comes forth in His majesty, as the One mighty in battle, He will ride prosperously, for He will do battle with the forces of evil on behalf of “truth, and meekness, and righteousness.” He will maintain the truth, avenge the oppressed, and establish righteousness. In this world's wars, earthly kings pay little heed to truth; the meek are crushed, and too often might prevails over right. A prosperous kingdom and a permanent throne cannot be reached by such means. Here, however, is One that wars, not simply to acquire territory or renown, but to establish the right, and bless the meek of the earth. With such motives and aims the King, in the day of battle, will “ride” through all the ranks of the enemy, and overcome every

obstacle. The peoples will fall under Him, and the King's enemies will be smitten to rise no more.

(vv. 6-7) Thus will He reach a throne that will be established for ever and ever, of which the sceptre will be wielded in righteousness. Moreover in that day the King will be recognized as a Divine Person, and addressed as God. The King is none less than the Son of God. Nevertheless, He has taken a place amongst man, and as Man, He loved righteousness and hated wickedness; and of Him it can be said, “God, Thy God, has anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy companions.” Righteousness must be the basis of a kingdom that endures for ever, and joy and gladness will flow from righteousness. While others will share the kingdom glories, Christ, as King, will ever be pre-eminent.

Thus the King has been passed before us in His moral perfection (v. 2); as the One mighty in battle, overcoming every enemy (vv. 3-5); and finally as reigning in righteousness, in the glory of His Person, exalted above His companions in kingly dignity (vv. 6-7).

(v. 8) We are now permitted to behold the King in yet another glory, as the Bridegroom in the day of His espousals. For even as the recognition of Christ in heaven, as the omnipotent King, is followed by the marriage of the Lamb (Rev. 19:6-8): so the coming forth of Christ to reign on earth as the King of kings will be followed by the restoration of Israel as the earthly bride.

Once He had worn the garments of humiliation; then He had gone forth to war clothed in a vesture dipped in blood; now the days of His humiliation are passed, His victories are complete, and He comes forth in garments that speak of a character redolent with every grace. Not only does gladness flow from His throne (v. 7); but He, Himself, is made glad by the joy of His people. At last He dwells amidst the praises of Israel (Ps. 22:3).

(v. 9) The nations, presented under the figure of “King’s daughters,” will do homage to the King; though the place of honour will be reserved for restored Israel, brought before us under the figure of the queen standing at the right hand of the King (cp. Isa. 54:5; Jer. 3:1; Hosea 2:19-20).

(vv. 10-12) The psalmist, using the figure of a bride, calls upon restored Israel to consider the new relationship upon which the

nation is entering, and to forget the sorrowful past with all its failure and unfaithfulness to Jehovah. In those days the leaders of the nation had boasted in their fathers while rejecting Christ. Restored Israel is called to recognize that, in connection with their own people, they had forfeited every claim to blessing. They are now to learn that if they inherit blessing it is entirely owing to Christ, and in connection with Him — the One who had been rejected by their fathers. They are called to dissociate themselves from the guilty nation in order to be entirely for Christ. Thus only will the Lord delight in Israel, and Israel worship the Lord.

Thus devoted to the Lord they will exercise an attractive power over the nations, as set forth by the “daughter of Tyre” and “the rich among the peoples.” Such will come with their gifts, entreating the favour of the nation that is in favour with the King. In like spirit Isaiah can say, “The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending to thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet” (Isa. 60:14).

(vv. 13-15) The restored nation of Israel has its distinct place of honour in submission and devotedness to the King. The nations

have come with their gift, thus submitting to Israel. Now restored Israel, and the converted of the nations, under the figure of the bride and her companions, having been made suited to the King, are presented to Christ with gladness and joy, to have a place of intimacy and nearness — “They shall enter into the king's palace.”

(vv. 16-17) In the closing verses of the psalm, we hear the voice of Jehovah speaking through the psalmist. Jehovah predicts that restored Israel, instead of looking back to their fathers, through whom all blessing was forfeited, will rejoice in her children who will rule as princes in the earth. Above all, Christ will be exalted and praised for ever and ever. Other names will be forgotten, but the name of Christ will be remembered throughout all generations, and He, Himself, the Object of praise among all people for ever and ever.

Psalm 46

The confidence of the remnant of the Jews in God, acquired by the experience of what God has been for them in the time of trouble.

(v. 1) With Christ before their souls, presented in Psalm 45 as the One who will vanquish all their enemies and establish a reign of righteousness, they can say, with the utmost confidence, “God is our refuge, and strength.” Moreover, not only can they say “we have heard” of the great things God has done for His people in times past, as in Psalm 44:1-8; but, with a deepened experience of God's goodness, they can add, “God is ... a very present help in trouble.”

(vv. 2-3) With the confidence that God is a present help in trouble, the godly can face their circumstances which call for a “refuge,” “strength,” and “help.” They find themselves in a scene of confusion and upheaval. The earth is removed, or “changed;” the mountains, speaking of stable governments (Matt. 21:21), are being overturned in the midst of nations in a state of turmoil. The roar of the masses, in revolution against every form of constitutional government, strikes terror into the hearts of men “for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth” (Isa. 5:26-30; Luke 21:26). Nevertheless, having God for their refuge, the godly can say, “Therefore will not we fear.”

(vv. 4-7) Delivered from the fear of present circumstances, however terrible, the godly can in calmness contemplate what God has before Him according to the purpose of His heart. They see “the city of God,” and “the tabernacles of the most High,” made glad by the river of God. The mountains that surround them may be removed, but the city to which they are going “shall not be moved.” Furthermore, they see that the dawn of the morning is near when God’s city will come into view (v. 5, JND). The heathen may rage, and their kingdoms be removed, but nothing can hinder the fulfillment of God’s purpose. God has but to speak and every enemy will melt away. If, however, God is against the nations, as the Lord of hosts He is with the godly; and being with them is their refuge, even as Jacob found when God said to him, “I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee into this land” (Gen. 28:15; Heb. 13:5-6). So too Elisha experienced at Dothan, when he said to his servant, “Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them” (2 Kings 6:14-17).

(vv. 8-9) Moreover, with the purpose of God before their souls, the godly see that, through the desolations of the earth, God is

working to fulfill His counsel, and in due time will make wars to cease; for if God makes desolation, He also makes peace.

(v. 10) Having thus seen the purpose of God, and the governmental ways whereby God carries out His purpose, the godly have only to be still and wait for God to act. In due time God will be exalted in the earth; then it will be made manifest that the Lord of hosts is with His people, and the God of Jacob their refuge.

Psalm 47

Israel, anticipating their deliverance from their enemies, celebrate the triumph of God, and call upon the nations to unite with them in praise to God.

(vv. 1-4) We know from Revelation, that in the days of trial, which precede the reign of Christ, a great multitude will be saved from amongst the nations. Apparently it is this great company, “the willing-hearted of the peoples” (v. 9 JND) that are called in this psalm to express their joy with shouts of triumph, because God has vanquished every enemy. The Lord Most High has shewn Himself to be terrible to those who re-

fuse to submit to His claims. He is not only King, but “a great King” that none can withstand. He has subdued the Gentiles and exalted Israel above the nations, and, in sovereign grace has chosen the land of Israel, the excellency of Jacob whom He loved.

(vv. 5-9) The psalmist, anticipating the time when God will have taken possession of His earthly throne, calls for all to sing with intelligent praise to God, the King of all the earth, who reigns over the nations, and whose throne is characterized by holiness. Then, every opposing enemy having been subdued under the feet of Israel, the willing-hearted of the nations will be gathered together with the people of the God of Abraham, and the defence of the whole earth against all evil (the shields of the earth) will be in the hands of God: the result being that, while the whole earth will be blessed, God Himself will be greatly exalted.

Psalm 48

The celebration of the reign of the King in Zion, the city of God, at last delivered from the enemy and established as the centre of government for the whole earth.

This psalm completes the series of psalms commencing with Psalm 44. In that psalm the faith of the godly, having heard from the fathers of God's deliverances in days of old, looks to God to arise for their help and redeem Israel from the power of the enemy. Psalm 45 presents Christ as the answer to their cry to God for help. He is the One through whom deliverance will come. Psalm 46 expressed the confidence in God gained by the actual experience of God's mercy in the present, and not simply the report of what God has done in the past. Psalm 47 celebrates the intervention of God on behalf of His people, establishing Christ as "King over all the earth," exalting Israel over the nations, and calling upon the nations to join with Israel in praise to Jehovah. Psalm 48 presents the King established in Zion the centre of government for the whole earth. Thus the godly say, "As we have heard," referring to Psalm 44, "so have we seen."

(vv. 1-3) The psalm opens with an ascription of praise to Jehovah, who has established His throne in Zion, "the city of our God." Then follows a description of the glory of the city. As becomes the dwelling place of Jehovah, it is described as "the mountain of his holiness." Holiness being established, the city

which had been desolate now becomes beautiful, the joy of the whole earth. “On the sides of the north” may indicate the blessedness of the city in the sight of the world, that at enmity with the people of God had once approached from the north. Now God, dwelling in the city, is known as its defence and security. Thus the city is publicly known as holy, beautiful, a joy, and as a refuge for God's people.

(vv. 4-7) There follows a vivid description of the sudden judgment by which the city had been delivered from the enemies of God's people. The confederated kings had assembled against the city. They mustered their hosts that passed by together in battle array, only to find themselves confronted, not simply by man, but by the mighty power of God. Astonished and dismayed they fled, seized with sudden panic; trembling like a woman overcome with the pain of travail, and dispersed like a navy in a storm.

(vv. 8-10) Thus the godly can say, not only “We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days” (Ps. 44:1), but, “as we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts.” Moreover the city now delivered, will be established “for ever.” When cast out of

the land, they had thought of the loving-kindness of God (Ps. 42:8); now that the city is freed from the enemy the godly can delight in the loving-kindness of God “in the midst of thy temple.” The praise of God, according to all that He is, as set forth in His name, will flow to the ends of the earth, and the power of His right hand will be known in righteousness for the whole world.

(vv. 11-14) The psalm closes with a call to mount Zion to rejoice, and to the cities of Judah to be glad. In peace the inhabitants can contemplate the beauty of Zion as they survey her bulwarks and palaces, and thus be able to tell of this great deliverance to future generations, recognizing that the God who has wrought the deliverance is their God for ever and ever. Never again will the nation turn aside to idolatry. Henceforth through life God will be their God and their guide.

Psalm 49

In view of the judgments of God about to overwhelm the world, all the inhabitants are warned against the folly of trusting in riches to meet “the days of evil.” The psalm shows the vanity of riches, and the end of those who boast in their wealth.

It encourages the godly in an evil day to trust in God, who not only redeems from death, but afterwards receives the soul.

(vv. 1-4) All the inhabitants of this passing fleeting world, whatever their social position, whether rich or poor, are called to hear the wisdom of one who speaks with understanding, or 'discernment.' The psalmist speaks as one who has listened to the voice of God, and is thus able to expound the riddle of life, with all the certainty of inspiration.

(v. 5) The psalmist opens his warning with a word of encouragement for the godly man who finds himself living in an evil day, surrounded by those who seek to trip him up. Why should such fear? The exposure that follows, of the utter vanity of those who confide in their riches, answers this question. For the one who trusts in God there is no fear.

(vv. 6-14) The psalmist proceeds to show the folly of trusting in wealth, and boasting in riches. Man cannot, with all his wealth, redeem his brother from death or secure blessing from God. The redemption of the soul is costly, beyond the wealth of the world; God alone can redeem from death. Man cannot but see one thing is common to all, whether wise, or fools, or

brutes — all die, and dying will leave their wealth to others. They may seek to make provision for the continuance of their line, the maintenance of their dwelling places, and the perpetuation of their name. Nevertheless, though man may rise to honour in this life, he cannot abide. Death spoils the plans of man, and proves the folly of their ways, even though the living approve their sayings. In spite of their inward thoughts, expressed in their “sayings,” their wealth is left behind, and their magnificent dwellings shrink down to the narrow grave. Their beauty ends in corruption.

(v. 15) Here then is the answer to the question asked by the poor man who trusts in God. “Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil?” In contrast to those who trust in riches, the one who trusts in God can say, “God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me.” The soul redeemed by God will be received by God after death has closed the present life.

(vv. 16-20) Therefore, those who trust in God are not to be afraid when success and earthly prosperity come to the man of the world. Such need not fear that they have made a mistake in trusting God, or that they have missed a great deal that the

worldly man enjoys. Let such remember that when the man of the world dies he carries nothing away. He has not been rich toward God. He leaves all behind, and has laid up no treasure for the world to come. Earthly riches and worldly glory cannot follow him to the grave. He may, indeed, have done well for himself, as men speak, in this life, and in consequence be praised by others as a successful man. In the end he dies, even as his fathers have done before him; he sees the light no more and, as far as this world is concerned, has perished like the beasts.

Psalm 50

A testimony of God to the heavens and the earth, that rebukes those who are content with the form of religion without the power.

Psalm 49 rebukes the folly of the worldly man that trusts in riches; Psalm 50 the religious man that trusts in forms of religion.

(vv. 1-2) God is present in His majesty, as the mighty and unchangeable One, speaking to the whole earth from the rising of

the sun to the going down thereof. He speaks out of Zion, and hence in sovereign blessing for man.

(vv. 3-6) The verses that follow declare that God has reached the throne of blessing in Zion through judgment. During long ages God has kept silence while the world has ripened for judgment. At length the silence will be broken and God will come with the devouring fire of judgment.

The scene being cleared in judgment, God gathers around Him those who are in relationship with Him on the ground of sacrifice — the death of Christ. The earth has manifested the unrighteousness of man; now, at last, the heavens will declare the righteousness of God that, on the one hand, deals in judgment with the rejectors of Christ, and on the other hand blesses those who trust in Christ.

(vv. 7-13) The verses that follow declare God's testimony to Israel, reproving them for trusting in the outward form of religion. God does not reprove them in relation to their sacrifices, as if they had not brought them. God does not want sacrifice from man, He requires righteousness. God has wearied with religious men continually bringing sacrifices, as if He were

claiming cattle from men, or as if He were hungry and needed meat. Every beast of the forest is His, and the cattle on a thousand hills. All the fullness of the earth is at His disposal.

(vv. 14-15) God looks for a spirit of thanksgiving, and the practical fulfillment of obligations. God desires that men should confide in Him and call upon Him in the day of trouble.

(vv. 16-21) Alas! while observing a round of religious ceremonies, the professing people of God hated instruction, and treated God's words with contempt. They might not be guilty of any gross sin, as stealing, but they took pleasure in a thief, and had partaken, if only in mind and imagination, with adulterers. Their mouth had been used for evil-speaking, deceit, and slander.

Yet, because God kept silence, and bore long in patience, men thought that all was well, and that God, like themselves, was satisfied with outward religious observances. When, however, God speaks he raises the question of man's unrighteousness. "These things hast thou done." Man's religion is one of outward forms with nothing to disturb the conscience. God begin-

ning with the conscience, raises the question, “What hast thou done?” (cp. Gen 3:13; 4:10).

(vv. 22-23) The formalist may indeed be religious, but he is forgetting God. Let such beware lest he is overtaken by judgment. Let him glorify God by offering praise, and ordering his way aright; then indeed he will see the salvation of God.

Psalm 51

The experiences of a repentant soul, anticipating the confession of sin by the godly Jewish remnant in the last days, when they humble themselves before God for the rejection and murder of Christ (v. 14).

Psalm 49 warns us against the worldly man that trusts in his riches. Psalm 50 rebukes the religious man who trusts in the outward forms of religion, such as sacrifices and burnt offerings. Psalm 51 presents the repentant man who, acknowledging that sacrifices and burnt offerings are of no avail (v. 16), humbles himself before God and looks to the mercy of God for cleansing.

(vv. 1-3) The psalm opens with a repentant man appealing to the grace and loving-kindness of God. He sees that with God there is an “abundance” (JND) of tender mercies, and therefore God's mercy is greater than his sin. So the prodigal in the parable can say: “How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare.”

In the light of the grace of God, the repentant man can acknowledge his transgressions and sin, and look to God to blot out his sins from before God's face, and cleanse him from the sin that is ever before him.

(v. 4) However much we may sin against man, all sin is against God. The repentant man has a deep conviction of the true character of sin as against God, and in the sight of God. Sin is a defiance of God, and being so, God will be justified in judging the sinner.

(vv. 5-6) Furthermore, the sin is traced to its origin and found to consist, not simply in sinful acts, but in a sinful nature. Hence the sinner requires not only cleansing from actual sins, but a new nature in “the inward parts.”

(vv. 7-8) Having acknowledged his sin, the repentant man looks to God to cleanse him with hyssop. The reference is to the cleansing of the leper, and those who had defiled themselves by contact with a dead body. The hyssop was dipped in blood, which was then sprinkled on the person to be cleansed. It surely speaks of the righteous ground on which God can cleanse — the precious blood of Christ. Being cleansed, the soul would be restored to joy and gladness.

(vv. 9-13) Furthermore, there is the desire, not only that the repentant sinner may be cleansed, but that God Himself will no longer see his sins, and further, that the cleansing may not only be outward, but inward, so that he may have “a clean heart” and a right spirit. Thus suited for God's presence, and filled with the Spirit, he would be led again into the joy of salvation. Sustained by a “willing spirit” (JND), in contrast to his past sin in defiance of God, the repentant sinner, now restored, would be able to teach others in the ways of God so that sinners would be turned to God.

(vv. 14-15) Having sought cleansing from his own sins, the psalmist seeks deliverance from the blood-guiltiness of the nation, guilty of the blood of their own Messiah (Matt. 27:25).

Then indeed he would sing of the “righteousness” of God, expressed as we know in the death of Christ. The declaration of the righteousness of God will lead to the praise of the Lord.

(vv. 16-17) The soul, having profited by the witness of God in Psalm 50, now disclaims all confidence in legal sacrifices. It is realized that if the soul looks to the grace of God for cleansing, the only right condition for being cleansed, is “a broken spirit” and “a contrite heart.” Such, God will not despise.

(vv. 18-19) The repentance of the remnant of the Jews, anticipated in the psalm, prepares the way for the restoration of Zion, according to God's good pleasure. Then, indeed, God will take pleasure in sacrifices offered, not with the legal thought of obtaining blessing, but as the witness of the ground on which the nation is blessed (cp. Ezek. 43:18, 27; Ezek. 45:15-25).

Psalm 52

The faith of the godly remnant in the presence of the antichrist, exposing his true character, challenging his power, and foretelling his doom, while, for themselves, they trust in the mercy of God, and wait for His deliverance.

(v. 1) The opening verse presents the antichrist — the lawless one — boasting in evil (JND), and in the place of power as a “mighty man.” Such an one may have the appearance of carrying all before him for a time; nevertheless, evil will not be allowed to endure, whereas the goodness of God will abide.

(vv. 2-4) There follows a description of this evil man as seen by the godly. His words may, to the unwary, appear fair; but they are devised to work mischief, like a sharp razor that cuts before one is aware. Thus he will be marked by “practising deceit” (JND). Moreover he loves evil rather than good; as the apostle, at a later date, foretells that antichrist will be opposed to “all that is called God.” Further, he loves “lying rather than to speak righteousness;” as again the apostle says he will be marked by “all deceivableness of unrighteousness.” Moreover his words are “devouring words” that overcome with a “strong delusion” those that come under his sway (cp. 2 Thess. 2:3-12).

(v. 5) The psalmist foretells the overwhelming and final judgment of this wicked man, who will be rooted up out of the land of the living (cp. 2 Thess. 2:8; Rev. 19:20).

(vv. 6-7) The judgment of this lawless one is followed by the exultation of the righteous at the overthrow of one who opposed God, and trusted in the abundance of his riches.

(vv. 8-9) In contrast to the wicked, the godly, instead of being rooted up from his dwelling place (v. 5), will flourish “like a green olive tree in the house of God.” Such will “trust” in the mercy of God for ever and ever; will “praise” God for ever, because of what He has done; and will “wait” upon all that God is, as expressed by His Name. Thus to “trust,” and to “praise,” and to “wait,” is the good which is before God's saints.

Psalm 53

The condition of the world as led by antichrist — man throwing off all recognition of God.

(v. 1) The antichrist of the last day, in whom “the fool” will have the most extreme expression, will deny God, opposing, exalting himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped (2 Thess. 2:4). He will gather round him followers marked by corruption and abominable deeds. As ever, the folly of denying God lets loose the filthiness of fallen man. Infidelity

and immorality are close companions; “No God” in the heart leads to “no good” in the life.

(vv. 2-3) Nevertheless, the God that men deny is patiently regarding man. God does not judge hastily. He looks upon men, and searches to find any that have understanding and seek after Him. As the result of God's search there is not one that can be found that does good. Apart from the grace of God the whole human race is found to be corrupt.

(vv. 4-5) There are those, however, in whom God has wrought: those of whom God can speak as “my people.” The wicked who deny God, devour His people without any fear of God (cp. Jer. 10:25; Lam. 2:16).

Those in great fear would seem to indicate the ungodly nation of the Jews, associated with antichrist (Isa. 33:14). They fear as they see the armies encamped against Zion. There will be no ground for fear; for God will destroy the opposing enemy, putting to shame and despising those who had despised God.

(v. 6) The longing of the godly that the salvation of Israel, which faith foresees, had already come. Then, when God reigns

out of Zion as a centre, Israel will be regathered with joy and gladness.

Psalm 54

The prayer of the godly remnant of the Jews that they may be delivered “by the Name of God” — that is in accord with all that God is revealed to be.

(vv. 1-3) The opening portion of the psalm is the prayer of a godly man who pleads the “Name” and the “strength” of God. The psalmist pleads that God, in accord with the revelation of Himself, would act in power to grant justice to His people.

Having pleaded his dependence upon God, he spreads out his trial before God. He is oppressed by strangers, those who are enemies outside the nation; and oppressors — the enemies amongst the people of God. In contrast to the godly they have not set God before them. Having no fear of God they are not dependent upon God.

(vv. 4-7) The second portion of the psalm anticipates the answer to the prayer. The psalmist is confident that God will answer his prayer; for God is his helper, and, though others seek

after his soul (v. 3), God is the upholder of his soul. The Lord is with them that uphold his soul, but will requite evil to the enemies of His people, and cut them off in accord with the demands of truth.

Delivered from his enemies, the godly man will, with a willing heart, bring his sacrifice to Jehovah. His sacrifice would no more be the carrying out of legal obligation, or mere compliance with an outward form, but would be the expression of a grateful heart that recognizes how good is the Name of Jehovah. The psalmist can say that God has answered his prayer, and has acted according to His Name in delivering him out of all trouble, and giving him to see the overthrow of his enemies.

Psalm 55

The prayer of a godly man, expressing the exercises of the believing remnant of the Jewish nation, when antichrist apostatizes from God, breaks the covenant, and persecutes the godly.

(vv. 1-3) The psalm opens by presenting the supplication of the godly man, and the cause of his sorrow — the voice of the enemy, and the oppression of the wicked. The voice of the wicked

is raised in slander against the godly man; for he can say, “They cast iniquity upon me.” As ever, slander is followed by persecution, “In anger they persecute me” (JND).

(vv. 4-8) The verses that follow present the misery of the godly remnant in Jerusalem, during the reign of antichrist. Within, the heart of the godly man is sore distressed; without he is faced with death. He longs to flee from the defiled city to some lonely spot where he may escape the storm and tempest of judgment about to break over the doomed city (see Matt. 24:15-22).

(vv. 9-11) There follows a vivid description of the city of Jerusalem during the days of antichrist. The walls, that should have protected the city from every attack, are marked by violence and strife. Iniquity and mischief are in the midst of it, and the streets are marked by oppression and deceit. From the centre to the walls all is corruption and violence.

(vv. 12-15) There follows, what would appear to be a description of the apostate character of antichrist. He had professed to be amongst the godly, as an intimate and familiar friend. He had gone to the house of God in company with the people of

God. Now he had turned against the godly, heaping reproaches upon them, and venting his hatred against them, while seeking to “magnify himself” (cp. Dan. 11:37-38).

For this wicked man, and those associated with him, the psalmist predicts a sudden and overwhelming judgment (Rev. 19:20).

(vv. 16-21) In contrast with the wicked, who are marked by violence and strife, day and night (v. 10), the godly man will call upon the Lord, “evening and morning and at noon.” He is conscious that God will hear and deliver his soul, and afflict those who refuse to repent and own God (Rev. 16:9). Moreover the wicked, not only refuses to glorify God, but he puts forth his hand against the godly and breaks the covenant with them, in spite of all the smooth words he had uttered (Dan. 11:31; Dan. 12:11; Matt. 24:15).

(vv. 22-23) The psalmist closes with a beautiful expression of confidence in Jehovah. Let the godly in their distress cast their burdens upon the unchanging One who will never break His covenant with His people, nor suffer the righteous to be moved, whatever the sorrows they may have to pass through. In contrast to the godly, the violent and deceitful man, who has exal-

ted himself, will be brought down to destruction. Well may the godly conclude by saying, “I will trust in thee.”

Psalm 56

The confidence of the righteous in God and in His Word, in spite of adverse circumstances that put faith to the test.

(vv. 1-3) Surrounded by enemies that daily oppose, oppress, and seek his life, the godly man finds relief from his fears by turning to God and trusting in Him.

(v. 4) Moreover the soul trusts in God to fulfill His Word, and therefore is lifted above his fears and cannot only say, “What time I am afraid I will trust in Thee,” but, rising to a higher plane, can add, “In God I have put my trust; I will not fear.” With God and His Word before the soul, he triumphantly asks, “What can flesh do to me?” (JND).

(vv. 5-9) In greater detail the psalmist spreads out his trial before God, contrasting the wickedness of those who are against him with the goodness of the God who is for him. Every day the enemy perverts the words of the godly: with evil intent they

consult together and secretly watch his steps, seeking to take his life.

In the consciousness that iniquity cannot go unpunished, the soul looks to God to cast down all those who oppose His people.

In contrast to the treatment at the hands of the wicked, God counts every step that His people have to take, keeps a bottle for their tears, and a book wherein to record their sorrows. In the consciousness of God's tender care the soul can look for deliverance from his enemies and say with triumphant assurance, "God is for me."

(vv. 10-11). Thus again the psalmist can confidently affirm that he can praise God's Word, as that in which the faithfulness of God will be proved; and putting his trust in God's Word, he will not be afraid what man can do to him.

(vv. 12-13) The psalmist is ready to fulfill his sacrifice of praise. Man had sought his life, but God had delivered his soul from death. Men seek to trip him up in his steps (v. 6); but God keeps his feet from falling. If God keeps his feet, it is that he

may walk “before God in the light of the living” — that he may live to God in the light of God.

Psalm 57

The confidence of the soul in God as a refuge, until all evils are past, the soul delivered, God exalted, and His glory displayed in all the earth.

(v. 1) In the midst of the calamities that meet the godly man on every side, he trusts in the mercy of God, and finds his refuge and home in the tender loving care of God set forth, in figure, by “the shadow of thy wings.”

(vv. 2-3) His cry is to God the Most High, conscious that God will undertake for him in all things. God will send from the heavens and save the godly man, while covering with reproach those that seek his life (JND). God will send forth His mercy to deliver the godly; His truth to deal with the wicked. His judgment will be according to truth.

(vv. 4-5) In the meanwhile, as to actual circumstances, the godly man is among lions that breathe out destruction, even the sons of men who gnash upon him with rage and malice. Having

God for his refuge, and in the consciousness that God will perform all things for him, the psalmist can look beyond the violence of men to the time when God will be exalted above the heavens, and His glory shine over all the earth.

(v. 6) The wicked may indeed have prepared a net to entangle the steps of the godly man, and a pit to encompass his fall; but, in the retributive ways of God, they will be taken in their own craftiness.

(vv. 7-11) Though faced with calamities, surrounded by violent men, with pitfalls at every step, the heart of the believer remains fixed and steadfast in the consciousness that God is His refuge, and will perform all things for His own glory and the salvation of His people. Therefore the psalmist breaks into praise; and his singing anticipates a new day for the world; it will “wake the dawn” (JND). With the dawn of this new day, the praise of God will spread “among the peoples” and “the nations.” Heaven and earth will join in witnessing to the truth of God. Thus God will be exalted, and His glory shine over all the earth.

Psalm 58

The believing remnant of the Jewish nation look to God to establish His government over the earth by the judgment of the wicked.

(vv. 1-5) The first portion of the psalm describes the condition of the world immediately preceding the judgment of the living nations. It will be evident that the government of the earth in man's hands has entirely failed. The sons of men no longer speak nor act righteously (JND).

As in the days that preceded the judgment of the flood, men were corrupt, and filled with violence in their ways (Gen. 6:11); so, before the judgment falls upon the present world it will again be manifest that their hearts are utterly corrupt, and their hands filled with violence. It will be seen that not only are men estranged from God by nature, but by their habitual practice — speaking lies, and spreading the poison of error. Moreover they are deaf to every appeal of grace, however attractively and wisely that grace is presented. Thus the sons of men seal their doom and prove themselves ripe for judgment.

(vv. 6-8) The psalmist, using a series of figures, appeals to God to execute judgment. Let the wicked be like young lions with teeth broken, and thus bereft of power; like water that runs to waste; like one that shoots with blunted arrows that can do no harm. Let them be as a snail that leaves only a trail of slime, or like a untimely birth, that has no future; or like burning thorns that have scarcely warmed the pot before they are “whirled away” (JND).

(vv. 10-11) The psalm closes by expressing the joy of the righteous as they behold the judgment of the wicked. The righteous will wash their “footsteps” in the blood of the wicked. They reach their blessing through the judgment of their enemies. It will then become manifest that the righteous have their reward, and that “there is a God that judges in the earth.”

The Christian, blessed with all spiritual blessing in the heavenlies, looks for deliverance from suffering and evil, by being taken out of the scene of evil to be with the Lord, therefore, he does not look for the judgment of his enemies. The godly Jew, whose blessing is on earth, is divinely instructed that the time of blessing for the earth can only be reached through the judg-

ment of evil, therefore he rightly looks for the judgment of his enemies.

Psalm 59

The godly remnant of the Jews appeal to God to judge their external enemies, who, for their own selfish ends, have opposed the nation of Israel. Then will it be known that God rules in Jacob to the ends of the earth (v. 13).

(vv. 1-5) The psalm opens with the suffering remnant looking to God for deliverance from, and defence against, iniquitous, violent, and mighty enemies that rise up against Israel, even though the nation has committed no wrong against the heathen. They look for the intervention of God in judgment, without mercy, upon those who have shewn no mercy to His people.

(vv. 6-8) Their enemies, like a dog roaming and howling at night, surround the city, breathing out malice against the people of God, without conscience; “For who, say they, doth hear?” Nevertheless, speaking after the manner of men, the Lord will hold such in derision.

(vv. 9-10) Conscious of the enemy's strength, and his own weakness, the righteous man waits upon God as his defence, in the firm conviction that God's loving-kindness will meet him in deliverance from all his enemies (JND).

(vv. 11-13) The psalmist would not have the enemy of Israel slain in a moment by the mighty power of God: he would rather see those who had prolonged the suffering of God's people come themselves to a lingering end, as an example to God's people of retributive justice.

The words of their lips betray the pride of their hearts. Their profanity and deceit call aloud for a judgment that will make manifest that God rules in Jacob to the ends of the earth.

(vv. 14-17) Anticipating God's judgment, the godly view their enemies as balked of their prey, and howling like a hungry dog wandering up and down at night. But, when the long night of suffering is past, the godly man will sing of God's power and mercy in the morning. For God has been his defence against the enemy and his refuge from the storm in the day of trouble.

Psalm 60

The remnant of the Jews own that God, though He has cast them off for their iniquities, is their only hope — the One who alone can restore and heal the breaches.

(vv. 1-3) Looking beyond all second causes, the remnant acknowledge that God has cast off, and scattered the nation because of His displeasure. They further realize that the One who has scattered is the only One who can restore.

They own that God has made the land to tremble. Now they look to the One that has “broken,” to “heal the breaches.” God has showed His people “hard things,” and made them “drink the wine of bewilderment” (JND). They do not rebel against God's dealings with them; they do not seek to justify themselves; they do not look to themselves or to others to retrieve their position. They look only to God.

(vv. 4-5) The remnant have thus reached a condition of soul in which God can bless them. Therefore they are able to say, “Thou hast given a banner to them that fear Thee.” The banner is that which rallies and unites the peoples of God. This rallying centre is found amongst those that fear God. The banner

becomes the display of truth, and thus a means of deliverance for God's beloved people.

(vv. 6-8) The psalmist now turns to the promises of God's Word, on which all their hopes rest. "God has spoken." And what God has said has all the certainty of God's own nature; He has spoken in His holiness. God asserts His title to the whole land, whether on the west side of Jordan, as represented by Shechem; or on the east side, as represented by Succoth. He claims the tribes of Israel as His. Gilead and Manasseh represent His people east of Jordan; Ephraim and Judah represent them on the west side. One is the most important tribe in the north as the other is the leading tribe in the south. Thus every quarter of the land is claimed by God. Politically these two tribes have a leading place; Ephraim being the warrior tribe (Deut. 33:17), and Judah the leading tribe in government (Gen. 49:10).

Finally God will utterly subjugate the ancient enemies of His people. Moab will be reduced to a state of ignominious bondage, likened to a slave who washes the feet of his owner. Edom is likened to a slave to whom the master cast a worn-out shoe. Philistia, who so often had triumphed over God's people, is

now called to “shout” or “cry” out because of the triumph of God (JND).

(vv. 9-12) The soul, strengthened by the promises of God, looks to God to lead to victory. The question is raised, “Who will bring me into the strong city?” of which the rock city of Edom was a formidable example. His confidence in God at once supplies the answer. The very God who had cast them off because of their transgressions is the One alone through whom their help will come; for vain is the help of man. Through God will they do valiantly, for they say, “He it is that shall tread down our enemies.”

Psalm 61

The cry of an outcast whose spirit, though overwhelmed, looks to God as his rock, to save from the floods by which he is surrounded.

(vv. 1-2) The psalmist cries to God from the end of the earth (or “land”). Thus the enemy is in possession of the sanctuary, while the godly man is driven out. Though overwhelmed with distress, the soul sees there is a rock that rises above the floods.

In spite of his distress, he is confident that God will lead him to this place of security, for he can say, “Thou wilt lead me on to a rock” (JND).

(v. 3) His confidence in God is the result of his experience of God; for he says, “Thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy.” He has found in God a shelter from the storm, and a defence against those opposed to him

(v. 4) With God before his soul, he is lifted above the overwhelming floods, and can look on with confidence to a bright future when he will dwell in the presence of God for ever. Until then he will trust in the protecting care of God — the covert of His wings.

(vv. 5-8) Conscious of being heard, he has the assurance that he will inherit the portion of those who fear God's name; though at the moment he may be at “the end of the earth.” The ground of his confidence is that Christ — the King — had passed through the circumstances of the godly, and His years had been prolonged, so that He is “before God for ever.” If the King abides before God for ever (v. 7), then those who are subject to the

King “abide ... for ever.” (v. 4) The one that abides for ever will sing praises to God for ever.

Psalm 62

The confidence that looks to God alone and rests in Him, waiting for His deliverance.

(vv. 1-2) In the last psalm, the godly man, though looking to God, is nevertheless overwhelmed in spirit. Here, looking only to God, he is revived in spirit. He can say, “Upon God alone doth my soul rest peacefully” (JND). In the last psalm he looks with confidence to be led to the rock; here he has reached the rock, and thus can say of God, “He only is my rock.” Resting upon the rock, he can say, “I shall not be greatly moved.”

(vv. 3-4) The psalmist, turning to his enemies, deprecates their secret attacks upon one who is in weakness, like “a bowing wall, or a tottering fence” (JND). Outwardly they may pretend to favour the godly; inwardly they curse such, and secretly plot to cast him down. This was indeed a character of suffering that the Lord had to meet in full measure.

(vv. 5-8) The plottings of the wicked cannot, however, move the godly man from his confidence in God. He does not seek to defend himself, He does not look to man for help. He says, “O my soul, rest peacefully; for my expectation is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation” (JND). Thus looking to God he has the assurance that he will not be moved; further he realizes that God is not only his salvation, but his glory. In due time God will exalt the one whom man treats as a “bowing wall or a tottering fence.”

Thus, from his experience of God, he can exhort others to confide in God at all times. Whatever the circumstances, confide in God: whatever the difficulty, “pour out your heart before him” (cp. Phil. 4:6).

(vv. 9-12) Having exhorted to trust in God, the psalmist warns against putting confidence in man, high or low. Alas! man is corrupt, a lie; or violent, they oppress and rob; or covetous, they set their heart upon money. But let the godly be warned against trusting in social position, corrupt schemes, human power, and earthly riches. God has said, more than once, that power and loving-kindness belong to God, and He will render to every man according to his work. How good then for the

godly soul to trust alone in God, to wait patiently for Him, neither seeking to exalt himself, nor attack his enemies. Men may have a measure of power, but without mercy; or they may show mercy without righteousness. Power belongs to God; but with power God has mercy, and with mercy He maintains righteousness, for He renders to every man according to his works.

Psalm 63

The confidence of a godly soul that longs after God in a dry and thirsty land — a scene where there is nothing to minister to the soul.

Psalm 61 is the cry of an overwhelmed soul; Psalm 62, the cry of a waiting soul: Psalm 63, the cry of the longing soul.

(vv. 1-2) The psalm opens by expressing the longing of the heart for God, by a god-fearing Jew, cast out of the land, and far from the sanctuary. Both soul and body — the whole man — longs for God, while yet in a desert scene where there is no water — nothing to refresh the soul.

The longing of the soul is according to the knowledge of God formed in the sanctuary. There, in God's own dwelling, God is displayed in His power and glory.

(vv. 3-7) The psalmist proceeds to give a two-fold reason for his delight in God. First, because he has found that God's loving-kindness is better than life. Joy in God is better than the joys of this earthly life; therefore, says the psalmist, “will I bless thee while I live.” Rejoicing in God, he finds his soul satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and his lips filled with praise; even though he is as yet in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is. Moreover, in the silent watches of the night, when all nature excitement is hushed and the soul is alone, he will meditate upon God.

The psalmist gives as a second reason for his delight in God the help that he has found in God in all his sorrows, leading him to rejoice in the protection of God.

(vv. 8-10) The practical result of this delight in God is then described. The soul follows hard after God, and is upheld by His mighty power. If God is thus for him, who can be against him? Therefore he can with confidence say of his enemies that they

will fall under the sword of judgment, and be left on the battle-field as a prey to jackals.

(v. 11) The destruction of his enemies will lead to the display of the King in His victory, rejoicing in God. All that trust in the King shall glory; while those who have sought to prevail by lies will be confounded.

This God-fearing man longs to see the display of God's power on the earth (v. 2). In verses 8 to 10 he anticipates the power of God in supporting His own, and in dealing with all who oppose His people; in verse 11, he anticipates the glory, when the judgment of the wicked will be followed by the reign of Christ as King.

Psalm 64

The description of the wicked and their devices; the retributive judgment that will overtake them, leading to the fear of God, and the joy of the righteous in the Lord.

The psalm looks on to a future day when the evil of the world will come to a head, and be publicly dealt with by the judgment of God, leading all men to fear God.

(v. 1) The psalm opens with the prayer of the godly man to be preserved, not only from the enemy, but from the fear of the enemy.

(vv. 2-6) The psalmist spreads out before God the evil devices of the enemy, realizing that the wicked are taking secret counsel against him. Moreover, moved by the secret counsels of the wicked leaders, the “tumultuous crowd” (JND) is hounded on to execute these secret plans. The crowd is urged on by sharp and bitter words against all that is of God; like a flight of arrows shot at venture. Slandorous charges are made without scruple or remorse. The wicked encourage one another in evil. Not only do they shoot the secret arrow of slander, but they lay snares to entrap the godly. They speak with fair words, and affect pious motives in order to obtain their evil ends. In their self-confidence they think that none will see the evil plans that, with deep duplicity, they have diligently devised.

(vv. 7-8) Nevertheless, acting without fear (v. 4), and thinking that none can see their snares, they forget God to whom all is open, and who can read “the inward thought of every one of them,” however deeply hidden in the heart. The God to whom all is known, will bring upon them retributive judgment. The

arrow they had used against others, will strike them; the bitter words used against others will fall upon themselves.

(vv. 9-10) The judgment of the wicked will lead all men to fear God, and consider His works. The righteous will be glad in the Lord, trust in the Lord, and exult at the overthrow of the wicked.

Psalm 65

The godly remnant look on with joyful confidence to God's intervention in answer to their prayers, when Zion will become a centre of praise and prayer for the whole earth; when government will be established, war will cease, and the earth brought into blessing.

(vv. 1-2) The psalmist, in his meditation before God, looking beyond his present circumstances, recognizes that Zion will be the centre of praise for the whole earth. Not only Israel, but “all flesh” will come to Zion for praise and prayer. Nevertheless the time for universal praise is not yet come; “Praise waits for thee in silence, O God, in Zion” (JND).

(vv. 3-4) The godly confess the cause of the silence in Zion. Their iniquities have prevailed against them. Nevertheless there is the confidence that God will purge them away, in the consciousness that the godly are the objects of sovereign grace. This leads the psalmist to describe the blessedness of the man whom God has chosen. Such He causes to approach Himself; and the one who draws near to God will be satisfied with the goodness of God's house.

(vv. 5-8) The godly anticipate the judgment of the wicked, and their own deliverance, in answer to their prayers. The intervention of God will involve “terrible things in righteousness” for the nations, but salvation for His earthly people. Government will be established by the power of God; “His strength sets fast the mountains;” and peace will result, the turmoil of the nations will be stilled. The “tokens,” or signs, of God's intervention will be universally acknowledged with fear.

No longer will men fear the future, dreading what each day may bring forth; “the outgoings of the morning and the evening” will rejoice.

(vv. 9-13) The closing verses present a beautiful picture of the millennial blessing of the earth, when all evil has been dealt with in judgment. The curse removed, or held in check, God will visit the earth in blessing. He will give the corn, and prepare the land to yield its increase, and command the seasons to pursue their course. The wilderness will become pastures for the flocks; the valleys covered with fields of corn; and over all will rise the song of praise and joy.

Psalm 66

All the earth called to submit to God and give honour to His Name, in the presence of the display of His mighty power in dealing with the enemies of Israel, and of His governmental ways with the godly remnant and of the nation.

(vv. 1-4) All lands are called to give honour to God, whose terrible works have been displayed in dealing with the enemies of His people Israel. It will be publicly manifest that those who have exalted themselves in rebellion against God will be forced to submit when God puts forth the greatness of His power in judgment. The result will be that all the earth will bow before God and praise His Name.

(vv. 5-7) The nations are called to contemplate the governmental ways of God with the children of men as set forth in the history of Israel, from the time that He brought them through the Red Sea, until their final deliverance from all their enemies. Thus it becomes manifest that God is omnipotent — ruling “by his power for ever;” and omniscient, “his eyes behold the nations.” Therefore, “let not the rebellious exalt themselves.”

(vv. 8-12) The godly in Israel testify to God's ways with them. Through all their trials God preserved their souls in life; and in all their wanderings God had kept their feet. Nevertheless they had been led by a painful way. They had been tried in the furnace of affliction, as silver is tried to remove the dross. They had fallen into the hands of the enemy, like an animal caught in the toils of the hunter. They had been in servitude to their enemies, like a beast of burden on whose loins a heavy load is laid. They had been triumphed over, like one who is cast down and trampled under foot by a savage enemy. They had gone through fiery persecution and faced the waters of death.

They recognized that in all their long history of trial and suffering, God had been dealing with them according to His own holiness, and for their blessing. Thus, looking beyond the

wickedness of men they take their trials from God. They say, “Thou” hast done these things. Further they recognize that if God passes His people through trial, it is for their ultimate blessing; therefore they can add, “Thou hast brought us out into abundance” (JND).

(vv. 13-15) The trials they have passed through fit the godly to draw near to God as worshippers. Thus the psalmist, speaking personally for himself, says, “I will go into thy house with burnt offerings.” Set free from his enemies he will bring the offerings that he had vowed in the days of trial.

(vv. 16-20) Not only is the godly man at last set free to worship before God, but he can bear witness before men of what God has done for his soul. In his trial he had cried to God and praised God, He had not regarded iniquity in his heart with pleasure, or allowed it to pass unjudged. God had heard and answered his prayer, and turned his prayer into praise.

Psalm 67

The godly remnant look to God for blessing, that through restored Israel the knowledge of God may be spread throughout the nations, and all the earth be led to fear God.

(vv. 1-2) The godly desire God's mercy, blessing, and favour to be manifested in the restoration of Israel, that there may be a witness to all the nations of God's way of blessing and salvation.

(vv. 3-4) The psalmist, anticipating the result that will flow from this witness of God's salvation, predicts the millennial blessing of the earth. Praise will flow to God from nations once in rebellion against God. In place of the sorrow and misery that arises from man's self-will, there will be joy and gladness in a world that is ruled in equity, and subject to the guidance of God.

(vv. 5-6) The nations having been brought into subjection to God, the earth will yield her increase. The curse will be removed, and the earth will bring forth its fruits in their fullness, for the praise of God and the blessing of man.

(v. 7) The psalmist closes with again asserting that the blessing of repentant Israel will lead all the ends of the earth to fear God.

Psalm 68

God made known in all the kingdoms of the earth, through the display of His goodness throughout the history of Israel.

(vv. 1-3) The psalm opens with presenting God as taking His place at the head of His people; scattering His enemies; the wicked perishing at His presence; while the righteous rejoice before God. It commences with the formulas used by Moses, when the camp of Israel moved forward on its journeys through the wilderness (Num. 10:35).

(vv. 4-6) Then, very beautifully, there is set forth the character of the One who leads His people. He acts as a loving Father, and a righteous Judge. The destitute, the oppressed, the lonely, and the captive are the objects of His care; but the rebellious are left to reap the result of their own folly — they perish in the wilderness.

(vv. 7-14) The history of Israel is recapitulated to set forth, not their failure, but God's goodness.

God led His people through the wilderness and manifested His presence at Sinai (vv. 7-8). He brought His congregation to dwell in the land, and in His goodness provided for His weary people and cared for the poor (vv. 9-10). Giving the word of direction, He led them to victory over all their enemies; so that kings fled, and spoil was secured, in which all had a share (vv. 11-12). Victorious Israel, who once had been lying in wretchedness and poverty, is now displayed in all the beauty that God has put upon her (cp. Ezek. 16:1-14), while the enemies in the land are scattered (vv. 13-14).

(vv. 15-19) Israel being settled in the land, God is presented as choosing Zion for His dwelling place. The powers of the world, represented by high-peaked mountains (JND), may look enviously upon Zion. Nevertheless, at Zion the Lord has chosen to dwell for ever as the centre of earthly government, waited upon by angelic hosts as the executors of His will.

Moreover, all this goodness to Israel flows from Christ having ascended on high. Doubtless the psalmist but little entered into

the deep significance of his own words (1 Peter 1:11); nevertheless the Spirit of God, as we know from the use of these words in Ephesians 4:8, had Christ in view. In His place of glory He received gifts for men. In Ephesians the gifts are spoken of in connection with the Church; here in connection with Israel, even though Israel had been rebellious. Thus by His gifts in grace, God secures a people in whose midst He can dwell. In Psalm 22:2-3, we read of Christ forsaken on the Cross, in order that Jehovah might dwell in the midst of a praising people. In this psalm He ascends on high to secure a praising people. Thus they say, “Blessed be the Lord, who daily loads us with benefits, even the God of our salvation.”

(vv. 20-23) The blessing of His people Israel will involve the destruction of His enemies. The Lord will again bring His people out of the world, here figured by Bashan; while His enemies are left in utter prostration, as carcasses on the field of battle.

(vv. 24-27) All enemies destroyed, the King is welcomed as He takes His place in the sanctuary in the midst of His rejoicing people, who, though long divided, are at last gathered together (Isa. 52:8).

(vv. 28-31) The King having His rightful place in the midst of His regathered people, they are now strengthened by the whole world being brought into subjection. The kings of the earth will come with their presents, and submit themselves to the King, and stretch out their hands in dependence upon God.

(vv. 32-35) Finally all the kingdoms of the earth are called to praise the Lord, who is over all created things, who is mighty in word and deed, and has displayed His power in His people Israel.

Psalm 69

The personal sufferings of Christ when entering into the distress of the godly in Israel, brought upon them by reason of the sins of the nation, and for which, in the government of God, they are smitten.

The experiences described in the psalm, though applicable to others, are only fully entered into by Christ. Seeing that the experiences can be known in measure by others, it becomes plain why the sufferings stop short of atonement, with the con-

sequent forsaking of God which Christ alone can endure, as set forth in Psalm 22.

Moreover, the sufferings depicted, while known in part during the lifetime of the Lord, yet culminate upon the cross, for there alone could the Lord be said to be smitten of God. But while the smiting of God, as the portion of Israel, is entered into, yet the suffering from the enmity of the guilty Jewish nation is prominent. Such wickedness merits judgment; hence in the psalm there is the call for judgment, rather than looking for the grace that brings blessing to man.

Nevertheless the judgment of the guilty nation prepares the way for the restoration of Israel with which the psalm closes.

(vv. 1-3) The opening verses present the Lord's personal sufferings on the cross. Later in the psalm we hear of the enmity of man that was endured in the path that led to the cross. Here the extreme suffering is first brought before us — that which the Lord endured in His own soul. All that which the godly in Israel felt in measure, He felt fully, as only a perfect Man could. The nation had “no standing” before God; into this position the Lord entered in spirit on the cross. Yet in this position the rem-

nant were waiting for God; and this confidence was perfectly expressed by Christ, who, in the midst of His distress, can say, “I wait for my God.”

(v. 4) The hatred of the Jewish nation towards the godly remnant was perfectly felt by the Lord on the cross. His infinite perfection enabled Him to say in an absolute way that they hated Him “without a cause,” and those who sought to destroy Him were wrongfully His enemies. Moreover, His enemies were many and were strong. With Him He had to meet, not simply the enmity of an individual, but, at the Cross the hatred of a nation, led by its powerful leaders. Of Him the proverbial expression was true, “I restored that which I took not away.” As one has said this “is equivalent to saying, 'I am treated as guilty, though I was innocent'” (cp. Jer. 15:10).

(v. 5) From the raging of the nations that surround the cross the holy Sufferer turns to God. Israel was suffering under the government of God for sins. Into this suffering the Lord enters. He can appeal to God as knowing the real occasion of His sufferings — the sins of the nation — which He confesses as if they were His own. Here, however, it is the confession of sins, not the judgment of sins that makes atonement as in Psalm 22.

(v. 6) He waits upon God (v. 3); but there are others who wait on the Lord of hosts. For such He looks to God that they may not be put to shame and confusion, through the sufferings of the One to whom they looked for redemption (cp. Luke 24:19-24).

(vv. 7-12) Now we are permitted to see the sufferings of the Lord in the path that led to the cross. Because of His faithfulness to God He suffered reproach and shame from a world that loved darkness rather than light.

Moreover, in His own country, and in His own house, He was treated as a stranger and an alien (Matt. 13:54-58).

Furthermore, the zeal of God's house, that led Him on two occasions to cleanse that house, brought Him into reproach with men whose hatred of God was vented upon Christ (John 2:13-17; Luke 19:45-48).

If He wept and fasted in soul as He foresaw the misery their sins would bring upon the nation, it was turned to His reproach. Outside their city He wept over the very sinners who, inside the city, were plotting to take His life (Luke 19:41-48). If the sins of the nation made Him the Man of sorrows and acquainted

with grief, the very sorrows, symbolized by the sackcloth, became the occasion of men using Him as a proverb to warn others from following in His steps. His public protest against ungodliness drew out the hatred of the leaders — those who sat in the gate; and made Him the subject of ridicule by the abandoned, for He was the song of the drunkard.

(vv. 13-19) The Lord has recounted His sufferings from man. We are now permitted to see that they become the occasion for manifesting the perfection of His confidence in God. There was nothing in Him, as with us, to betray Him into an expression of resentment, or exasperation. The wickedness of men only turns Him to God. “As for me, my prayer is to thee, O Lord.” He turns to God with all the consciousness that He is heard, for He turns to God in an acceptable time. When suffering for sin from the hands of God, we know from Psalm 22, that He cried and was not heard. Here, where the sufferings from the hands of men are in view, His cry is accepted. His confidence in the unbounded mercy, and in the truth of God's saving power, is undimmed by all that He is passing through. He looks to God for deliverance from His distress, from those that hate Him, and from death.

He speaks as One who knows by experience the loving-kindness of the Lord, and the greatness of His tender mercies, and as One who needs these mercies as the servant of Jehovah surrounded by enemies. His consolation is that all is known to God. The One with the loving-kindness and the mercies, is the One who knows His reproach, His shame, His dishonour; His very adversaries are all before God.

(vv. 20-21) Thus he looks to God alone in the day when the reproaches of men had broken His heart. To look elsewhere for comfort were useless, for in this world there were none to take pity. He looked, indeed, for some to take pity, for some to comfort, but He found none. So far from pity and comfort, they only answered His cry with gall and vinegar.

(vv. 22-28) The rejection of the grace of the Saviour, and the causeless hatred that nailed Him to the cross, leaves man exposed to judgment, for they have rejected the only One who could shelter from judgment. Thus there follows the call for retributive judgment to fall upon those who had shown themselves to be the causeless enemies of Christ. It is a judgment that overtakes men in this world, though by implication it may indeed lead to eternal judgment. Of this judgment the Lord

warned the city of Jerusalem, instructed His disciples, and admonished the daughters of Jerusalem (Luke 19:42-44; Luke 21:20-24; Luke 23:28-31).

The world's earthly prosperity will become its snare; and with the failure of all that men trusted in, the world will be plunged into darkness of mind. Not knowing how to act there will come upon the earth “distress of nations, with perplexity.” Their loins will continually shake, “Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth.” God's indignation will be poured out upon them, and their habitation will be destroyed. Their house will be left desolate, their city trodden down of the Gentiles.

The judgment that overtakes men is because of the unpitying cruelty which delighted in persecuting One whom God had smitten. In this suffering others have their share. The very grief of those who are wounded in spirit by the sin of the nation becomes the occasion to draw out the persecution of that nation. The rejection of the grace of Christ is the crowning sin that is added to their iniquities. Such can have no part in the righteousness of God that brings salvation, no part in the book of life, nor in the portion of the righteous.

(vv. 29-31) If, however, the sufferings of Christ at the hands of men lead to judgment of the nation, they will also have a glorious answer in the exaltation of Christ. Therefore, though “poor and sorrowful,” the Lord can say, “Let thy salvation, O God, set me up on high.” With His exaltation there will be praise to God, in which Christ will take the lead, and which will replace the sacrifices of old.

(vv. 32-36) If the Lord leads the praise, the lowly followers of Christ that seek God, will be glad as they see the answer to the cry of the needy, and learn that, though men may persecute, yet the Lord will not despise His captive people.

Further the praise that commences with the exalted Messiah will be taken up by heaven and earth, the seas and everything that moves therein. Zion will be saved, the cities of Judah re-established and re-inhabited, and the children of the servants of Jehovah will inherit the land. They that love His Name shall dwell therein.

Thus we learn that while the suffering of Christ from the guilty nation brings judgment upon the nation, it also leads to the exaltation of Christ. Furthermore the execution of judgment upon

the nation prepares the way for the blessing of the godly remnant and the restoration of Israel.

Psalm 70

The experience of the godly remnant in Israel, when suffering from the hands of men in the latter day, expressing the desires of Christ when suffering from the hands of men upon the Cross.

(v. 1) The prayer of one who looks only to God for deliverance from his enemies; but seeks that Jehovah would hasten to his help.

(vv. 2-3) The desire that those who seek his life, who take pleasure in his adversity, that mock at his sufferings, may be confounded and overtaken with retributive judgment (cp. Mark 15:29).

(vv. 4) The desire that those who fear God, and look for His deliverance may be glad and rejoice in Jehovah. Let those who rejoice in God's salvation say continually, "Let God be magnified." Let them see that the sufferings are submitted to, and de-

liverance looked for, in order to glorify God (cp. John 12:27-28; John 13:31).

(v. 5) In order to magnify God the sufferer is content to be “poor and needy,” though assured that God is his “help,” and “deliverer.” He looks that Jehovah will make no delay in acting for his deliverance (cp. John 13:32).

Psalm 71

The experience of a godly Israelite; illustrating God's ways with Israel from the commencement of their history until the nation is revived in a day yet to come.

(vv. 1-3) The psalm opens with an expression of confidence in God, and an appeal to God to act in righteousness for deliverance from bondage. The soul finds in God his unfailing resources; in His words, his ground of assurance. If God has given His command that Israel shall be blessed, the believing soul can appeal to God's righteousness to carry out His Word.

(vv. 4-9) The verses that follow recount the goodness of God in the past. The godly man is in the hand of the wicked, unrighteous, and cruel man; but, by reason of God's goodness to him

in the past, the Lord GOD is still his hope. From his birth God has been his refuge, and through all the vicissitudes of his long history he had been upheld by God, so that his preservation had become a wonder to many. Now, in the end of his history he looks to God that he may be kept for the praise and honour of God, and not be cast off in the day of his weakness.

How truly these experiences witness to God's ways with Israel. Throughout their long history there had ever been a “remnant according to the election of grace;” the abiding proof that God had not cast off the nation. Their preservation as a nation separate from the Gentiles, in spite of their bondage to the powers of the world by reason of their sins, is a standing wonder to the world.

(vv. 10-13) Nevertheless the godly man finds himself in the midst of enemies that plot against him without fear of consequences, for they say “God has forsaken him.” Thus the Gentiles, in the last days, will persecute the Jewish nation without fear of God. Circumstances will indeed look as if God had forsaken them.

(vv. 14-16) This time of testing will draw out the faith of the godly, who will look to God to make haste to their help, by putting to shame their enemies; result in praise to God increasing yet “more and more”, and His righteousness being declared all the day, as that which is beyond reckoning. Thus, when his strength fails (v. 9), the godly man falls back on the strength of the Lord God.

(vv. 17-18) The history of this godly man has been a witness to God's “wondrous works.” In his old age he still desires to be a witness to God's strength and power, to generations yet to come. Even so, the history of Israel through long ages, has been a witness to God's wondrous works of righteousness; and in the old age of the nation will witness to the mighty power of God in its deliverance and restoration.

(vv. 19-20) The righteousness of God that would not pass over evil in His people had been witnessed to by the sore trials they had been allowed to pass through. His quickening power would be seen in reviving the nation and bringing them again from the depths of the earth in which for so long they had been buried amidst the nations.

(vv. 21-24) The greatness and glory of restored Israel will surpass the former greatness of the nation. After their sore trials they will be comforted on every side. Set free from their enemies, they will be to the praise of God, the Holy One of Israel, the One who has redeemed them in righteousness, and put to shame all their enemies.

Psalm 72

The millennial reign of Christ; the answer to the sufferings of Christ from the hands of men, presented in Psalm 69; the fulfillment of the desires of Christ expressed in Psalm 70, following the restoration of Israel, foretold in Psalm 71.

(v. 1) The psalm opens with a prayer to God, that the King may be guided by divine righteousness, and thus able to give decisions, or judgments, in accordance with the will of God. It is thus realized that the blessing of the kingdom wholly depends upon a King who carries out God's judgments according to God's righteousness. This King will be found only in Christ — the Son of David, of whom Solomon was but a type.

(vv. 2-11) There follows the presentation of the character of the kingdom that must follow from having a King according to the mind of God. It will be marked by peace as the fruit of righteousness, according to which “the poor,” “the needy” and “the oppressed,” will come under the special care of the King.

Moreover, established in righteousness, it will be not a kingdom of peace only, but an enduring kingdom, marked by the fear of God throughout all generations (v. 5).

Further it will be a kingdom of spiritual and material prosperity. The influence of the King upon His kingdom will be like showers that water the earth. In His days the righteous will flourish, and there will be abundance of peace (vv. 6-7).

In extent His kingdom will be universal, from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth (v. 8).

Moreover, if universal in extent, it will be supreme in power. Every enemy will submit to the King, and own their subjection with gifts, by bowing before the King and serving Him (vv. 9-11).

(vv. 12-14) There follows the reason why this glorious kingdom marked by righteousness and peace, endurance, prosperity, universality and supremacy, should be given to Christ. He alone is worthy to receive riches, and honour, and glory, and might; for all these things will He use to deliver the needy and the poor when they cry; to be the Helper of the helpless, and the Redeemer of men from corruption and violence; and in His sight the lives of the poor and the helpless will be precious.

(vv. 15-16) Further we are assured that this King, who secures such blessing for the world, will never be cut off by death, for “he shall live.” To Him the riches of the world will be given; for Him prayer will be made that the blessing of His reign may continue; and to Him praise will be offered daily. Thus abundance of blessing will be secured for every portion of the earth — the valleys, the mountains, and the cities (JND).

(v. 17) The glory and blessing of His kingdom will lead to the everlasting fame of His Name; for all will be blessed in Him, and He will be blessed of all.

(vv. 18-20) Lastly the praise of the King will lead to the praise of God. Thus men will say, “Blessed be the Lord God, the God

of Israel, who only does wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever.” Thus through the reign of Christ in righteousness, the whole earth will be filled with the glory of God. In the anticipation of this glorious prospect, David can say, “the prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.” What more, indeed, is left for David to pray. It only remains for him to say, with all others, “Amen, and Amen.”

Book 3

Psalm 73

The goodness of God to Israel; though for a time, in the holy ways of God, His people may be allowed to suffer while the wicked prosper.

The ways of God with Israel are presented through the experience of a godly man who, seeing the prosperity of the wicked, is tempted to say that godliness is in vain. These ways of God, at first so passing strange to the soul, become plain when the sanctuary is entered.

(v. 1) The great theme of the psalm is stated in the first verse, “Truly God is good to Israel” — the true Israel — “even to such as are of a clean heart.” Circumstances may seem to deny this great truth, therefore the conviction is only reached through painful experience. The result of the exercise is stated before the soul conflict is described.

(vv. 2-3) Though God is good to His people, circumstances may arise which tempt the soul to question the goodness of

God. The godly man is near to being stumbled in his spiritual life, for he finds that he is left to suffer while the wicked prosper (cp. Matt. 11:2-6).

(vv. 4-12) The psalmist proceeds to describe the prosperity of the wicked. Apparently they are better off than the people of God. Death causes them “no pangs” (JND), and life has for them no plagues. Pride is counted by them as an ornament; and their violence, like a garment, is seen of all. Their eyes betoken their self-satisfaction and gratification of every wish. In heart they are corrupt; in words they speak with lofty contempt of others; in their arrogance they express their judgment on things “in the heavens” as well as things on earth. The mass of the people follow them, abandoning themselves to license, scornful of God, with whom, they say, there is no knowledge of the ways of men. Such are the ungodly, “who prosper in the world” and “increase in riches.”

(vv. 13-14) Contrasting the outward prosperity of the wicked with the suffering of the godly, the soul is tempted to think that it is useless to have cleansed his heart and washed his hands. What benefit is there in having a pure heart and clean hands, if

one is plagued all the day and chastened every morning, while those who are wicked prosper?

(vv. 15-16) The contemplation of the prosperity of the wicked may suggest these unbelieving thoughts; but at once they are resisted by the psalmist. “If,” says he, “I will speak thus; behold I should offend against the generation of thy children.” Nevertheless, to answer these unbelieving questions was a grievous task to the godly man.

(vv. 17-20) These painful doubts, even if resisted, remain unanswered until the psalmist enters the sanctuary. There, in the presence of God, all become plain. At once the outlook of the psalmist is entirely changed. He had looked at the outward prosperity of the wicked; now he sees their end. He had been thinking of what men say and do; now he sees what God is doing in relation to the wicked. They appeared to be prospering, but, says the psalmist, “thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction.” Their desolation comes in a moment, and “they pass away, consumed with terrors” (JND). When the Lord awakes to judgment, He will despise their image even as a man in his waking moments thinks lightly of some horrible dream.

(vv. 21-23) The sanctuary has, moreover, other lessons for the psalmist. He has learned the truth about the wicked; now he learns other and more important truths about himself. He now sees that when his heart was “in a ferment” (JND), he was thinking foolishly like a mere brute that has no thought of God. Nevertheless, though he had forgotten God, he learns in the sanctuary that he had never been out of God's thoughts. In the midst of trials he was continually before God: and when his feet were almost gone, and his steps had well-nigh slipped, he now sees that God held him fast by the hand.

(vv. 24-26) With the confidence that God has sustained him through all his trials, he looks on with confidence to the future and says, “Thou wilt guide me by thy counsel, and after the glory, thou wilt receive me” (JND). When the glory of the Lord will be revealed the godly man will have his portion in the kingdom. If he sees the solemn end of the wicked in spite of their present prosperity, so he sees the glorious end of the godly notwithstanding their present suffering. Thus God Himself becomes the confidence of the soul. His flesh and heart may fail, but God is the strength of his heart.

(vv. 27-28) Those who live far from God will come under judgment; those who draw near to God will surely find that God is good to Israel (v. 1).

Psalm 74

An appeal to God to act in judgment against the wicked, on behalf of His people and for His own glory.

(vv. 1-2) The psalm opens with the godly in Israel appealing to God in their distress. They recognize that they are suffering under the governmental anger of God; but they plead that, however much they may have failed, they are the sheep of His pasture, they are God's assembly, they are God's portion in the earth. Moreover God has purchased them, and dwelt in their midst on Mount Zion.

God has to deal with His people because of their sins; but can God forsake forever His sheep, His redeemed, and Zion that He had chosen?

(vv. 3-8) They spread out before God the work of the enemy. They say, "Lift up thy feet to the perpetual desolations." They appeal to God to look upon the ruin caused by the enemy — a

ruin that is beyond repair. The enemy has destroyed everything in the place of God's assembly. In the house of God man has set up his signs in place of God's signs. Instead of setting forth God, the house of God becomes a place for the display of man. All that which speaks of the beauty of God's house — the carved work — is ruthlessly broken down with as little concern as one would feel in felling the trees of the wood. God's house is defiled, and the aim of the enemy is to destroy every meeting place of God's people throughout the land.

(v. 9) Moreover among God's people there are no signs of God's work. There is no prophet to recall the people to God, or any who can give hope of any limit to the evil. There are none who can say “how long” the trial will continue.

This leads to a fresh appeal to God. It is not now “how long” will God's people suffer, but “how long” will God allow the adversary to reproach and blaspheme His Name. If it is a question of God and the enemy, can God remain inactive? Will not God show His hand and act?

Thus the godly have pleaded that the enemy is attacking God's people (vv. 1-2); God's sanctuary (vv. 3-9); and God's name (v. 10).

(vv. 12-17) Having fully spread the trial out before God, the psalmist encourages himself in God. In spite of all failure amongst the people of God, and all the power of the enemy, God is King, and God is working salvation in the midst of the earth.

He recalls what God has done in the past. He divided the sea, and destroyed the power of Pharaoh, figured by monsters (vv. 13-14). God brought water from the rock, and thus sustained His people in the wilderness; He dried up the Jordan, and brought them into the land (v. 15).

Then, passing from these miraculous interventions of God, the psalmist sees in creation the ever-present witness of God's mercy to man. The day and the night, the moon and the sun, the land and water, summer and winter, are a perpetual witness that God is not unmindful of His creatures.

(vv. 18-21) Having encouraged his soul by the remembrance of God's past interventions on behalf of His people, the psalmist

now boldly appeals to God to remember that His Name is being reproached; and that His people are defenceless — like a turtle dove — and poor, oppressed, and needy. Moreover God cannot be unmindful of the covenant that He has made in regard to the blessing of His people.

(vv. 22-23) The soul makes a final appeal that God would “arise” and plead His own cause. It is not now “our cause,” for God's Name is being reproached. For the third time in the course of this psalm, we have the plea that God is being reproached (vv. 10, 18, 22). In this final appeal there is no word about the people or the temple. The one plea is that it is God's cause. The voice that is raised comes from God's enemies; the tumult comes from those that rise up against God, and this tumult “increases continually.”

Psalm 75

The announcement that God's set time for intervention in judgment is near at hand. It is the answer to the appeal of the godly in Psalm 74, who ask, “How long” (Ps. 74:9-10)?

(v. 1) The appeal of Psalm 74 opens with a cry of distress: this psalm opens with praise to God, for His wondrous works declare that the time is near when all that God is, as set forth in His Name, will be displayed in judgment.

(vv. 2-3) The verses that follow give the occasion which calls forth the praise of verse 1. It is the announcement by God Himself that, in His set time, God will judge uprightly. We are often impatient for God to deal with evil. God, however, has His set time — when evil is ripe, and His people have learned their lesson — for intervention in judgment. Then the earth and its inhabitants will be dissolved. The social fabric will be broken up (see Isa. 24:19-20); but even so God has established its pillars. God maintains the earth, though the world system formed by man is broken up.

(vv. 4-5) In these verses the psalmist gives a warning rebuke to men, based upon the announcement that God is about to intervene in judgment. The boastfulness of man in himself and his doings, and his rebellion against God, will call down the judgment of God. Hence the psalmist warns man not to boast, and exalt himself in his own strength, symbolized by the figure of a horn (the fighting strength of an animal), nor rebel against God.

(vv. 6-8) Deliverance comes neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. “Promotion” is a poor and misleading translation. The word is 'lifting up,' and continues the thought of verses 4 and 5. It is not the idea of exalting a person to a place of prominence, but rather deliverance of the crushed by 'lifting them' up from the dust. The expression is found again in verse 10, where the word 'exalted' should be translated 'lifted up.' This thought of 'lifting up' is found in verses 4, 5, 6, 7 and 10. The north is not mentioned because, it has been suggested, the enemy that attacks the land of Israel comes from that quarter, and hence there would be no thought of help coming from the North. The people of God have to learn that help does not come from any quarter of the earth. It comes from God: God is the Judge; He puts down one and lifts up another.

In the hand of the Lord there is a cup of judgment. This cup is full of mixture, an allusion to the aromatic herbs mixed with wine to add to its intoxicating qualities. The wicked will be made to drink this cup to its dregs.

Psalm 76

The judgment of the nations anticipated, and the results celebrated.

The previous psalm announced that in God's set time He will intervene in judgment on behalf of His people. This psalm anticipates this judgment and celebrates the result.

(vv. 1-3) The first three verses give the result of God's judgment upon His enemies. The verses that follow present the actual judgment. The first result is to make God “known;” and being known His Name becomes “great.” The knowledge of God must lead to the exaltation of God. This knowledge and exaltation of God will come through God's dealing on behalf of His earthly people Judah and Israel. The long divided tribes will at last be brought together.

Moreover the knowledge of God will prepare the way for God to dwell in the midst of a scene of peace, brought about by sovereign grace. Salem, meaning “peace,” is the ancient name for Jerusalem. Zion is the symbol of God's sovereign choice in grace (Ps. 78:65-68).

The peace in which God will dwell will be the outcome of the righteousness of God that deals in judgment with His enemies. Thus these verses present the reign of peace, established in righteousness, in which God will be known and exalted.

(vv. 4-6) The verses that follow present God's actings in judgment by which the reign of peace is established. Jerusalem, that hitherto had been a prey to the nations, is alluded to under the expression "The mountains of prey." Upon these mountains, that so often had witnessed the defeat of Israel, their enemies will become a prey when God shines forth in His glory. Isaiah looks forward to the same great event when he utters Jehovah's prophecy, "I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot" (Isa. 14:25). Then follows a description of this overwhelming judgment. God's enemies sleep the sleep of death. They are utterly powerless and bewildered, for "None of the men of might have found their hands." The God that entered into a covenant with Jacob to protect him from all his enemies now acts on behalf of His ancient people. At His rebuke all the might of man is destroyed.

(vv. 7-9) This destruction of the enemy not only delivers His people but makes God known. And God made known through

this overwhelming judgment will lead to God being feared, for it becomes manifest that when God acts in judgment none can stand in His sight.

For long years God had been silent, but at length, by God's intervention in the affairs of men, it will be recognized that heaven is dealing in judgment with the evils of earth. God's voice will “be heard from heaven.” In result the earth will fear and be still: all opposition to God will cease.

Moreover, this intervention in judgment will be manifestly on behalf of His people — “to save all the meek of the earth.” It will thus make manifest God's righteous judgment against evil, and His saving grace on behalf of His people.

(vv. 10-12) The leading thought in verses 7 to 9 is God known: the great thought in the closing verses is God exalted. Thus in the latter part of the psalm we have the two thoughts expressed in the first verse, “God known,” and “His name is great.”

All the fury of man will turn to the praise of God. All the concentrated power and might of man with his chariots and horses, arrayed against God in the mountains of Jerusalem, only serve to show by their overwhelming defeat that God is greater than

all the power of man. All other opposition to God that will yet remain upon the earth will be restrained. All the nations of the earth are called to recognize Jehovah as their God, and to yield their allegiance to God by bringing gifts. If the great ones of the earth refuse they will be cut off, and find indeed that God is terrible to those who oppose His will.

Psalm 77

Confidence in God in the day of distress.

(vv. 1-3) In deep distress as to the low condition of God's people, the psalmist cried to God. In the day of trouble the godly man still looked to God and stretched out his hand to the Lord in the night (JND). He remembered God, though for a time he found no rest for his soul, as apparently God was silent. Thus his spirit was overwhelmed.

(vv. 4-6) The following three verses reveal the cause of the pressure upon his spirit. He was seeking to find some solution for his exercise in the experience of others in the days of old. Then, passing from the experiences of others he made diligent

examination of his own experiences; only to find that self-occupation brought no relief.

(vv. 7-9) At length the psalmist recognized that the low condition of God's people was the result of their own failure. He saw that they were undergoing the chastening of the Lord. But, he asks, will the Lord because of their failure, cast them off for ever? Can it be possible that God will be favourable no more? Has the failure of His people withered up the mercy of God? Will God fail to carry out His promises because His people have sinned? Can the breakdown of man alter the grace of God, or “shut up his tender mercies?” The psalmist raises these suggestions only to dismiss them as untenable.

(vv. 10-12) The realization that it is impossible for the sin of God's people to be greater than the grace of God comes as balm to the troubled soul of the psalmist. He sees that the suggestion that it is possible for God's people to be cast off arises from the weakness of his mind that has judged of God's ways towards His people by the way they have acted towards Him. Hence he arrests these thoughts and, instead of recalling his own experiences and the years of ancient times, he now remembers “the years of the right hand of the most High,” “the works of the

Lord,” and His “wonders of old.” He says, “I will meditate also upon all thy work, and talk of thy doings.”

(vv. 13-15) Furthermore, he discovers that whatever affliction the people of God may be passing through on earth because of their failure, God has a way which can only be known in the sanctuary. When perplexed by the prosperity of the wicked, the soul found the answer to its difficulties in the sanctuary (Ps. 73:17). So, when puzzled by God's apparent silence while His people are in trial, he again finds an answer to his exercises in the sanctuary. There he learns that God has a settled way that governs His acts; that God is great and does wonders. In accordance with His way God makes known His strength among the peoples in order to redeem His own.

(vv. 16-20) The closing verses present these actings of God on behalf of His people, proving the truth of the lessons learned in the sanctuary. God's ways at the Red Sea declared His strength among the peoples and showed how He redeemed His people from the power of the enemy, and led them through the wilderness like a flock.

Thus in spite of all the power of the enemy, and the trials of the wilderness, God has a “way” that He is taking with His own in this world in perfect accord with His “way” that is settled in the sanctuary. In the midst of all the confusion and scattering among the people of God, His people may not always be able to trace His footsteps, nonetheless faith knows that God has a way that He is taking for His own glory, and His people's blessing. Thus faith is encouraged to trust God in the darkest day as in the brightest.

The principles of the psalm can surely be applied with much comfort in any day of rush and confusion among the people of God. In the presence of much failure the devil might seek to tempt the believer to think that God is indifferent to the trials of His people, and has cast them off. Nevertheless faith knows that no amount of failure can thwart the purposes of God's grace. Moreover in the presence of God we learn that God has a way in accordance with which He is acting for His own glory and the blessing of His people. We are encouraged to know that however great the confusion, yet God has a way through it all — a path through the wilderness — by which to lead His flock.

Good then for us to stretch out our hands to Him, even though at times we may have to do so in the dark.

Psalm 78

The way of God in the midst of the failure of His people, securing His glory and their blessing.

In Psalm 77 the godly soul, though realizing the failure of Israel, is delivered from the terrible thought that God has cast off the nation for ever, and that His promises and grace have failed. He learns in the sanctuary that, in spite of the failure of Israel, God has a “way” by which He secures His own glory and the blessing of His people. Psalm 78 traces the failure of the nation from Egypt until the times of David, and discovers to us God’s “way” of blessing.

(vv. 1-4) The psalmist speaks with the authority of one coming from God. He appeals to the people to listen to the testimony of the law. He is about to utter a parable: he gives us, in fact, history. While, however it is history that shows us the failure of the people of God, it is also a parable to teach the hidden way of God to those who incline their ear to hear (Ps. 77:19). Such

will discern behind the failure and weakness of the people the strength of the Lord, the “wonderful works that he has done.” Thus the history of the people will turn to “the praises of the Lord.”

(vv. 5-11) God's testimony and how it was treated by the people. Before turning to the history of Israel, the psalmist reminds us that God had “established a testimony” to be rendered by the fathers to the children, and by the children to their children, in order that they might set their hope in God, walk in obedience, and not forget His works. Thus they would escape the stubbornness of former generations whose affections were not set upon God, and whose spirits were not steadfast with God.

Ephraim, as a representative tribe, shows how completely the people failed to answer to this testimony. Though well equipped for conflict they turned back in the day of battle, disobeyed God, and forgot His works, and His wonders.

The history that follows shows that the children were like their fathers. The flesh learns nothing from its own failure, or the failure of past generations; it never changes.

(vv. 12-20) God's wonders and how they were treated by the people. The Palmist now passes from the testimony of God to speak of the wonders of God. In rapid review he brings before us God's wonders in Egypt; His wonders at the Red Sea; His wonders in the desert — the cloud, the pillar of fire, and the water that gushed from the rock.

The people had not profited by God's testimony; how did they act in the presence of these wonders? Alas! they sinned yet more and more. They profited neither by a testimony rendered to them by their fathers, nor by miracles wrought before their eyes. They tempted God by speaking against Him. In a miraculous way God had provided the streams to quench their thirst; nevertheless their unbelief said, "Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?" They own, indeed, that God had wrought miraculously on their behalf, but they said, as it were, "He has given us water, can He give us bread?" Men speak against God when there are no miracles, and ask "Why does He not intervene?" They forget that when God wrought miracles before the eyes of

men, they spake against God. Miracles and signs do not change the heart of man. Miracles or no miracles, the natural man is unbelieving.

(vv. 21-32) God's governmental dealings in chastening His people, and the result. The people refused the testimony of God, and scoffed in the presence of the miracles of God; now God will test them by chastening. Governmental wrath came upon them because they believed not in God, and trusted not in His salvation. He had opened heaven and rained down manna, thus giving them the bread of the mighty. The people, however, turned from the manna and desired flesh (v. 20). God sends them the flesh in greater abundance than the manna. It comes upon them "as dust," and like "the sand of the sea." It could be gathered without labour, for "He let it fall in the midst of their camp, round about their habitations." Instead, however, of this wonderful manifestation of God's power leading them to condemn their murmuring, they used it as an occasion for their lust, and thus brought upon themselves the governmental consequences of their own folly. The chosen men of Israel were smitten down. Alas! the only result of this chastening was that "they sinned still, and believed not for his wondrous works."

(vv. 33-42) God's way with the people tempered by mercy. God had tested the people in the wilderness, only to bring out their utter failure. Now verses 33 to 42 present God's ways with His people in the days of the Judges. In those days God's governmental ways with His people were tempered with mercy. Captivity after captivity was followed by repeated deliverance, for God is full of compassion. He remembered the weakness of His people; that “they were but flesh; a wind that passes away; and comes not again.” The result was that, as in the wilderness, they had provoked and grieved God, so in the land, “they turned again and tempted God, and grieved the Holy One of Israel. They remembered not his hand, the day when he delivered them from the oppressor” (JND).

(vv. 43-45) God's ways that are carried out in spite of man's failure. These varied testings had proved the utter evil of the flesh. Nevertheless the psalmist shows that God carried out His purposes for the glory of His Name and for the blessing of His people. Thus, for the second time in the psalm, we are taken over the history of God's people from Egypt to the land. In this second account, however, nothing is said of the failure of the people. From beginning to end it is an account of what God has

done to maintain His glory in dealing with all His enemies and delivering His people; bringing them forth like sheep; guiding them through the wilderness like a flock; leading them safely, and bringing them to the border of His sanctuary; casting out the heathen before them, and dividing the land amongst the tribes of Israel.

(vv. 46-64) God breaks all outward links with the people who have forsaken Him. The fact that God had thus carried out His purposes in spite of all the unbelief and rebellion of His people should surely have led them to yield obedience to the Lord, and worship Him only. Alas! as they had tempted God in the wilderness, and kept not His testimonies, so now they forsook the sanctuary — God's centre — and set up high places, and turned from God to graven images.

The solemn result was that God broke all outward links with the people. He greatly abhorred Israel; He forsook His tabernacle; He allows the ark to pass into captivity, and His people are given over to the sword.

(vv. 65-72) Blessing secured for ruined man on the ground of sovereign grace. Man has been fully tested by the testimony of

God, the mighty works of God, the governmental dealings of God, and the mercy of God; but all in vain. Man utterly ruins himself and forfeits every claim to blessing on the ground of carrying out his responsibilities. It is therefore made abundantly plain that if man is to be blessed, all must depend upon God. Man's complete ruin makes way for the manifestation of God's love and power on behalf of His people. If, however, God intervenes on behalf of a people who have hopelessly ruined themselves, it cannot be on the ground of what they are for God, but wholly because of what God is for the people. Thus, in the closing section of the psalm, the Lord is presented as acting from Himself in sovereign grace.

The Lord awakens as one out of sleep. The figure of a mighty man is used to express the energy with which the Lord deals with all His enemies. Moreover He refuses Ephraim and strength of nature, and acts according to His sovereign choice. In sovereignty He “chose” the tribe of Judah, the Mount Zion for His sanctuary, and David to feed His people. Zion thus becomes the symbol of grace, and David the type of Christ, the One through whom all the grace is ministered. Thus the people are at last brought into blessing on the ground of grace, accord-

ing to the integrity of God's heart and the skillfulness of His hands. God's way in the sanctuary is thus made plain by His ways in the world (cp. Ps. 77:13, 19).

Psalm 79

The confession by the godly of the sin and utter helplessness of God's people, with an appeal to God to act on their behalf on the ground of his tender mercies, and for the glory of His great Name.

Psalm 78 had set forth the utter ruin of God's people, and that their only hope lies in the sovereign grace of God. This psalm is the proper response of the godly. They own their sin and cast themselves upon God and His mercy.

(vv. 1-4) The godly spread out their sad condition before God. Apparently the enemy has completely triumphed over God's people, leaving them utterly helpless; in reproach and derision before the world. They plead, however, that the enemy is attacking God's inheritance, God's holy temple, God's servants, and God's saints.

(vv. 5-7) The godly rightly feel that an attack against God, and His possessions, must have a limit. God cannot allow it to go on for ever. Thus they ask, “How long, Lord?” furthermore they own they are suffering under the chastening anger and jealousy of the Lord. They plead, however, that the instruments of His chastening are simply expressing their hatred against God. They have not known God or called upon His Name.

(vv. 8-10) They acknowledge their sins and that they are brought very low: but they plead God's tender mercies, the glory of His Name, and the reproach of the enemies who say, “Where is their God?” Outwardly it might appear to the world that God was indifferent to the sufferings of His people.

(vv. 11-13) Finally they plead their own utter weakness and God's great power. “Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee,” is followed by the prayer that the greatness of God's power might preserve His people who, apparently, were at the point of death. Then they plead that those who reproach the Lord may be dealt with in judgment and thus eternal praises would arise from those who, in spite of all their failure, are still the sheep of His pasture.

Psalm 80

A threefold appeal to God to restore and save His people from their enemies (vv. 3, 7, 19)

(vv. 1-3) The last psalm closed with the plea that the people of Israel, however low they may have fallen, are still the Lord's people, and the sheep of His pasture. In this psalm the godly, while still confessing the sin of the people, rise higher in their appeal. If Israel are the Lord's sheep, it follows the Lord is the Shepherd of Israel, the One to whom the sheep should look. Thus the cry goes up to the Shepherd of Israel who once led His people like a flock, and dwelt in their midst between the cherubim, to once again shine forth before the tribes; to come in His strength to deliver them from their enemies, and cause His face to shine in favour upon them.

(vv. 4-7) They confess that their present low condition is the result of their sins and the consequent chastisement of the Lord. As in the previous psalm they ask, “How long?” Faith realizes that there must be a limit to God's chastenings. Can God be deaf to the prayers of His people: indifferent to their tears, or unmoved by their sufferings at the hands of men, to whom they are a bone of contention and an object of derision?

Again they appeal to the God of hosts to restore them, show His favour, and save them.

(vv. 8-16) Furthermore they plead they are God's vine, brought out of Egypt, separated from the world, and planted in the land. Why, then, if Israel is God's vine, has God broken down the hedges and allowed the nations to trample them underfoot? They beseech God to look down from heaven and visit His vine — the vine that God had planted and the branch that God made strong for Himself. In the branch may there not be an allusion to David and his family, of whom according to the flesh, Christ came? They admit all this sorrow has come upon them at the rebuking of the Lord, involving a confession of their own sin that called for rebuke.

(vv. 17-19) Here they make their highest appeal. “Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son of man whom thou makest strong for thyself.” This surely is an allusion to Christ, the One who is the resource of God, available for the need of man and the maintenance of the glory of God.

When brought into blessing through Christ, the people will not go back from Jehovah. Thus for the third time they repeat the

refrain, “Restore us, O Jehovah, God of hosts; cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.” Their first plea is that God is the Shepherd of Israel; their second plea, God cannot be indifferent to their sufferings; the last plea is Christ, the Man of God's right hand.

Psalm 81

Restored Israel brought into the light of God's favour, learns from Jehovah the way He has taken to bring them into blessing.

(vv. 1-5) In the 80th Psalm there is the thrice repeated appeal of Jehovah to cause His face to shine upon Israel. This psalm anticipates the answer to these appeals. “The new moon,” it has been said, “was the symbol of the reappearance of Israel in the sun's light.” The blowing of trumpets, on the first day of the seventh month, celebrated the first of the three set times in that month which spoke of Israel's blessing (Lev. 23:24, 27, 34). The psalm, therefore, looks on to the time when Israel will again come into blessing as a nation in the recognized favour of God. Then Israel will sing aloud and praise God according to the desire of God from the beginning of their history.

(vv. 6-10) From verse 6 to the end of the psalm, the Lord's voice alone is heard. The Lord reminds His people of the way that He had taken with them. In Egypt He had delivered them from their burdens, their slavery and distress.

In the wilderness He had proved them. Would they “hearken” to the Lord, walk in devotedness to the Lord, serving no other gods? Would they confide in Him, and wait upon Him to meet their needs — opening their mouths wide, for the Lord to fill?

(vv. 11-12) What was the result of these dealings with the people? Alas! It proved that they would not hearken to the voice of the Lord. They turned aside to strange gods — “they would none” of Jehovah. Hence Jehovah gave them up to their own heart's stubbornness (JND) and they were allowed to walk in their own counsels. Here then is the answer to that question raised by the godly in the last psalm, when they ask, “Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her?”

(vv. 13-16) The psalm closes with Jehovah's touching appeal to Israel — the answer to their appeal to Jehovah in Psalm 80. “Oh that my people had hearkened to me, and Israel had

walked in my ways” (cp. Luke 19:41-44). Then, indeed, their enemies would have been subdued, and God's people would have been fed and satisfied.

Thus Jehovah discloses His way with His people and His love for His people.

Psalm 82

The condemnation of the unjust rulers of God's people — those who have been set in authority to represent God.

(v. 1) God is presented as standing in the midst of the congregation of His people. He judges among the judges. The Lord, in the New Testament days, tells us that these judges, or “gods,” are those “to whom the word of God came” giving them authority to act in judgment as His representatives, and therefore referred to as “gods” (John 10:35).

(vv. 2-4) Alas! these leaders of God's people are condemned for acting unjustly. They had failed in righteousness, the essential quality in a judge. Instead of truly representing God and judging according to truth, without respect of persons, they delivered false judgment in order to maintain the favour of man.

Furthermore they showed no regard for the poor, the fatherless, the afflicted and the needy; they neither exercised righteousness nor mercy.

(v. 5) Thus these leaders of God's people prove themselves to be without heart or understanding. Solemn, indeed, is the condition of leaders who are so ignorant of God that it can be said of them, “they walk on in darkness.” By such the moral foundations of God's people — righteousness and mercy — are undermined.

(vv. 6-7) God is not indifferent to this unrighteousness. Those who pervert judgment will themselves come under judgment. The high position that God had given them, as His representatives, will not secure them against His just judgment. They will fall even as any earthly prince who rules without fear of God.

(v. 8) The failure of God's representatives only proves that the earth waits for God, Himself, to rule in righteousness. Thus the psalm closes with an appeal to God to “arise” and “judge the earth” as the One who inherits, not only Israel, but “all nations.”

Psalm 83

The judgment of the nations confederated against God and His people Israel.

Psalm 82 deals with the corrupt leaders within the circle of God's people. Psalm 83 deals in judgment with the confederated enemies of God's people who oppose them from without.

(v. 1) The psalm opens with an appeal to God that He would no longer keep silence, and refrain from acting in the presence of His enemies.

The silence of God and His non-intervention in the presence of the wickedness of men and the sufferings of His people, is a great test for faith. Nevertheless, faith knows that, in God's due time, when evil is ripe, God must intervene. Hence the appeal that God would no longer keep silence.

(vv. 2-4) The godly soul, looking on to the last great confederacy of the nations against God and His people, sees that wickedness calls for judgment. The enemies of God, taking occasion by His long suffering and silence, raise their voice against God and exalt themselves. This hatred of God is ex-

pressed against God's people — His hidden ones whom God has secretly sheltered, even if for a time He does not publicly intervene on their behalf (cp. Ps. 31:20).

The intention of the enemy is to cut off Israel as a nation from the face of the earth, with the desire that their very memory may perish.

(vv. 5-8) In seeking to achieve this end the nations confer together, forming themselves into a confederacy against God. The nations immediately surrounding the land of Israel are enumerated. They are aided by the Assyrian from the north.

(vv. 9-17) The psalmist encouraged by the former interventions of God on behalf of His people, appeals to God to act against His enemies as in the days of old. He prays that they may be like the chaff before the wind; that the fire of judgment may consume them, and the storm of judgment fill them with terror. Thus may the enemies of the Lord be filled with shame and come to destruction.

(v. 18) The psalmist anticipates the result of God's intervention in judgment. The end will be that men will know that Jehovah — the God of Israel — is the Most High over all the earth.

Psalm 84

The path of suffering trodden by the people of God on the way to their blessing.

In its strict interpretation this beautiful psalm refers to God's earthly people who will reach their future millennial blessings through a path of suffering. Nevertheless, the principles of the psalm have a deeply instructive application to the Christian.

The three divisions of the psalm present, first, the house of God that awaits believers at the end of their journey (vv. 1-4); secondly, the path that leads to God's house (vv. 5-7); thirdly, the prayer of the man who takes this journey in dependence upon the Lord (vv. 4, 5, 12).

(vv. 1-4) The psalm opens with an expression of delight in the house of God, and of the longing of the soul to reach the courts of the Lord, and the living God. It is realized that the One who finds a home for the worthless bird, and a rest for the restless bird, has most surely a home and a resting place for His people, secured to them through the altar, or the great sacrifice of which the altar speaks. The psalmist sees before him the

blessedness of God's house where God will dwell in the midst of the everlasting praises of His people.

(vv. 5-7) The verses that follow describe the blessedness of the one who is treading the path that leads to Zion. He may have to pass through trial, set forth by the valley of Baca — or “weeping” as the word signifies; but, even so, he will find that the “early rain covers it with blessing” (JND). God uses the trials by the way for the blessing of His people. Thus they grow in grace, and increase in spiritual strength, until at last they appear before God in Zion.

(vv. 8-12) The prayer of the godly soul as he treads the path of trial. His confidence in looking to God, and his one plea, is that Christ — God's Anointed — is ever before God. On the ground of all that Christ is, the soul can count upon God to be his sun and shield — the One who will supply his needs and protect from harm, who will give grace along the way and glory at the end.

Assured of “grace” and “glory” and every “good thing,” the soul may well conclude, “Blessed is the man that trusts in Thee.”

Thus the psalm presents the blessedness of the man that dwells in God's house (v. 4); the blessedness of the man who is treading the path that leads to God's house (v. 5); and the blessedness of the man who trusts in the Lord while treading the path that ends in glory (v. 12).

Psalm 85

An anticipation of the deliverance of Israel from captivity, and their restoration through the mercy of God acting in righteousness.

(vv. 1-3) In the opening verses the restoration of Israel is anticipated by the godly. The nation is viewed as brought back from captivity into the favour of Jehovah, their sins forgiven, and God's wrath taken away. These verses present the final blessing of the nation; the remainder of the psalm, how that blessing is reached.

(vv. 4-7) The restoration of Israel awaits the moment when they will own that God has been dealing with them in governmental anger because of their long history of failure, and that their recovery wholly depends upon God, and not upon their own ef-

forts. Therefore they say, “Bring us back” (JND). Of old Naomi had to say, after her wanderings in Moab, “I went out ... and the Lord has brought me home again” (Ruth 1:21). We, alas! can wander; it is only the Lord who can bring us back again. In like spirit the nation of Israel will be brought to own that all their own efforts, or the efforts of others, to bring them back to the land of their blessing, will be in vain. They will at last confess the Lord alone can “bring us back.” Thus they plead with the Lord to cause His people to rejoice, to shew them mercy, and grant them salvation from all their enemies.

(vv. 8-13) The closing verses give the answer to this appeal to Jehovah. Very blessedly the godly man says, “I will hear what God, Jehovah, will speak” (JND). He finds that Jehovah gives an answer of peace. They had asked for salvation to be granted (v. 7); they hear that salvation is nigh them that fear Him. They had asked for mercy (v. 7); they hear that mercy and truth are met together — that God will show mercy while maintaining truth, and that righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Peace is brought to Israel, but not at the expense of righteousness. They had asked to be “revived” (v. 6); they hear that truth shall spring out of the earth, once marked by corruption; and

righteousness will rule from heaven bringing forth goodness and plenty, where there had been only evil and want.

Righteousness will be the basis of the restored kingdom, and “shall set his footsteps on the way” that leads to the kingdom (JND).

Psalm 86

The appeal of a godly soul to Jehovah to listen to his cry — (v. 1): attend to his supplication (v. 6): to be taught in the Lord's way (v. 11): and to be saved from evil men (v. 16).

In this psalm the title Lord, or “Adonai,” occurs seven times. It indicates the Lordship of Christ over all, and supposes that the one speaking takes the place of a servant who looks to his Lord (vv. 2, 4, 16).

(vv. 1-5) The psalm opens with a cry to Jehovah to listen to the cry of a suppliant who is conscious of his need, and can plead that he is “pious,” or holy — that is, he fears God, and trusts in God.

The godly man feels his need of daily mercy, and forgiveness, and realizes that the Lord is plenteous in mercy to all that call upon Him.

(vv. 6-10) In the verses that follow the suppliant prays that Jehovah would do more than hear his cry. He desires that Jehovah would “attend” to his supplication, and “answer” his call. He feels that in the day of trouble God must answer His people. Here the godly man pleads the greatness and the power of the Lord, as before he had pleaded the mercy of the Lord. There is none like the Lord; there are no works like His works. He has made the nations for His own glory. He is great and doest wondrous things. He alone is God.

(vv. 11-13) Further, the psalmist not only seeks an answer to his cry in the day of trouble, but he desires to be taught the way of Jehovah, that he may walk in the truth, and glorify the One who in mercy has saved his soul from the lowest Sheol.

(vv. 14-17) Lastly the godly man cries to God concerning his enemies. He is surrounded by the proud who have risen up against him; by the violent who oppose him; and lawless men who live without fear of God.

Nevertheless, if the wicked are against the psalmist, God is for him. And the God who is for him is full of compassion, gracious, long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth. Therefore he pleads, though men turn against him, that God would turn towards him (JND), strengthen him, and save him from his enemies. Thus the manifest favour of the Lord, would put to shame those that hate him, and all would see that he had been helped and comforted by Jehovah.

Psalm 87

The glory of Zion established as the city of God.

(vv. 1-3) The psalm opens with celebrating the glory of Zion. Men may found other cities; but Zion is the city of Jehovah's foundation. Not only is it thus firmly established, but its foundations are secure because built on “the mountains of holiness.” It is established on a righteous foundation. Being holy Jehovah “loves” its gates — the place of concourse and government, and therefore the symbol of the active life of the city. Glorious things are spoken of this city. It is not simply a place where great events have happened, but a city of which a glorious fu-

ture is foretold. In contrast to all other cities it is the “city of God.”

God is its builder; God has given it a firm foundation; God has established it in holiness; God delights in Zion; God has spoken glorious things of Zion; it is the city of God.

(vv. 4-5) Jehovah appears to be the speaker in verses 4 and 5. Amongst them that know Him, He calls attention to the great cities of earth, and the nations that had surrounded Israel. Rahab (or “Egypt” Ps. 89:10; Isa. 51:9), Babylon, Philistia, Tyre and Ethiopia, had their great men in whom they boasted. But the fame of Jehovah's people would be that they belong to Zion, the city established by the Most High.

(v. 6) The godly, responding to Jehovah, say, “Jehovah will count, when he inscribes the peoples, This man was born there” (JND). The godly realize that, in the day to come, those connected by grace with Zion will have a place of pre-eminence above all the peoples.

(v. 7) The closing verse indicates that all earthly joy will have its centre and spring in Zion.

Psalm 88

The soul exercises of a godly man, in learning the reality and horror of God's wrath against sin.

The unrelieved distress of soul, of which this psalm is the deep expression, arises neither from the opposition of enemies nor from trial of circumstances. The distress is not from the surrounding difficulties of the path, but from the inward exercises of the soul.

The psalm depicts the deep distress of a godly soul who is learning in his conscience the reality and horror of God's wrath against sin, and a broken law. God is known and appealed to as Jehovah. Thus there is the knowledge that there is loving-kindness with God, and the soul has confidence to look to God. Nevertheless, in order to have the full enjoyment of this loving-kindness, the horror of God's wrath against sin must be learned.

(vv. 1-7) The godly man realizes that salvation is alone found with God. Thus he addresses Jehovah as the God of his salvation. Nevertheless, the soul is in deep distress that leads it to cry to God day and night. In prayer he owns before God that this soul is full of troubles. He is made to feel that the effect of

sin is to separate the soul from God; that it brings into death; that it leaves man without strength, and brings to the grave where the soul is utterly forsaken by God — remembered no more, and cast off from God, where there is only darkness, with God's wrath abiding on the soul.

What a terrible picture of the effect of sin! The soul filled with trouble (v. 3); the life forfeited, drawing near to the grave (v. 3); no strength against sin (v. 4); brought into death (v. 5); forsaken by God (v. 5); left in darkness (v. 6); and under judgment (v. 7).

(vv. 8-9) Moreover there is the consciousness that sin not only separates from God, but that sin makes the person an object of loathing to his acquaintance. That it shuts the soul up in an awful loneliness from which he cannot come forth. Nevertheless, in its misery, the soul is not allowed to be abandoned to despair: thus the hands are stretched out to God.

(vv. 10-12) However, turning to God only makes the distressed soul more conscious that, while there are wonders with God (v. 10), loving-kindness, faithfulness (v. 11), and righteousness, yet the effect of sin, if allowed to work out to its full result, is

to bring the soul into death and the land of forgetfulness, where God in all these blessed attributes is unknown.

(vv. 13-14) Nevertheless, the soul in its distress, clings to Jehovah, even though it feels, by reason of its sin, God has cast off the soul and hidden His face.

(vv. 15-18) Thus, under the sense that God has hidden His face, the soul is afflicted and ready to die. Instead of enjoying God's wonders, and loving-kindness, and faithfulness, it is only conscious of God's terrors, God's wrath, and God's forsaking.

The psalm closes in distress with the godly man compassed about by terrors, forsaken by friends, and left in darkness. The relief can only be found in the mercies and faithfulness of God that form the theme of the succeeding psalm.

Psalm 89

The mercies of Jehovah, secured by Israel by the faithfulness of God.

In Psalm 88 the godly man, representing the nation of Israel, learns in the presence of Jehovah that sin and a broken law

bring the soul under the judgment of Jehovah, from which there is no salvation apart from Jehovah to whom faith looks.

In Psalm 89, the godly remnant look for salvation in the mercy of God, and the faithfulness of God to His covenant with David, by which blessing is secured, even though for a time the nation is cast off.

(vv. 1-2) The opening verses present the great theme of the psalm — the mercies and faithfulness of God, instead of the sin and failure of the nation, as in Psalm 88, moreover the psalm presents the great fact that, not only are there mercies and faithfulness with God, but, these blessed qualities cannot be affected by anything that man can do. They are beyond the reach of man's corrupting hand. Mercy is built up for ever; and faithfulness is established in the very heavens.

(vv. 3-4) The two verses that follow recite the covenant of mercy with David, which is made sure by the faithfulness of Jehovah (2 Sam. 23:5; Acts 13:34).

(vv. 5-8) The psalmist then celebrates the glory of Jehovah — the One who has made the covenant with David. The heavens declare His wonders; the saints His faithfulness. No creature

can be compared with Jehovah. In His supreme glory as God there can be none likened to Him. In the assembly of His saints He is the object of reverent fear. Supreme in strength, as the Lord God of hosts, He acts in faithfulness on every side.

(vv. 9-10) The godly recall the exercise of Jehovah's power, when at the Red Sea He broke the power of Egypt ("Rahab"), and scattered His enemies with His strong arm.

(vv. 11-14) Moreover, Jehovah is the possessor of heaven and earth by His rights as Creator, and, if He overthrows the power of the world, as represented by Egypt, it is that He, by His mighty arm, may establish His own throne, marked by justice and judgment, mercy and truth.

(vv. 15-18) Furthermore, His throne is established in order that He may dwell in the midst of a praising people, who rejoice in His favour, and are exalted in righteousness. A people of whom Jehovah is their glory, their strength, their defence, and their King.

(vv. 19-28) The verses that follow present in detail the covenant made with David, and the assurance of God's faithfulness to His covenant. God had spoken in vision to Nathan (2 Sam. 7:4-

17) of David, the one who is chosen from the people and exalted; anointed as the servant of the Lord (v. 20); triumphant over all his enemies (vv. 21-23); established by God's faithfulness and mercy, to reign over the full extent of the land as given to Abraham, from the sea (the Mediterranean) to the rivers (the Euphrates and the Nile). The one appointed to rule in dependence upon God as his might and his salvation (v. 26); and thus pre-eminent over the kings of the earth (v. 27). For him God's mercy will be kept for evermore; and "with him" God's covenant will stand fast (v. 28).

In this fine description of the glories of David we are surely intended to see Christ the true Anointed King of Israel, of whom David was but a type.

(vv. 29-37) The following verses present the seed of David. With the seed there is the possibility of failure and the governmental consequences that follow (vv. 30-32). Nevertheless, God will not utterly take from them His loving-kindness, nor suffer His faithfulness to fail. God will not break His covenant, nor alter the word that has gone out of His lips (vv. 33-34). The holiness of God is a witness that God cannot alter His word by which blessing is secured to David and his seed.

(vv. 38-45) Alas! the seed of David entirely broke down. They forsook the law, and walked not in God's judgments; they broke His statutes and kept not His commandments (vv. 30-31). Thus the threatened rod (v. 32) has fallen upon the nation. They are cast off and, apparently, the covenant is made void. Their land is ruined, they themselves in reproach; their enemies exalted over them; their glory passed away; their throne brought down; they are covered with shame.

(vv. 46-52) Nevertheless, in the midst of their shame the faith of the remnant shines forth. They realize that there will be a limit to the chastening of the Lord. Hence they ask, "How long, Jehovah?" They ask God to remember the frailty of man (vv. 47-48). They plead the former lovingkindnesses which God had shown to David. They plead the reproach of their enemies. However great their failure, they say, we are "thy servants," and their enemies are "thine enemies," and they have put to shame "thine Anointed."

They wait for an answer, but, knowing it must come, for God's faithfulness cannot fail, they say "Blessed be the Lord for evermore. Amen, and Amen."

Book 4

Psalm 90

The man of God appealing to Jehovah, who, through all generations, is the resource of His people.

(v. 1) The psalm opens with a sublime appeal to Jehovah as the dwelling place of His people. The man of God looks back over all the generations of God's people. He sees, as it were, Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, as pilgrims and strangers without any certain dwelling place; he recalls the years of the wilderness wanderings when Israel was without a home and without a country, exposed to dangers and perils, and, throughout all these generations, he sees that Jehovah has been the home and refuge of His people.

The man of God takes his stand on the blessed fact that God is the resource of His people. In the light of this fact he can face the frailty and failure of God's people, and on this fact every utterance of his appeal is based.

(vv. 2-6) Having stated the ground of his confidence in appealing to God, the psalmist draws a contrast between the eternal God and mortal man. God is the unchangeable God, the same before the world was as now. Creation may pass, yet God remains. The One who is our resource is everlasting and unchanging — “From eternity to eternity thou art God” (JND).

In contrast to God the psalmist sees the mortality of man and the passing of time. God is immortal, but man is mortal and returns to dust (JND). In the sight of God there is no time as men count time. A thousand years in the sight of God are as soon gone as yesterday, or as a watch in the night.

Moreover, a world that seems to be established for ever is carried away by a flood, and like men in a sleep, those swept away are unconscious of all that transpires on earth. With all their brave show of glory and power, men perish like grass that flourishes and grows for a day, but is cut down and withered by night. Joseph, in his day, was made “ruler over all the land of Egypt,” but the last we hear of Joseph is that “he was put in a coffin in Egypt” (Gen. 50:26). All the glory of man ends in the dust of the grave and in the darkness of death. Such is frail and fallen man, for the man of God is speaking of the natural man,

not of the spiritual; of the first man, not of the second; of the earthly not of the heavenly.

(vv. 7-10) Faith, however, looks above the changing circumstances of time and sees, through all these things, the ways of God in His governmental dealings with His people in view of His purpose. Hence there is the confession of sins, both open and secret — all are before God — and there is the consciousness that sins justly incur the governmental dealing of God. If we wither, if our days pass away, it is but the due reward of our deeds. Thus in condemning ourselves we justify God in His dealings with us. It may be that by reason of strength our years are lengthened out beyond the allotted span of threescore years and ten, but even so, the strength that we are proud of, and the years that we boast in, will only bring labour and vanity.

(vv. 11-12) This recognition of God's wrath against sin will be according to the measure of our fear of God. Fear is the outcome of the knowledge, and recognition, of God as He is according to truth. The more we recognize the holy character of God the deeper will be our sense of His hatred of sin. “Dost thou not fear God,” says the thief on the cross; and realizing who God is, he realizes also the holy wrath of God against sin,

for he immediately adds, “We receive the due reward of our deeds” (Luke 23:40-41). Thus the man of God desires that “we may acquire a wise heart” (JND), for a wise heart is one that fears God. The beginning of wisdom is the fear of God.

(v. 13) With the fear of God, and the confession of sin, there comes confidence in God. Thus at once the man of God appeals to Jehovah for His blessing. So the thief on the cross, with the fear of God in his heart, and the confession of sins upon his lips, can at once turn with confidence to the Lord and say, “Lord remember me.” In like spirit the psalmist can say, “Return, Jehovah: how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants. Satisfy us early with thy loving-kindness” (JND).

Faith recognizes that it is God's purpose to bless His people, and therefore faith knows there must be an end to the time of affliction and sorrow in the governmental ways of God. Thus faith says “How long?” This is the language of faith and hope — of faith in the purpose of God to bless, and hope that reaches out to the coming blessing.

(vv. 14-15) Faith, growing yet bolder, can say, “Satisfy us early with thy loving-kindness.” Faith looks to God, not to failing

men or passing circumstances, to give everlasting satisfaction. Nevertheless, faith realizes that satisfaction can only be given to a guilty sinner on the ground of grace, hence the cry is, “Satisfy us with thy loving-kindness.” The glorious end is that “we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.” So the psalmist prays, “Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, according to the years wherein we have seen evil.”

(v. 16) If, however, God acts in grace, it must be on the ground of His own work. So at once there is the prayer, “Let thy work appear to thy servants, and thy majesty to their sons.” The efficacy of His work rests on the majesty of His Person. To sully the majesty of His Person is to belittle the efficacy of His work.

(v. 17) Moreover, the blessing that is secured by God's work must far transcend the requirements of our need, and the deliverance from sorrows by the way. The end is that the beauty of the Lord will be upon us, or as the Christian can say, “Conformed to the image of His Son.” Then, when blessing has been secured by grace, we shall find that the work of our hands will be established. The works of self-righteousness will pass, but the works that flow from grace will be established. Not a cup of cold water given for Christ's sake will be forgotten.

Psalm 91

The Man who abides in the secret place of the Most High.

The 90th Psalm presents mortal man in contrast to the everlasting God. The 91st Psalm presents Christ as the perfectly dependent Man in contrast to mortal man.

(v. 1) The 90th Psalm opens by announcing the great fact that the Lord has been the dwelling place of His people in all generations. This psalm opens by stating the blessedness of the one who dwells in the dwelling place. He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. If Psalm 90 describes the blessedness of the dwelling place, Psalm 91 presents the blessedness of the dweller.

We gladly own the fact that the one who dwells in the secret place of the Most High must abide under the shadow of the Almighty; but where can we find a man who dwells in this secret place? Adam, the first man, described in the 90th Psalm, failing to abide in the secret place, was driven forth to be a wanderer, to wither in the evening of his life and, at last, be “cut off.” In this psalm there comes before us another Man, One of whom we read, “He that dwells ... shall abide.” Who

can this be but Christ, the One who, in His pathway through this world, ever abode in the secret place of the Most High? He could speak of Himself as “the Son of Man which is in heaven.” He walked on earth but dwelt in heaven.

(v. 2) In this verse we know that Christ is the speaker, for the Spirit of God, in Hebrews 2:13, uses the statement “I will put my trust in him,” as the language of Christ. It is the acceptance by Christ of the proposal of verse 1. He responds by saying, “I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust,” He will make God his refuge in every storm, and his defence from every enemy. The need of a “refuge” and a “fortress” proves that Christ is speaking in the circumstances of man. There will be no storms to ruffle the calm of heaven, no enemy to oppose. It is a wilderness psalm, and, in after days is used by the Spirit of God in the wilderness circumstances of our Lord (See Luke 4:10 and Heb. 1:14).

The names by which God is referred to in the first two verses have a special significance. The “Most High” speaks of the absolute supremacy of God (Gen. 14:18-20). “The Almighty” speaks of absolute power (Gen. 17:1). Then we learn from the lips of Christ that the One who is supreme in position and abso-

lute in power is the Jehovah of Israel — the Eternal God, the I AM. How safe then — how sure of blessing must be the one who dwells in His secret place.

(vv. 3-8) In these verses the Spirit of God addresses Christ, unfolding the blessings that flow to the one who dwells in the secret place of the Most High. Such will know the power of God delivering from the snares of the enemy, and from the destructive pestilence of evil. Moreover he will enjoy the watchful care of love, for “He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou find refuge.” In result the one who dwells in the secret place will not be afraid of secret attack — “the terror by night,” nor of direct and open opposition — the “arrow by day.” A thousand shall fall at his side, but destruction shall not come nigh the one who confides in Jehovah. He shall have no part in the judgment of the wicked save to behold it with his eyes.

(vv. 9-13) The Spirit of God has spoken: now one of the godly of Israel, with whom Christ has identified Himself, is led by the Spirit to address Christ. This godly soul can speak of Jehovah as his refuge, and thus with confidence can say to Christ, “Because Thou hast made the Lord ... even the most High, thy

habitation, there shall no evil befall thee.” The evils and plagues that are common to fallen man shall not come nigh to His “tent” — for thus it should read, clearly showing that it is His pilgrim journey on earth that is in view. Moreover, the resources of heaven are available for Him throughout His earthly pathway. The angels are charged to keep Him in all His ways. Furthermore, He will triumph over all the power of the devil, whether coming against Him as the lion, the adder, or the dragon. As the lion, the devil wields a destructive power over man; as the adder, he beguiles men (2 Cor. 11:3); as the dragon he persecutes (Rev. 12).

Thus in the pathway of this perfectly dependent Man, earth's evils cannot come nigh Him, heaven's hosts wait upon Him, and hell's forces are subdued beneath Him.

(vv. 14-16) The Spirit by whom He was led has spoken; the voice of the remnant, with whom He associated, has been heard; now we are privileged to hear God Himself, as He testifies to the Man in whom is His delight. God has at last found in Christ a Man in wilderness circumstances of whom He can say, “He has set his love upon me,” “He has known my name;” and “He shall call upon me.” Alas! we have set our affections upon

anyone but God; we have been indifferent to all the blessedness of God as set forth in His Name; we have done our own wills rather than walk in dependence upon Him. Here at last is a perfect Man who, while walking on earth, has set His love wholly upon Jehovah, who knows and delights in the blessedness of Jehovah's Name, and ever expressed His absolute dependence upon Jehovah by calling upon His Name. To the personal perfection of this perfect Man, God will give a perfect answer. God can say of Christ

I will deliver Him,

I will set Him on high,

I will answer Him,

I will be with Him,

I will honour Him,

I will satisfy Him with length of days, and

I will show Him My salvation.

Psalm 92

Praise to Jehovah in anticipation of the millennial rest.

The 90th Psalm presents the eternal God in contrast with mortal man. The 91st Psalm presents Christ as the dependent Man,

come into the circumstances of the mortal man. The 92nd sets forth the results of Christ having come into the circumstances of the mortal man. The psalm is described, in the heading, as “A Song for the Sabbath day.” In keeping with this heading we find in the psalm an anticipation of the gladness of the future millennial day of which the Sabbath is the type.

(vv. 1-4). The opening verses express the joy of the kingdom day when the loving-kindness and faithfulness of Jehovah will be declared. All the gladness of that scene will flow from Jehovah's works.

(v. 5) The millennial rest will not only be the outcome of what God has wrought, but will also be the witness of the greatness of God's works, and the depth of His thoughts (Rom. 11:33-36). In the full light of Christianity we can see that the greatness of the works of God are the outcome of the depth of His thoughts. His thoughts carry us back before the foundation of the world, there to find all was purposed in the deep eternal counsel of God. His works find their greatest expression at the Cross whereby all the counsel of God is righteously fulfilled.

(vv. 6-7) The brutish man — pursuing the dull round of life without reference to God; and the fool — living only for the gratification of his lusts without fear of God — cannot know God's thoughts, nor understand His works. Such do not realize that if they spring up suddenly, like the grass, and flourish for a time, it is only the prelude to their destruction.

(v. 8) In contrast to the wicked, who are exalted for a brief moment and then pass away, Jehovah is on high for evermore.

(vv. 9-11) The absolute supremacy, and eternal stability of Jehovah's throne must lead to the ultimate judgment of the wicked. All the enemies of Jehovah shall perish; all the workers of iniquity be scattered. Moreover the judgment of the wicked will lead to the earthly exaltation of Christ. Thus we are permitted to hear Christ saying, “mine horn shalt thou exalt,” and again, “I shall be anointed with fresh oil.”

The horn speaks of exaltation and power. Zacharias, anticipating the birth of Christ, speaks of Him as “an horn of salvation” (Luke 1:69; see also Ps. 18:2; Ps. 75:10; Ps. 148:14). The anointed is the title of one appointed to rule. Christ, in His day, was anointed by the Holy Spirit of whom the oil is a type. In

the day of His exaltation He will see the righteous judgment upon all His enemies.

(vv. 12-14) As the result of the exaltation of Christ, not only will the wicked be judged, but the righteous will be blessed. They shall flourish, not like the grass, that flourishes only for a day, as in the case of the wicked (v. 7), but, as a palm tree that brings forth fruit in abundance, and as a cedar in Lebanon, whose enduring age is measured by centuries. The godly will have their roots in the house of the Lord, and they will adorn the courts of our God. Age will not diminish their fruitfulness, nor lessen their vitality.

(v. 15) If, however, the righteous have their place in the courts of the Lord it will be for the glory of the Lord — “to show that the Lord is upright;” that He is the firm “rock” on which all blessing is founded, and One in whom there is no unrighteousness.

How blessed are the results, as set forth in this psalm, of the coming of Christ into the circumstances of mortal man. It will inevitably lead to the exaltation of Christ, the judgment of the wicked, the blessing of the righteous, and the glory of God.

Psalm 93

The Reign of Jehovah.

The 93rd Psalm is introductory to the second section of the Fourth Book, comprising Psalm 93—100. It presents the great theme of these psalms — the reign of Jehovah, the character of His throne, and the effect of His rule.

(v. 1) In the opening verse the reign of Jehovah is anticipated. By publicly taking His throne Jehovah displays His majesty and exercises His power. It is not only that dignity is His and that power belongs to Him, but when Jehovah reigns His royalty will be displayed, for “He has clothed himself with majesty;” His strength will be exercised, for “he has girded himself with strength.” The blessed result will be that, at last, the world will be brought into rest, and enjoy the blessings of a stable government, “the world is established, it shall not be moved” (JND).

(v. 2) However, the throne that is established on earth is no new throne. It is established of old; the One who reigns is from everlasting.

(vv. 3-4) Through long ages rebellious man has opposed the government of God. The floods lifted up their voice. The passion and will of man had risen up as the angry and tumultuous waves, but however mighty the power of man, “Jehovah on high is mightier.”

(v. 5) When the will of man, like the noise of many waters and the might of the waves, seems to triumph and carry all before it, faith has that in which it can rest, the testimonies, or Word of God. God's testimonies are, like Himself, very sure. In the midst of the rising up of evil, His throne remains untouched. God is, and has been from all eternity, and His Word is as sure as Himself. Furthermore the certainty of His Word is linked with the holiness of His house. God will fulfill His Word; at the same time He will maintain His holy character. If we are to enjoy the certainty of His Word we must maintain the holiness of His house. “It is not holiness apart from the Word, or knowledge of certainty apart from holiness. The Spirit of truth is the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit the Spirit of truth.”

Psalm 94

The cry of the godly remnant in Israel to Jehovah in the time of trial that precedes the coming of Christ to establish order and blessing through the judgment of evil.

(vv. 1-2) The theme of the psalm is stated in the first two verses. The godly realizing that the blessing of Israel, as of the world, can only be brought about by the judgment of evil, look to God to redress the wrongs of His people, and to execute judgment upon the wicked. The wicked, in the place of power, have lifted themselves up in pride against God and His people. Now the godly appeal to God to shine forth and lift Himself up, and thus intervene in a direct and manifest way.

(vv. 3-7) The grounds on which this appeal is based are clearly stated. First, the triumph of the wicked calls for the intervention of God. In the place of power they treat others with arrogance and insult while boasting in themselves. Secondly, their persecution of God's people calls for the intervention of God. They crush God's people and afflict God's inheritance. Thirdly, their defiance of God Himself calls aloud for God to intervene. The impiety of the wicked leads them to say, "The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it."

(vv. 8-11) A solemn warning is addressed to the unbelieving mass of the nation, who are in alliance with the wicked, as to the folly and evil of their way. They are addressed as the “brutish among the people.” The people are the people of Israel, among whom there are found a great number who pursue their way like brutes, without reference to God, and like fools, gratify their lusts without fear of God. The folly of their course is exposed. He that planted the ear shall He not hear the hard and insolent speeches of the wicked? He that formed the eye, does He not see the violence and unrighteousness of the wicked? He that instructest the nations, shall He not correct if they are heedless of His instruction? He that teaches man knowledge, does He not know the vanity of man's thoughts?

(vv. 12-13) The godly soul learns, in the hour of trial, that, as ever, God uses the time of trial for the blessing of His people. Thus he can say, “Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord.” Looking beyond those through whom the trial may come, he sees the chastening hand of God in the trial. Thus he can say, “thou chastenest”: “thou teachest”: “that Thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity.”

“Thou chastenest” is the admission that behind the hand of those who trouble God's people there is the hand of God dealing with His people. “Thou teachest” is the acknowledgment that through chastening God teaches His people, not only what is in their hearts but the grace, the goodness, and the holiness of His own heart, so that distrusting themselves they may rest in God. Thus God's chastening is often God's way of teaching; and divine teaching leads to divine rest — “That thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity.”

(vv. 14-15) Feeling the terrible evil of the world, there may be the attempt on the part of the godly to put things right, only to find that all such attempts will end in weariness and heart-breaking disappointment. When, however, by the chastening and teaching of God, the ways of God are seen in allowing evil to triumph for a time while the godly suffer, the submissive soul finds rest. It is then seen that though the wicked crush God's people (v. 5), yet God will not cast off His people (v. 14); and though the wicked afflict God's heritage (v. 5), yet God will not forsake His inheritance (v. 14). Further it is seen that the time is not far off when “judgment shall return to righteousness.” Now judgment and righteousness are too often divorced.

Power and authority have been put into the hands of the Gentiles, but they have abused the power by separating righteousness from judgment. This was manifestly so at the judgment seat of Pilate where judgment was with Pilate but righteousness with the holy Prisoner. The day is coming when “judgment will return to righteousness.” Judgment will be exercised in righteousness, and the upright in heart will follow the judgment. They will approve and justify the judgment of evil.

Thus the heart finds rest from the evil, not by seeking to deal with it, but by submitting to God in the trial in the confidence that God will not cast off His people, and, in His own time will deal with the evil.

(vv. 16-19) If, however, there is quiet submission in the presence of evil, the question may arise, “Who will rise up for me against the evil doers? Who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?” The answer is that such have the help of Jehovah (v. 17); the loving-kindness of Jehovah (v. 18); and the comforts of Jehovah (v. 19). The godly can say in the presence of evil, “He is my help”: in the presence of temptation, His loving-kindness held me up: when harassed by anxious thoughts His comforts delighted my soul.

But for His help we should have lapsed into silence in the presence of evil. We should have raised no testimony for God and allowed our hearts to become narrowed and our tongues dumb. But for His mercy our feet would have slipped into evil. But for His comforts our souls would have been overwhelmed with anxious thoughts.

(vv. 20-23) The godly soul realizes that it is impossible that there can be any fellowship between the throne of iniquity and a holy God. Hence God must judge the wicked; for it is manifest that God cannot allow that with which He cannot be joined. Thus in the time of trial the soul learns of rest in the consciousness that God is his defence against the wicked, his refuge in the storm, until the time comes when He will deal with evil and cut off the wicked.

Psalm 95

The nation of Israel called upon to turn to Jehovah with thanksgiving, in view of the coming of Christ to earth to bring the nation into rest.

(vv. 1-2) The godly remnant appeal to the nation to come before the Lord — who is the rock of their salvation — with songs of praise.

(vv. 3-5) The ground of this appeal is the glory of Jehovah. Jehovah is a great God, and a great King above all that exercise rule. The deep places of the earth are in His hand, and the heights of the hills are His. There is no depth beyond His reach, and no height above His rule. He made the sea, and formed the dry land. The One who comes to rule is “above all”; Possessor of all the earth, and the Maker of all things.

(vv. 6-7) The godly delight to confess that the One who made the sea, and the dry land is “our Maker,” and “our God.” Moreover they say, We are His — “We are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand.” The people of God are prone to look to second causes for the provision of their needs, and for protection from their enemies. They are in danger of forgetting that God has pasture to meet every need, and a hand to protect from every foe.

Once again grace gives the nation opportunity to submit to God and own that Jehovah is the rock of their salvation. “Today” is a day of grace and salvation.

(vv. 8-11) Grace rejected must end in judgment. Hence Israel is warned not to act as their fathers who hardened their hearts in the wilderness. Though they saw God's “work” for them, they erred in their hearts, and would have none of God's ways. In result they could not enter into God's rest.

Psalm 96

The Gentiles called to turn to Jehovah in view of the coming of Christ to reign.

The previous psalm was addressed to the nation of Israel, hence the recurrence of the words “Let us” — “Let us sing”; “Let us make a joyful noise”; “Let us come”; “Let us worship,” and “Let us kneel.” This psalm is addressed to the Gentiles, thus the appeal is to “All the earth,” “the heathen,” and “all the people.”

(vv. 1-3) The nations are called to take up “a new song,” and sing to the Lord because of the greatness of “his name,” “his

salvation,” “his glory,” and “his wonders.” There has been a creation song, when the earth came fresh from the hands of God and “the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy” (Job 38:7). Alas! sin marred that fair creation, and singing gave place to weeping, and songs to groans. In the millennial day, earth will be made new; creation's groan will be hushed, and heaven and earth will unite in a new song.

(vv. 4-6) The ground of this appeal to all the earth, is the manifested greatness of the Lord — the One who is “above all gods.” The gods of the nations are but vanity; Jehovah made the heavens. With Him is honour and majesty. Beauty and strength are found in His sanctuary in the midst of Israel.

(vv. 7-9) The peoples and nations are invited to own Jehovah in His sanctuary, and worship Him in holy splendour.

(v. 10) The ground of the appeal is that Jehovah reigns, and the world is established. No longer moved by wars and rumors of wars, it will come into rest. Jehovah will exercise judgment over all the peoples in righteousness. Judgment and righteousness will at last be brought together (Ps. 94:15).

(vv. 11-13) World-wide blessing will result in the heavens uniting with the earth in joy and gladness. The sea and its fullness, the field and all that is therein will exult and be glad.

Psalm 97

The reign of the Lord on earth, introduced by the judgment of the wicked, leads to the blessing of His people and the glory of the Lord.

(v. 1) The psalm opens with an anticipation of the joy and gladness of the whole earth when the Lord actually reigns.

(v. 2) The gladness of His reign will be preceded by His coming as the Judge. We have thus a description of His coming in keeping with His character as the Judge. “Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.”

(vv. 3-5) The immediate effect of His coming as the Judge is brought before us. The fire of judgment will deal with all His adversaries. No evil, in any part of the earth, will pass unjudged; all will be searched out even as lightnings lighten the world. The earth will see and tremble. Everything that exalts it-

self against Jehovah will melt away “at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.”

(vv. 6-7) For long ages earth has declared the unrighteousness of man. With the coming of Christ to reign the heavens will declare the righteousness of the Lord. All the people will see the glory of the Lord declared in righteousness, even as at His first coming His grace was declared in humiliation. Shame will overwhelm all those who serve graven images and boast in their idols.

(v. 8) Moreover, the execution of judgment upon the adversaries, will bring deliverance to Zion. Therefore Zion will rejoice and be glad “because of thy judgments, O Lord.”

(v. 9) The judgment of the wicked and the deliverance of Zion will lead to the exaltation of Jehovah in His universal sway above all the earth. Thus the wicked are judged (vv. 2-7); Israel brought into blessing (v. 8), and the Lord exalted (v. 9).

(vv. 10-11) The godly remnant — “His saints” — who love the Lord and hate evil, had been preserved in trial, and are now delivered from the wicked. For such there is light and joy; for the wicked fire and darkness (vv. 2-3).

(v. 12) In view of these dealings of Jehovah, the godly are exhorted to rejoice and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness. They are reminded that the holiness of the Lord is behind all His dealings.

Psalm 98

The intervention on behalf of Israel calls for a new song of praise to Jehovah, and becomes a witness of Jehovah to “all the ends of the earth.”

(vv. 1-3) Once in their past Israel had raised a song to Jehovah for having delivered them from the Egyptians and destroyed their enemies (Ex. 15:1). Now the nation is called to raise a new song to the Lord for this fresh and final intervention on their behalf. By power, and holiness — “his right hand, and his holy arm” — He has triumphed victoriously over all His enemies. Moreover the deliverance of Israel from all their enemies becomes a witness to the heathen even to the ends of the earth of the salvation, righteousness, mercy and faithfulness of God.

(vv. 4-6) Israel and the land called to lead the praise to the Lord, the King for His intervention on their behalf. (“all the earth” can, and probably should, be translated “all the land”).

(vv. 7-9) The world and all that dwell therein called to praise the Lord. No longer will the floods lift up their waves in rebellion against Jehovah's throne, nor “the mighty breakers of the sea” oppose His power, as in Psalm 93. Earth's multitudes, free and happy — set forth by the sea and the floods — will swell the chorus of praise to Jehovah. The authorities of the earth — set forth by the mountains — will be united in their common joy in the Lord; for, at last, One will have arisen whose world-wide sway will bring righteousness and equity to the peoples.

Psalm 99

Jehovah, the King, having come to reign, is presented as great in Zion and dwelling between the cherubim in the midst of a worshipping people (vv. 1-5); God's ways in grace and government through which His purposes have been brought to pass (vv. 6-9).

(v. 1-3) In the previous psalm the King is presented as coming; in this psalm He has come and taken His place between the cherubim, and is great in Zion, His rule extending over all peoples. The only right response from all nations is to praise His great and terrible name, for it is holy.

(vv. 4-5) These verses present the character of His rule. His name is great and holy; His reign, in accord with His name, will be marked by power exercised in righteous judgment. Might and right, so often divorced by man, are at last brought together under the rule of Christ, the King. The glory of the One who rules calls not only for submission, but for worship at the footstool of His throne, and again we are reminded He is holy.

(vv. 6-8) In these verses we are reminded that the ways of God, in bringing the nation into blessing, are similar to, and therefore illustrated by, His dealings with the nation in the past. Israel's history had been one long story of sin and failure; nevertheless there had ever been a godly remnant in the midst of this failing people. Moses and Aaron among the priests, and Samuel among the prophets, are outstanding examples of this godly remnant who, in the midst of the greatest failure, has in-

terceded for the people (Ex. 17:11-12; Num. 12:13; 1 Sam. 7:5-9). These leaders of the people called upon God in the day of trial, and God answered and spoke to them in the cloudy pillar, and they obeyed His word.

Because of this godly remnant, who walked in dependence and obedience, God acted in grace and government towards those who were under them, and for whom they interceded. God forgave Israel's sins in grace; but God took “vengeance of their doings” in government. In grace they were forgiven; in government they had to suffer for their sins.

Thus in the day to come the restoration of Israel is brought about by the grace of God that answers the call of the godly remnant (Ps. 94; Ps. 118:25-26; Luke 13:35; Joel 2:32; Rom. 10:13). Nonetheless the nation has to suffer for its evil doings, and thus pass through the great tribulation.

(v. 9) The final result of all God's dealings in grace and government will be to surround Himself with a people who “worship at the hill of his holiness.” For the third time in the psalm we are reminded that “God is holy” (vv. 3, 5, 9). In heaven there will be a redeemed people “holy and without blame before him

in love”; on earth there will be a company worshipping at His holy hill, made suited to His holy name.

Psalm 100

A summons from the restored nation of Israel to all the nations of the earth to worship the Lord within His courts.

(vv. 1-2) Jehovah has taken His place in Zion, and sits between the cherubim (Ps. 99). All the earth is summoned to serve Jehovah with joy, and to come before His presence with exultation. The godly remnant had indeed “served” in circumstances of sorrow; now all can serve with joy. When surrounded with enemies the godly came into His presence with trepidation, now all can come with exultation.

(v. 3) Restored Israel, speaking from their experience of Jehovah's loving-kindness, can bear witness to all the earth. They can say to the nations, “Know that Jehovah is God.” He “has made us”; all that we are we owe to Him, and not to ourselves. In conscious relationship they can say, “We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.” It is not only that He has created us

and that we are His creatures, but He has made us to be His people.

(v. 4) As of old so also in the millennial day, His house is a house of prayer for all nations. Hence all are invited to pass through His gates into His courts, there to give thanks to Him, and bless His name. The house of prayer becomes a house of praise.

(v. 5) Restored Israel recognizes that all the blessing they have been brought into is the outcome of the everlasting mercy and unchanging faithfulness of Jehovah. Through all their long history of failure, the mercy (or “loving-kindness”) of Jehovah never ceased. It “endures for ever” (JND). It had been the hope of the godly in the darkest day. Realizing that God's loving-kindness endures for ever, they knew that finally the nation would come into blessing. At the same time God's faithfulness is as enduring as His mercy: therefore it follows that, while mercy brings them into final blessing, faithfulness must pass them through the great tribulation on the way to the blessing. God shows mercy because of man's need and His own love: God acts in faithfulness because of man's sin and His own holiness.

Psalm 101

The great principles on which the kingdom of Christ will be governed, unfolded by the King. The psalm is written by David, the king. He expresses the desires of his heart for the government of his house, the land, and the city of God. His desires express the mind of Christ for the government of the world as the King of kings. Thus the psalm sets forth the principles on which the kingdom will be ruled.

(v. 1) Above all else the kingdom will redound to the praise of Jehovah, setting forth His loving-kindness and judgment. These are the two great principles of grace and government (see Ps. 99:8; Ps. 100:5). Grace to His people and judgment of evil and evildoers will introduce the kingdom; and in grace and government it will be maintained. As one has said, “This must be so, for righteousness must be upheld, while grace takes its course; justice will not give way, though love will have its way.”

(v. 2) In the government of His kingdom, the King will take “a perfect way,” moved by “a perfect heart.” In Christ's kingdom the inward motives will be as perfect as the outward ways. The administration of His kingdom will flow from a pure heart.

(vv. 3-4) Moreover the kingdom will be marked by separation from every “wicked thing,” and every wicked person. The King “will not know evil.” There will be no toleration of evil.

(v. 5) Furthermore in Christ's kingdom not only will there be separation from evil, but, the evil will be dealt with. The slanderer will be “cut off.” The “high look” and the “proud heart” will be dealt with by a King who not only sees the look, but reads the heart.

(v. 6) If, however, the judgment of the King comes upon the wicked, the favour of the King will rest upon “the faithful of the land.” Such will dwell with Him, and he that walks in a perfect way shall serve Him.

(vv. 7-8) Evil will have no place in the “house,” “the land” or “the city of the Lord.” Those who practice deceit, speak falsehood, and work iniquity will meet with prompt and early judgment. In the kingdom of Christ evil will not be allowed to ripen into open rebellion.

Psalm 102

Christ, as Man, identified in spirit with the sufferings of His people; as God, identified with the glory of Jehovah.

The psalm presents experiences of the Lord which may have been anticipated in spirit during His life, but were entered into in all their fullness in the garden of Gethsemane only.

The sufferings of this psalm are not those felt by the Lord by reason of His treatment at the hands of men, though this is present to His soul; nor is it suffering in view of His expiatory work — bearing wrath and indignation from the hand of God — though this, too, is before Him. The psalm presents His own personal sufferings as identified with His suffering people.

(vv. 1-11) These verses present the identification of Messiah in spirit with the suffering remnant of His people Israel. It is the cry of “the Man of sorrows” in the day of distress. The great desire of the godly soul in distress is for his cry to be heard by the Lord. In spirit the Lord enters into this trouble, and gives expression of the desire (vv. 1-3).

Under the chastening of the Lord the days of His people are shortened and fade like smoke; their glory withers like grass. Into this trial the Lord enters (vv. 3-5). His people are lonely and desolate like a bird of the desert or a sparrow alone upon the housetop. The Lord enters into this desolation (vv. 6-7). They suffer continual reproach and opposition from men, and the Lord personally bears this reproach (vv. 8-9). Moreover the nation had been lifted up above all nations, and yet, because of God's wrath and indignation, had been cast down: the Lord enters into this trial, for He, who was anointed to be the Messiah was cast down, and His days cut off. He does not say, indeed, "Thy indignation and wrath is upon Me," for He is not speaking as bearing judgment upon the cross, but rather as entering in spirit into the indignation and wrath that was upon the nation (vv. 9-10).

(vv. 12-22) In contrast with Messiah identified with His suffering people, these verses present the glory of Jehovah and His intervention in grace and power on behalf of His people. The One who in lowly grace has given expression to the sorrows of His people is the One who can equally give expression to the glories of Jehovah. He is the Apostle and High Priest of our

confession. He can bear up the sorrows of His people before Jehovah in priestly service: He can present the glories of Jehovah to His people as the Prophet.

Israel may fade and wither, but Jehovah endures for ever. At His “set time” Jehovah will intervene in grace on behalf of Zion. Thus all blessing for Israel rests on the glory and work of Jehovah (vv. 12-14).

When Jehovah thus intervenes on behalf of Israel — when He builds up Zion, and appears in His glory — then the heathen will fear His name and all the kings of the earth acknowledge His glory (vv. 15-16).

Then the prayers of the godly will have their answer, and prayer will be turned to praise (vv. 17-18). The Lord having looked upon His suffering people and heard their groans, and intervened to set them free, the days of persecution will for ever cease (vv. 19-20).

In result there will be a people who will declare the name of the Lord in Zion, and His praise in Jerusalem. All the peoples will gather to Jerusalem as a centre, and all kingdoms serve the Lord (vv. 21-22).

(vv. 23-27) In these closing verses Christ is presented as a divine Person — God — identified with Jehovah. The question arises, How can Jehovah intervene in blessing for His people if the Messiah is cut off? For the Messiah can say, “He weakened my strength in the way: he shortened my days.” How can the kingdom be established if the anointed King is cut off? There cannot be a restored kingdom without the King. The answer is disclosed in the great mystery of His Person. The Messiah who identified Himself with His suffering people and was cut off, is none less than Jehovah Himself. Thus in these verses we find that the Messiah is identified in Person with Jehovah, as before He was identified in suffering with His people.

He is addressed as Jehovah, whose years are throughout all generations. He is the Creator who laid the foundations of the earth; and the heavens are the work of His hands. All created things may perish, but He will endure; all else may change, but He is “the same,” and His years shall not fail (vv. 23-27).

The Spirit of God uses this passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews to prove the Godhead glory of the Son, who, though He became a Man, is addressed as God (Heb. 1:8-12).

Thus it is that the Messiah secures the blessing of His people. The One who is Jehovah having become Man and identified Himself with His suffering people, at last brings His suffering people to be identified with Himself in His glory. If He endures they will endure; if He is the Same, they will be “established before him” (v. 28).

Psalm 103

Praise to Jehovah from restored Israel for the blessings into which they are brought in the ways of God.

(vv. 1-3) The psalmist calls upon his soul to praise the Lord for all the blessings into which the nation is brought. He presents a millennial picture of Israel blessed in their circumstances by the benefits of the Lord, with their sins forgiven and their diseases healed. In the days of His presentation to Israel, the Lord has forgiven sins and healed diseases, and thus, by putting forth the powers of the world to come, showed that the kingdom had drawn nigh. Alas! the King was rejected and for the time the blessedness of the kingdom was lost.

(vv. 4-6) Now at length, the nation redeemed from destruction renews its life. The righteous judgment of the Lord will end the long centuries of oppression to which the Jew has been subjected under the rule of the Gentiles, as the result of their rejection of their Messiah.

(vv. 7-12) The blessing of restored Israel will be brought about by the ways of God as made known to Moses. To Israel His outward acts were revealed; to Moses was revealed the principles on which God acted. These ways are now declared to the restored nation. In His ways God is merciful, gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. Thus He revealed Himself to Moses on the Mount (Ex. 34:6-7). In accordance with these ways God had ever acted in the long history of the nation. Because of their sins God had to chasten them, yet, “He will not always chide; neither will He keep His anger for ever.”

Their sins and iniquities had become the occasion of showing that His mercy and grace is greater than man's sin, even “as the heaven is high above the earth.” Thus it is seen that God is not indifferent to the sins of His people. He shows mercy to His people, but He deals with them on account of their sins and removes their sins “as far as the east is from the west.”

(vv. 13-16) In all these ways God had acted in tender condescension towards the God-fearing remnant, even as an earthly father pities his children. God remembered their frailty — that like a flower blown away by the wind, so His people if left to the storms of this world would be utterly destroyed and have no more place as a nation.

(vv. 17-18) In contrast to weak man, whose beauty flourishes like a flower, and is then withered by a storm of wind, the “mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and His righteousness to children's children.” Neither the frailty of man nor the adverse wind of the enemy can change either “the mercy” or “righteousness” of the Lord. This mercy and righteousness is towards such as keep His covenant and do His commands. Is not this the unconditional covenant made with Abraham, under which the nation being brought into blessing can at last keep Jehovah's commands (Rom. 8:4)?

(vv. 19-20) The end of all God's ways with man is to make manifest that His throne is established in the heavens, and His kingdom rules over all.

His kingdom displayed as over all calls for the praise of all, both in heaven and earth. Thus all spiritual beings are summoned to bless the Lord. All His “hosts” — every providential force in nature — are called to bless the Lord. All His created works are called to bless the Lord. And let every individual of the redeemed say, “Bless the Lord, O my soul.”

Psalm 104

Praise to Jehovah as the Creator. A millennial song of the godly when the enemies have been consumed out of the land, and the wicked are no more.

In Genesis 1 we have the record of creation; in this psalm the song of creation. The psalm in its main outline follows the story of creation. The record presents the creation in its beginning; the song sets forth the creation in its present active organization. “One portrays the beginning of the eternal order, the other its perpetual living spectacle. Hence, too, the Ode has far more animation than the Record. The latter is a picture of still life: the former is crowded with figures full of stir and movement” (Perowne).

(vv. 1-4) The psalm opens with an ascription of praise to the Creator by one, who, according to the previous psalm, already knows Jehovah as Redeemer, and, therefore, can say, “O Lord my God, thou art very great.” In the opening verses there arises before the psalmist a view of creation that corresponds with the first and second days of creation. God, who is light, divides the waters from the waters, stretching out the heavens above over the waters beneath. In all this great work God is seen, not only as creating, but moving in His own creation, He “makes the clouds his chariot,” and “walks upon the wings of the wind.” Angels wait upon Him as His ministers.

(vv. 5-9) In the verses that follow the psalmist recalls the first portion of the third day's work. He thinks of the day when at the “rebuke” of the Lord the waters were gathered into one place, and the dry land appeared, when “the mountains rose, the valleys sank, to the place” which God had “founded for them,” when God set the bounds of the seas that “they may not pass over.”

(vv. 10-18) Further the psalmist sings of the rich provision that God has made for His creatures. He sees the streams springing from the earth, and the rain from His chambers above falling

upon the hills and flowing down to the earth to quench the thirst of His creatures (vv. 10-13). He sees the grass and herbs for the food of His creatures and the trees and the high hills for their shelter (vv. 14-18). All this speaks of the latter portion of the third day's work viewed in its provision for God's creatures. Moreover the psalmist does not think of the Creator only in His past work as the Originator of all, but in His present work as the Sustainer of His creation. Thus the psalmist can say, "He sends the springs;" not simply that He sent them in the past; He does so now. Again he says, "He waters the hills," and "He causes the grass to grow." It is the present sustaining mercy of the Creator that fills the soul with praise. Moreover the creation is viewed in the fullness of its life and activity. The springs are not simply made — they "run among the hills." The wild beasts quench their thirst at the streams; the birds sing and make their nests in the branches of the trees.

(vv. 19-23) The psalmist passes on to sing the praise of God in connection with the heavenly bodies of the fourth day's work, here viewed in their present ceaseless activity in relation to the needs of God's creatures.

(v. 24) The psalmist pauses in his description of God's works to exclaim upon the manifold character of them, all displaying the wisdom of the Creator, and the wealth of His resources.

(vv. 25-30) The psalmist resumes his song with a description of the sea, bringing us to the fifth day's work. Therein are things great and small, wholly dependent upon God for their existence, sustenance and replenishment.

(vv. 31-35) From the glory of creation the psalmist turns to the glory of the Creator. The whole creation will redound to His eternal glory, and in His works shall the Lord rejoice. Redemption has delivered the groaning creation from the bondage of sin so that the Lord can again rejoice in His works. Such is His majesty He has but to look on the earth and it trembles; He has but to touch the hills and they smoke. Thus the psalm closes with the Lord, rejoicing in His works; the godly rejoicing in the Lord, and the sinners consumed out of the earth, the wicked ceasing to have place any more.

Psalm 105

The faithfulness of Jehovah to the covenant made with the fathers, set forth in His care for His people Israel, and His judgment upon their enemies, throughout their history.

(vv. 1-7) The psalm opens with a call to Israel to give thanks to the Lord; to call upon His name, and to make known His deeds among the peoples. Thus restored Israel are to be a praising people, a dependent people and a witnessing people.

They are called to praise the Lord for what He has done and for what He is in the glory of His Person. He has done wondrous works, and His name sets forth what He is — He is holy.

They are to call upon Him, or “seek the Lord,” because they are weak and “strength” is with Him. This dependence must be constant: they must “seek his face continually” (cp. John 15:5).

To be witnesses among the peoples they must remember His marvelous works that He has done; the judgments of His mouth, and the judgments He has executed in all the earth.

(vv. 8-15) The history of Israel is reviewed to prove the faithfulness of God to His covenant made with Abraham and Isaac,

and confirmed to Jacob. The promise of the land to Israel was made at a time when, in the sight of nature, it would appear impossible of fulfillment; for those to whom the promise was made were few in number and strangers in the land. Nevertheless they were under the constant care of the Lord. They went from one nation to another and from kingdom to kingdom, but none were allowed to wrong them without coming under the reproof of God.

(vv. 16-22) The psalmist recalls different periods in the history of the nation in order to show God's care for them in the midst of trial. In the time of the patriarchs God called for the famine, but sent Joseph to save them in the trial. The one, however, through whom salvation comes must himself be a sufferer before he is a saviour and having suffered is exalted to a place of glory. Thus Joseph becomes a striking type of the One whom the Father sent to be the Saviour of the world.

(vv. 23-36) The history of Israel in Egypt is next brought before us, to show, not only God's care for His people, but His judgment upon all that oppose and oppress them. Reference is made to eight of the plagues that fell upon Egypt. The plagues are grouped together, not in historical order, but in a way that

brings into prominence the devastating character of these judgments.

The first two plagues that are mentioned — the darkness and the water turned to blood — touched the two main sources of Egypt's existence and prosperity. The sun was eclipsed and the water of the river turned into blood. This, if continued, would have brought the country to speedy ruin.

The next three plagues — the frogs, the flies and the lice (or 'gnats') — touched the persons of the Egyptians, humbling their pride and making life unbearable.

The following two plagues — the hail and the locusts — were destructive to their possessions, reducing them to destitution.

The last plague fell upon their offspring, and if continued would have led to the extermination of the race.

(vv. 37-38) The people of Egypt suffered the destruction of their land, but the people of God are delivered, and, in spite of the oppression they had endured, are brought forth with gold and silver. Not one feeble person is found among their tribes.

(vv. 39-41) In three short verses the journey of the Israelites through the wilderness is brought before us to show God's care for His people. They were sheltered from the heat by day; light was given to them in the night. They were fed with bread from heaven, and water was given to them from the rock.

(vv. 42-43) In all these dealings with His people — in the days of the patriarchs, in the days of Israel's bondage, or in their wilderness journey — there is no mention of their sins, their murmurings and their rebellions. All is recounted to call to remembrance Jehovah's wonderful works, and His faithfulness to His covenant. With this leading thought the review of Israel's history is opened, as we read in verse 8, “He has remembered his covenant for ever.” With this thought the history closes, for again we read, “He remembered his holy promise, and Abraham his servant.”

(vv. 44-45) Thus it comes to pass that, the promise made to Abraham — “Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan” (v. 11) — is at last fulfilled; for now we read, He “gave them the lands of the heathen; and they inherited the labour of the people.” Thus the psalm looks on to the time when the long centuries of the exile of God's earthly people will be over, and the oppression

of the Gentiles will end in Israel possessing the lands of the nations and inheriting the labour of the races. Little do the nations think that in the end the despised Jew will possess the land of the Gentiles and inherit the fruit of their toil. But thus will it be in the ways of God, and the fulfillment of the everlasting covenant made with Abraham. The gifts and calling of God are without repentance. Moreover, when Israel is blessed in the land, the Lord will have secured an earthly people who will do His will and be for His praise.

Psalm 106

The unfailing goodness, and enduring mercy, of the Lord to His earthly people, in spite of their failure.

The psalm prophetically looks on to the time when Israel's long captivity among the nations is reaching its close, and God is about to regather the nation under the reign of Christ. In that day the godly will recognize that all the blessing of the nation depends on the enduring mercy of the Lord. In the light of the goodness and mercy of the Lord the psalmist confesses the sin of God's people: (v. 6), owning every stage of their failure (vv.

7-46), and finally appeals to God to save and regather the nation for His own praise (vv. 47-48).

(vv. 1-5) The introductory verses present the theme of the psalm — the goodness and mercy of the Lord which endures for ever, and is beyond the power of man to express or praise.

Blessed then to be of the number who are morally suited to Jehovah, by keeping judgment and doing righteousness at all times. The psalmist desires to be remembered, and saved from present distresses, to see the good, and enter into the gladness of God's people in the day when they enter upon God's inheritance.

(v. 6) In the light of this mercy this representative of the godly remnant identifies himself with the nation in the confession of the sin, iniquity, and wickedness that has marked it throughout its course from the time of the fathers.

(vv. 7-12) After this general confession of sin, the history of Israel's failure is traced in detail from the bondage in Egypt to the captivity in Babylon. In the outset of the nation's history they neither understood God's wonders against the Egyptians, nor His mercies to themselves. At the Red Sea they rebelled and

would have turned back to Egypt and its bondage. Nevertheless God “led them through the depths,” saved them, redeemed them, and judged their enemies. Then they believed and sang His praise.

(v. 13) Faced with the difficulties of the wilderness, “they soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel.” Forgetting God's ability to save, they neglected to seek counsel from God.

(vv. 14-15) Neglecting God's counsel they were delivered to do their own will which, while it gave a brief gratification to their lust, sent leanness into their soul.

(vv. 16-18) Having neglected to seek counsel of God they envied and ignored the servants of God, only to bring upon themselves the chastening of the Lord.

(vv. 19-23) From dishonouring the servants of God they proceed to the yet greater sin of assailing the honour of God, Himself, by setting up a false god — a sin that would have brought swift destruction upon them but for the intercession of Moses.

(vv. 24-27) Indifference to the honour of God leads them to despise the land of God. This unbelief led to their overthrow in

the wilderness. This again leads to their seed being lost among the nations and scattered in other lands.

(vv. 28-31) Mingling with the nations they failed to maintain holiness. They were defiled by their associations, bringing upon them the swift judgment of the Lord, that was only stayed by the firm action of one man whose act God has stamped for approval for all time.

(vv. 32-33) Further, the sin of the people, leads to the failure of the leader of the people. Provoked by the perversity of the people, Moses spoke unadvisedly with his lips, and has to suffer for his hastiness.

(vv. 34-39) Having traced Israel's failure in the wilderness, the psalmist further confesses their sins in the land. There they mingled with the nations of the world. In result the nations did not learn the ways of God, but God's people fell into the ways of the world. Having learned their ways, Israel followed their evil practices; with the result that their children suffered, and innocent blood was shed.

(vv. 40-43) For all these sins the chastening hand of the Lord came upon His people. Thus the land became desolate, and

God's people passed into captivity. They came into subjection, and under the oppression of the Gentiles, and were “brought low” for their iniquity.

(vv. 44-46) Nevertheless, in judgment God remembered mercy. He “regarded” the affliction of His people “when he heard their cry.” He remembered His covenant to Abraham. He showed mercy to His people, and caused those who had taken them captive to show pity.

(vv. 47-48) Having thus confessed the sins of the people, the psalmist appeals to Jehovah to save His people and gather them from the heathen, and make them a praising people. Anticipating the answer to his prayer, all the people are summoned to praise the Lord God who is blessed from everlasting to everlasting.

Book 5

Psalm 107

The nation of Israel viewed as restored to their land, called upon to celebrate the goodness of the Lord, as set forth in the ways of God with the nation particularly, and mankind in general (vv. 8, 15, 21, 31).

(vv. 1-3) The theme of the psalm is the goodness of the Lord, and His enduring mercy. Israel, delivered from the power of the enemy, and regathered from every quarter of the globe, is called upon to celebrate this goodness.

The body of the psalm sets forth the various circumstances in the history of Israel, and mankind, in which the goodness of the Lord has been displayed in His ways with men.

(vv. 4-9) First, man is viewed as a wanderer, seeking to find rest in a wilderness world. All his efforts only end in soul thirst — “Hungry and thirsty; their soul fainted in them.” In the ways of the Lord we are allowed to prove that nothing in all this scene of unrest can satisfy the soul. In the depths of their need

men cry to the Lord, to discover that He can lead them by “the right way,” that brings to the rest of God — “a city of habitation.” Thus we discover the goodness of the Lord that “satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry soul with goodness.”

(vv. 10-16) Secondly, men are viewed in their lawlessness, rebelling against the words of God, and despising His counsel. In the former case the soul was unsatisfied; here, through rebellion against God, the spirit comes into darkness, under the sentence of death, and in bondage to the enemy. The heart is crushed and there are none to help. Then, in their distress, men cry to the Lord, to find that in His goodness He delivers them from bondage, that they might praise Him for having brought them into liberty.

(vv. 17-22) Thirdly, because of their folly and transgressions, men may be afflicted in body, so that they draw nigh to death. Then in their distress they cry to the Lord, who sends His healing word to deliver them from destruction, that they might praise the Lord for His goodness, and declare His wonderful works (Luke 8:38-39).

(vv. 23-32) Fourthly, men are put to the test by the circumstances of life. As men have to do with the business of this world, they have to meet the storms of life; they are faced with trouble, and at times are brought to “their wit's end.” Then they cry to the Lord, and find that He can still the storm and bring men to their desired haven, that they may praise the Lord for His goodness, and exalt Him in the assembly of God's people.

Thus we are permitted to see the way God has taken with His people, that, in learning their own frailty, they may discover the goodness of the Lord. Thus God deals with men in soul, spirit, body, and circumstances, in order that they may find their resource in the goodness and enduring mercy of the Lord.

(vv. 33-42) There are, moreover, the general governmental ways of God with the world. On the one hand, God may wither up the prosperity of a land, because of the wickedness of those who dwell therein (vv. 33-34); on the other hand, He can give prosperity in His care for the hungry (vv. 35-38). Nevertheless, man does not alter, if the hungry are filled and increase in worldly possessions, they, in their turn, may oppress and afflict others; hence in the ways of God they are again “diminished and brought low” (v. 39).

God takes up the cause of the oppressed, pouring contempt upon princes, and setting the needy one “on high from affliction.”

Thus the ways of God with man are marked by holiness that is not indifferent to wickedness; mercy that cares for the hungry; righteousness that deals with oppression, and compassion that espouses the cause of the poor. Who can gainsay these ways of God? “The righteous shall see it; and rejoice: and all iniquity shall stop her mouth.”

(v. 43) Such are the ways of God in His goodness and mercy. The wise, who observe these things, will understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.

Psalm 108

The godly remnant of the nation of Israel assured in heart, in view of the purpose of God to deliver His people from all their enemies.

Psalm 107, sets forth the ways of God with men, especially having in view His people Israel. Psalm 108, very blessedly sets forth the purpose of God for His people, or the end to

which all His ways are leading. His ways with us ever have in view His purpose for us.

In order to present His purpose, the spirit of God has united in this psalm the closing portions to two other psalms. Verses 1 to 5, form the latter portion of Psalm 57: verses 6 to 13, the end of Psalm 60. The ends of these two psalms, cut off from the exercises and trials with which they are connected in their original setting, combine very blessedly to present the purpose of God for His people.

(vv. 1-3) The godly in Israel, though the nation is not yet delivered from all their enemies, can praise Jehovah, through being assured in heart of God's purpose to bless them. The soul anticipates the dawn of a new day when all the nations will join with Israel in praise to Jehovah.

(vv. 4-6) The confidence and joy of the godly springs from the knowledge that mercy and truth have prevailed, and that the glory of God is secured. Thus blessing can flow to His beloved people, delivering them from all their enemies. In this confidence the godly man looks to God to put forth His right hand in saving power, and thus answer his prayer.

(vv. 7-9) The verses that follow give the answer to God, setting forth His settled purpose to deliver His people. God says, “I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem”; “over Edom will I cast out my shoe; over Philistia will I triumph.” When God says, “I will,” who can oppose His will, or thwart His purpose.

Moreover He makes His people's cause His own. He says “Gilead is mine; Manasseh is mine; Ephraim also is the strength of mine head; Judah is my lawgiver.” Great had been the failure of Manasseh, and great the sin of Ephraim; but no failure can frustrate God's purpose to bless His people. In spite of all failure God rejoices in them, claims them as His own, and in holiness has said that He will triumph over all those who have opposed His beloved ones.

(vv. 10-13) The psalm closes with the response of the godly to the avowed purpose of God. The very God who, in times past, had cast them off, because of their failure, is the God to whom they now look to be led to victory. Having learned that the help of man is vain, and looking only to God, they can say, with the utmost confidence, “He it is who shall tread down our enemies.”

Psalm 109

The ways of God in connection with the path of Christ in humiliation.

Prophetically the psalm looks on to the time when the restored godly remnant of the Jews will have to face, not only Gentile enemies, as in the previous psalm, but, the hostility of the unbelieving Jews led by Antichrist.

These trials, that the Jewish remnant will have yet to meet, have already been faced by Christ in the days of His humiliation. Thus, while the psalm prophetically gives the future experiences of the remnant, it also presents the ways of God with Christ in humiliation (v. 27), according to which the wicked, energized by Satan, are allowed to speak against Christ — the holy Sufferer, who gave Himself to prayer and waited for God to speak on His behalf.

(vv. 1-5) The opening verses touchingly present experiences which were only fully entered into by Christ in humiliation. In the ways of God there came a time when God was silent, in the presence of the insults heaped by man on the One who was wholly here for the praise of God. While submitting to the trial,

the holy Sufferer looks to God and waits for Him to speak on His behalf.

The guilty nation, led by the mouth of the wicked man (singular), spoke against Christ with “a lying tongue.” The lying lips that laid false charges against Christ, were moved by hearts that hated Christ. For this hatred there was no cause in Christ. In Christ there was only love that expressed itself in doing good to His enemies. In the presence of the causeless hatred of the Jew, He gave Himself to prayer; while His enemies devised evil against One whose love only called forth their hatred. Their hostility aroused no resistance from Christ: it called forth perfect submission that took all from God, and perfect dependence that carried all in prayer to God.

In the days to come, when the Jewish remnant will have to face the hostility of the nation led by Antichrist, how greatly will they be comforted, and sustained, by the realization that Christ has already trodden the path that they are called to tread.

(vv. 6-20) The verses that follow present the call for judgment on the adversaries of Christ. Judas was a special instance of the hatred that took advantage of the humility of Christ to perse-

cute the poor and needy man, and slay the broken in heart. Hence the Spirit of God has applied expressions used in these verses to Judas (cp. Luke 22:47-48; Acts 1:20). Verse 20, however, shows that it is not only an individual of outstanding wickedness that is in view, but all the “adversaries” of the Lord who have spoken evil against His soul. Doubtless, the verses have in view, not only Judas and the guilty nation in the day of Christ's humiliation, but also Antichrist and the apostate mass of the Jews under his leadership in a day yet to come.

The enemy contemplated in these verses is viewed as energized by Satan. This we know was so in the case of Judas and will be so in the person of the coming Antichrist. We learn the judgment that will come upon such. His days are cut off (v. 8); his offspring are forsaken (vv. 9-10); his possessions are lost (v. 11); he is beyond the pale of mercy (vv. 12-15).

This overwhelming judgment comes upon one that showed no mercy, that persecuted the poor and needy man, and slew the one whose heart was broken by the causeless hatred of man (v. 16). The cursing that he loved falls upon himself; the blessing that he spurned is removed far from him. The garments of curs-

ing with which he clothed himself, he shall for ever wear (vv. 17-19).

Such will be the judgment of those who without cause spurned the love and goodness of Christ in the days when, in His humility, He became the poor and needy Man; who spoke against Him (v. 2); who lied against Him (v. 2); who fought against Him (v. 3); who rewarded Him only evil (v. 5); who persecuted Him, and at last “slew the broken in heart” (v. 16).

(vv. 21-29) The call for judgment on the adversaries is followed by a prayer to God to act on behalf of the godly. The prayer opens with the highest plea — the maintenance of what is due to God's Name. Then follows the plea of the exceeding need of the godly soul (vv. 22-25). The very need that gave vile men the occasion to persecute calls forth the delivering mercy of God (cp. vv. 16 and 20).

A third plea for help is that it may be made manifest that these sorrows have been allowed of the Lord, and that His hand is declared in salvation. All is permitted of God in His wonderful ways with Christ, that the godly may be blessed (v. 28), and the adversaries be put to shame (v. 29).

(vv. 30-31) The closing verses anticipate the result of God's intervention. Not only will Christ celebrate the praise of Jehovah, but He will become the Leader of the praise among the multitude of God's people. Satan may stand at the right hand of the wicked to persecute the godly in humiliation: Jehovah is at the right hand of the poor to “save him from those that condemn his soul.”

Psalm 110

Christ in exaltation, waiting for the judgment of His enemies, and to reign from Zion for the blessing of His willing people, exercising His priesthood after the order of Melchizedek.

In Psalm 109, Christ is presented as waiting upon God to speak for Him in answer to the wicked who spoke against Him (Ps. 109:1-2, 21, 31). In this psalm God speaks for Christ, in answer to the prayer of Psalm 109. Thus while Psalm 109, unfolds God's ways with Christ in humiliation, Psalm 110 presents God's purpose for Christ in exaltation.

(v. 1) In the days of Christ's humiliation men spoke against Christ with a lying tongue; they fought against Christ without a

cause, and “persecuted the poor and needy man” (Ps. 109:2-3, 16). God's answer is to exalt Christ to the place of supreme power in heaven, there to wait until His enemies are made His footstool, when He will have the place of supreme power on earth. He once waited in the days of His humiliation for God's answer to His prayer; He now waits in exaltation for the fulfillment of God's purpose.

(vv. 2-4) The verses that follow unfold God's purpose for Christ. God has decreed that He shall rule from Zion in the midst of His enemies. In the very scene of His humiliation, and man's hostility, His power will be displayed. If, however, He rules in the midst of His enemies, He will also exercise His Melchizedek priesthood in the midst of His willing people. From the dawn of that new day there will come to Him a new generation of willing people, here called “the dew of thy youth” (Lit. “young men”), in all the freshness and vigour of youth. (cp. Ps. 22:31). As the King ruling from Zion, He will bring blessing from God to His willing people: as the Priest He will lead the praises of the people, and thus bless God on behalf of the people (cp. Gen. 14:20).

(vv. 5-6) In the day of His power all that exalt themselves against the Lord will come under judgment. The One who now sits at Jehovah's right hand will rise up and “strike through kings.” The day of His patience will be followed by “the day of His wrath.” It will be a universal judgment “among the nations”; and an overwhelming victory that will turn the scene of conflict into a vast battlefield strewn with the corpses of His foes — “He shall fill (all places) with dead bodies” (JND).

The statement that “He shall smite through the head over a great country” (JND), would appear to refer to Israel's last enemy, the Gog of Ezekiel 38 and Ezekiel 39. It can hardly refer to the Beast or to Antichrist, who we know, will be destroyed by the coming of Christ (Rev. 19:20). The psalm does not contemplate the actual descent of Christ, but rather, the overwhelming judgments among the nations that will take place after He has come.

(v. 7) The closing verse tells us that when all other heads are judged, Christ will “lift up the head.” The One who was once the perfectly dependent Man, will alone be the exalted Head over all. He is the One who drank of the brook in the way. In the day of His humiliation, as the dependent Man, He partook

of the mercies the Lord provided in the way. He did not despise the brook: He was not detained by the brook. He stooped to be the dependent Man; therefore will He be the exalted Man, who will lift up the head above every other head. He will be the King of kings, and the Lord of lords.

It is well to note that the Lord Jesus definitely states that this psalm refers to Himself, and was written by David under the direction of the Holy Spirit. It is more frequently cited by New Testament writers than any other single portion of Scripture. It is quoted in each of the synoptic gospels to prove that David's son will be David's Lord (Matt. 22:43-44; Mark 12:36-37; Luke 20:42-43). It is quoted by Peter in Acts 2:34-35, to prove the exaltation of Christ; by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:25, to enforce the fact that all Christ's enemies will be annulled. In Hebrews 1:13, it is used to prove the superiority of Christ over angels; in Hebrews 5:6, to prove His Melchizedek priesthood; in Hebrews 7:17-21, to prove the unchangeable character of His priesthood, and in Hebrews 10:13, to prove His present waiting attitude.

Psalm 111

Christ in the midst of the assembly of His people leading their praises to God for His wonderful works.

Psalm 111 is the first of a group of three psalms each beginning with a Hallelujah, or “Praise ye the Lord.” The first celebrates Jehovah's works and ways; the second celebrates the blessing of His people; the third the glory of His Name.

Psalm 111 and Psalm 112, are both alphabetical psalms. The twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet mark, in regular order, the beginning of the clauses.

(v. 1) In Psalm 109:30, Christ is presented in the day of His humiliation, alone and forsaken by men, looking on to the time when He will be the leader of the praise in the midst of the congregation. Psalm 110, presents Christ in exaltation, as a priest after the order of Melchizedek. Psalm 111 opens with presenting Christ exercising this priesthood and leading the praise to God in the midst of the congregation of His people. When He leads the praise it will be whole-hearted.

(vv. 2-4) The works of the Lord are the theme of the praise (vv. 2-4, 6-7). His works are, and must be, like Himself, great, honourable, glorious, enduring, gracious and full of compassion. The godly seek out His works, find pleasure in them; the Lord makes them to be remembered.

(vv. 5-6) His “wonderful works” are wrought on behalf of those that fear Him, that, in faithfulness to His covenant, He may give to His people the heritage of the nations.

(vv. 7-8) Accomplished in truth and righteousness, His works stand fast for ever.

(v. 9) By His work He redeems His people, establishes His covenant, and secures the glory of His Name. Thus is answered the prayer of Christ in humiliation, “Do thou for me, O God the Lord, for thy name's sake” (Ps. 109:21).

(v. 10) God having thus blessedly revealed Himself in His works, it is manifestly the beginning of wisdom to fear the Lord, and obey His commandments. Those who walk in the path of godly obedience will have “a good understanding” of divine ways.

Psalm 112

The Lord praised for the blessings bestowed upon the man that fears God.

The blessing contemplated in the psalm is of an earthly and Jewish order, rather than the heavenly blessing of the Christian. However, whether for the earthly or heavenly saint, the practical enjoyment of either blessing springs from a life lived in the fear of God.

(v. 1) The last psalm closed with the assertion that “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” This psalm opens with praise to the Lord because of His blessings bestowed on the man who fears the Lord. This is not a legal fear that dreads the Judge, but the reverent fear of a man who delights to do the will of the One he fears.

(vv. 2-3) The blessings are then described. The God-fearing man is blessed “upon earth:” his seed are “mighty:” he is enriched with material wealth.

(vv. 4-5) The character of the one thus blessed is then delineated. He is gracious, full of compassion, and righteous. In conduct he shows favour and acts with wisdom.

(vv. 6-9) Moreover we are told the way in which the God-fearing man is cared for and protected. The one who cares for others will not be moved, for he is in the everlasting remembrance of God. He shall not be afraid either of evil tidings, or of his enemies, for his heart is fixed, and sustained, trusting in the Lord. As to his neighbours, he disperses to the poor, and is held in honour.

(v. 10) The government of God which brings blessing to the God-fearing man, brings judgment upon the wicked.

Psalm 113

The celebration of the Name of the Lord.

Psalm 111, presents the wonderful works of the Lord whereby His glory is secured, and His people redeemed. Psalm 112 presents a millennial picture in which, as a result of the Lord's works and government, His people are brought into blessing, and the wicked come under judgment. Psalm 113 completes

this series of psalms by showing that God's ways in government will lead to His Name being exalted in all the earth.

(vv. 1-4) The servants of the Lord called to praise the name of the Lord from “this time” — the time of God's public intervention in the government of the world. His name will be blessed through all time — “for evermore”; — throughout the whole world — “from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof”; and “above all,” whether it be “all nations,” or all creation.

(vv. 5-9) Furthermore, the greatness of the Lord is set forth in His condescending grace. The One whose dwelling is on high, humbles Himself to look on the heavens and the earth. And looking upon the earth He raises up the poor; He lifts up the needy; and He blesses the hopeless, for He makes the barren to be the joyful mother of children. Little wonder, that over the wide world, and throughout all time, His servants will say, “Praise ye the Lord.”

Psalm 114

The presence of the Lord in the midst of His people, dealing with every opposition, and meeting every need.

Prophetically the psalm looks on to the time when restored Israel will acknowledge that, as in the past so now, they owe their deliverance and blessing to the presence of the Lord acting in almighty power.

(vv. 1-2) The introductory verses look back to the commencement of Israel's history as separated from the nations. They celebrate the deliverance of God's people from Egypt, as well as the purpose for which they were redeemed. If God set Israel free, it was that He might dwell among, and rule over, His people: that Judah might become “his sanctuary,” and Israel “his dominion” (Ex. 15:17-18; Ex. 19:6).

(vv. 3-4) The verses that follow set forth the mighty power that wrought on behalf of Israel in the days of their former deliverances. At the deliverance from Egypt the Red Sea fled, and thus witnessed to the presence of irresistible power, even as at the end of their journey, at the entrance to the Land, Jordan was driven back. Between the Red Sea and the Jordan, the moun-

tains of the desert had to bear witness to an unseen power when Sinai quaked greatly (Ex. 19:18).

(vv. 5-6) What ailed the sea, the river, and the mountains? What mighty power was present from which the sea fled, before which the waters of the river were driven back, and the mountains shook?

(vv. 7-8) Restored Israel calls upon the whole earth to acknowledge it was the presence of the Lord, the God of Israel. He it was who crushed all opposition to His people and met all their needs (Ex. 17:6).

Psalm 115

The restored people of Israel, realizing that their deliverance depends upon the presence of the Lord, deprecate all merit in themselves, and ascribe all glory to the Lord. In result the earth will be held by the children of men for the praise of the Lord.

(v. 1) The opening verse gives the theme of the psalm — God's people refusing any merit in themselves, and ascribing all blessing to the Lord. Psalm 114 had traced their deliverance to the presence of the Lord acting in power on behalf of His

people. Psalm 115 shuts out the power and glory of man. “Not to us,” they say, “but to thy name give glory.” His mercy and His truth have combined for the blessing of His people.

(v. 2) Nevertheless, in the governmental ways of God, they had, because of their failure and idolatry, been cast off, giving the enemy the occasion of asking, “Where is their God?” Israel may call the earth to tremble at the presence of the God of Jacob (Ps. 114:7); but where is He?

(vv. 3-8) Faith replies, “Our God is in the heavens.” A contrast is then drawn between the unseen God, known to faith, and the visible idols in which the heathen trust.

“Our God,” faith can say, “has done whatsoever he has pleased.” As to the idols that men have made, they can neither speak, nor see, nor hear, nor smell, nor act, nor walk. In a word they are helpless, as indeed are those who trust in them.

(vv. 9-11) The psalmist then exhorts to trust in Jehovah, for He alone can help, and defend those who trust in Him. The nation of Israel, the priestly family of Aaron, the Gentiles that fear the Lord, are called to trust in the Lord, and thus find in Him their help and shield.

(vv. 12-15) Though God is in the heavens (v. 3) the godly can look back over their long history of failure and say, “The Lord has been mindful of us.” Having experienced Jehovah's care for them in the past, they can look on to the future with confidence, and say He will bless Israel, the house of Aaron, and all that fear the Lord, both small and great. Moreover, those He blesses are increased, and blessed in the present, for says the psalmist — “Ye are blessed,” He who blesses is the Maker of heaven and earth.

(vv. 16-18) The closing verses present the result of being blessed by the Creator. The heavens are the Lord's, but the earth has He given to the children of men to be held for His praise. If we are “blessed of the Lord” it is in order that we may “Bless the Lord” (vv. 15-16). The psalm does not look beyond death: the blessing of which it speaks is not heavenly as with the Christian. It is the millennial life of blessing that the psalmist has in view, when he says, “We will bless the Lord from this time forth and for ever more.” Of the heavenly life beyond death he knows nothing.

Psalm 116

The response of love in the Lord's people, to the grace that had delivered them when at the point of death.

(vv. 1-2) The end of the Lord's dealing with His people is to surround Himself with those who respond to His love and confide in Him. This end is reached in the godly soul that can say, “I love the Lord,” and “I will call upon him as long as I live” (cp. Eph. 1:4; 1 John 4:16-19).

(vv. 3-6) In the verses that follow the psalmist describes the circumstances which revealed the love of the Lord, and called forth his own love. He was brought nigh to death and found trouble and sorrow. When at death's door, beyond all human help, the godly man had called upon the name of the Lord. In response to his cry, he found the Lord to be “gracious,” “righteous,” and “merciful” — One who is the preserver of the simple, and the helper of the helpless. The simple man is not necessarily a wicked person, but one that may be easily deceived by the wicked.

(vv. 7-11) The psalmist proceeds to describe the effect upon his soul of the Lord's gracious dealings with him in the time of

trial. First, he is brought into rest, as the outcome of the Lord's bountiful dealings — the rest that comes from confidence in God. Then he gladly ascribes every blessing he has received to the Lord. He can say, “Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.” The Lord has done it all. The Lord has given him rest of soul, and deliverance from death: He has dried his tears and kept his feet. Thus he can look on with confidence to the future and say, “I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.” Rest of soul leads to a godly walk that has the Lord for its object.

Moreover, confidence in the Lord opens his mouth to witness to the Lord; “I believed, therefore have I spoken” (2 Cor. 4:13). If his affliction drew out his confidence in the Lord, it also destroyed his confidence in man, as such. In his haste, or “agitation,” he had said “All men are liars.”

(vv. 12-15) The delivered soul owns its indebtedness to the Lord. The cup of sorrow has been exchanged for a cup of salvation. The psalmist gladly takes this cup, and confesses the name of the Lord. His vows, made in the presence of death, will be paid to the Lord in the presence of all His people. If indeed, he had succumbed to death, instead of being recalled to

the land of the living, his death would have been precious in the eyes of the Lord.

(vv. 16-19) He now delights to own that he is the willing servant of the One who has set him free. In the presence of all His people in the courts of the Lord, in the midst of Jerusalem, he will pay his vows, and offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving. Thus, the Lord secures a loving and praising people to fill the courts of His house.

Psalm 117

Restored Israel calls upon the nations to praise the Lord.

(v. 1) Israel established in Jerusalem, as described in the end of the previous psalm now calls upon all nations and peoples to praise the Lord.

(v. 2) They can thus call upon others to praise the Lord, because of what they have experienced themselves — “His merciful kindness is great toward us.” They at last own they have come into blessing on the ground of mercy (cp. Rom. 11:31-32). Nevertheless, they recognize it is not mercy at the expense

of truth. God has shown mercy but maintained truth. The truth has not been set aside; it endures for ever. “Praise ye the Lord.”

Psalm 118

The restored nation of Israel called to praise the Lord for His enduring mercy. The trials of the nation traced to the rejection of Christ; their restoration to their confession of Christ.

(vv. 1-3). Israel, the house of Aaron, and the Gentiles that fear the Lord — the three classes that in Psalm 115 were called to trust in the Lord — are now called to praise the Lord for His enduring mercy.

(vv. 5-9) The occasion of the praise is the deliverance of Israel. The Holy Spirit uses the experiences of a delivered individual, as representative of God's way of intervention on behalf of the nation. This godly man called upon the Lord in his distress, and the Lord answered and brought him into a large place.

He thus learned, in his distress, that the Lord was on his side, and taking his part; and the Lord being for him who can be against him. He asks, “What can man do to me?” He learns

moreover that it is better to trust in the Lord than in man, or the great ones of the earth.

(vv. 10-21). The psalmist then sets forth the trials through which he had passed, and the Lord's dealings to bring about his deliverance, as representative of the trials and deliverance of Israel.

First, all nations had compassed him about, but in the name of the Lord they are destroyed (vv. 10-12).

Second, the enemy of his soul — the devil that energized the nations (Rev. 12:15-17) had thrust sore at him; but the Lord had intervened for his help and had become his “strength,” his “song” and his “salvation” (vv. 13-14). The result being the “song” is heard in the dwelling of the righteous; the “strength” is seen in the right hand of the Lord; and the “salvation” in deliverance from death (vv. 15-17).

Third, behind the opposition of the nations and the power of Satan there was, in these trials, the chastening of the Lord. The enemy had thrust sore at him to encompass his fall (v. 13); but the Lord has chastened him “sore” for his good. The enemy would oppose him to bring him into death; the LORD

chastened him to save him from death. If the Lord chastened it is only to remove all that is contrary to Himself in His people, in order to open a righteous way into His presence, to be there for His praise (vv. 18-21). The devil is behind the outward enemies of God's people, but the Lord is behind the power of the devil, and there is no one behind the Lord.

(vv. 22-24) In the deeply important verses that follow, the psalmist probes the root of all the sorrows that the nation has passed through, and shows the righteous ground of their salvation and blessing. Their long history of trial, when scattered among the nations is traced to their rejection of Christ, while their restoration is brought about by their confession of Christ. The gate of the Lord through which the righteous will pass to blessing (v. 20), has its full answer in Christ. He alone is the way into all blessing.

Isaiah prophesied concerning Christ, “Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation” (Isa. 28:16). The psalmist tells us this stone is refused of the builders. In the New Testament the Lord Himself, (and the Holy Spirit, speaking through the Apostles) ap-

plies these words to His own rejection by the leaders of Israel, warning them that it would lead to the judgment of the nation.

Nevertheless, the One that is rejected by Israel is exalted by God. It will at last be manifested that the One that man rejected is the One through whom all blessing will come to Israel, even as the corner stone bears all the weight of the building. If the rejection of Christ was man's act, the exaltation of Christ is the Lord's doing, and the everlasting proof of God's delight in, and acceptance of, Christ — the ground of all blessing for man, whether Israel, the Church or the nations. The time will come when it will be as marvelous in the eyes of the Jewish remnant as it is in the eyes of the Christian today. Thus the day of glory will be ushered in with joy and gladness.

(vv. 25-26) If Christ is exalted at God's right hand, the godly man can raise his hosanna, or “save now,” and beseech the Lord to send prosperity through the One who is coming in the name of the Lord. In the days of His flesh the Lord applies these words to Himself, telling the nation that they will not see Him until, in the time of their deep distress, they are brought to cry out, “Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord” (Matt. 21:9; Matt. 23:39).

(vv. 27-29) If the nation is brought to see in the One they rejected their only salvation, it will be God who gives them light. Rejoicing in the light of Christ, they will worship, even filling the courts of His house with sacrifices up to the horns of the altar. Thus the psalm closes in praise and exaltation of the Lord, for He is good, and His mercy endures for ever.

Psalm 119

The exercises of a God-fearing man as a result of the law written in his heart.

The writer of the psalm is a servant of the Lord (v. 17); a companion of those who fear the Lord (v. 63); and a stranger in the land (v. 19).

He is surrounded by transgressors that grieve his spirit (v. 158), and enemies that oppress him (v. 134). Princes speak against him (v. 23), and persecute him without a cause (v. 161). The proud hold him in derision (v. 51), forge lies against him (v. 69), and dig pits for his overthrow (v. 85). The wicked lay snares for his feet (v. 110), and lie in wait for his destruction (v.

95). He is held in reproach and contempt (v. 22); in the eyes of the world he is little and despised (v. 141).

He is tempted by covetousness within, and vanity without (vv. 36-37). In the past he had gone astray (v. 67), and wandered like a lost sheep (v. 176). He had passed through affliction (v. 71), and taken his life in his hand (v. 109). At times he is in heaviness of soul, ready to faint (vv. 28, 81), and finds trouble and anguish.

Nevertheless in all his failures and trials, and through all his changing experiences, the Word of God is the unfailing resource of his soul. It is his delight and his comfort, the subject of his prayers, and the theme of his praise. It is a lamp to his feet, and a light to his path. It is sweeter than honey to his taste; it is more to him than thousands of gold and silver. By it he is restored in soul, strengthened in weakness, and enlightened in his understanding. Through it he cleanses his way, escapes temptation, and answers his opponents.

Thus the great theme of the psalm is the Word of God, cherished in the heart, expressed in the life, and witnessed to with the lips. Under different titles there is a reference to the Word

of God in every verse, with the exception of verses 122 and 132.

Prophetically the psalm presents the exercises of the godly in Israel during the days of tribulation that will precede their deliverance from their enemies, by the coming of Christ to reign. Morally the psalm is rich with instruction as to the practical life of the godly in all ages.

The psalm is arranged in twenty-two sections according to the number, and order, of the Hebrew alphabet. Every section consists of eight verses, each verse commencing with the same letter of the alphabet.

It will be noticed that the law, or revelation of God, is referred to under ten different terms having distinct meanings, apparently, as follows:

1. Law (torah) occurs twenty-five times — the law of Moses as a whole.
2. Commandments (mitsrah), occurs twenty-two times — the ten moral laws.
3. Testimonies (edal or eduth), used twenty-three times — the law as bearing witness to God.

4. Precepts (piqqudion), used twenty-one times — the law as a charge upon man.
5. Statute (choq), used on twenty-two occasions — the permanent written law in contrast to a customary law.
6. Judgments (mishpat), used twenty times — that which is ordained by authority.
7. Way (orah), occurs five times — an ordinary path (vv. 9, 15, 101, 104, 128).
8. Way (derek), used thirteen times — a trodden path.
9. Word (dabar, or 'logos'), used twenty-three times — the matter or substance of what is said.
10. Word (imrah), used nineteen times — the actual saying or speech (vv. 11, 38, 41, 50, 58, 67, 76, 82, 103, 116, 123, 133, 140, 148, 154, 158, 162, 170, 172).

Division 1 (Aleph) Psalm 119:1-8

The blessedness of the undefiled in the way.

(vv. 1-3) The opening verses present the theme of the whole psalm — the blessedness of those who walk through this world in “the way” marked out by the Lord in His law, who “keep” His testimonies, and seek Him with the whole heart.

The law cherished in the heart leads to a practical walk in which iniquity is refused. Thus the godly are delivered from their own wills to do God's will.

(vv. 4-8) With the blessedness of God's way before his soul, the psalmist turns to God in prayer, admitting the authority of God to “command,” and our responsibility “to keep” His precepts. Moreover, there is the longing desire that the responsibility should be met; and, conscious of human weakness, the godly man looks to God to so direct his ways that God's statutes may be kept (v. 5). Thus walking, a good conscience will be maintained (v. 6); and, when the conscience is good, praise flows, not from formal lips, but from an upright heart (v. 7).

Having cast himself upon God, the psalmist can say with confidence, “I will keep thy statutes,” though recognizing past failure, which leads to the cry, “O forsake me not utterly.”

Division 2 (Beth) Psalm 119:9-16

The desire of the godly man to enjoy the blessedness of the undefiled in the way. How this is effected and the result.

(vv. 9-12) The desire being awakened, the question is asked, How can a young man cleanse his path, and enjoy the blessedness of the undefiled in the way? The answer follows.

First, by watchful care to bring all his ways under the searchlight of God's Word (v. 9).

Second, by casting himself upon the power of God to be kept from wandering in paths of his own lust and will. Conscious of his weakness and that right and honest desires will not in themselves keep him in the path of blessing, he whole-heartedly casts himself upon God (v. 10).

Third, by hiding the Word in his heart, and thus being kept from sinning against God in secret (cp. 1 John 2:14).

Fourth, by owning the blessedness of the Lord and thus in confidence looking to be taught of the Lord (v. 12).

(vv. 13-16) The way of the young man having been cleansed, he can bear testimony of others (v. 13), from a heart that is in the enjoyment of God's testimonies (v. 14), meditates upon them (v. 15), delights in them, and keeps them in mind (v. 16).

Division 3 (Gimel) Psalm 119:17-24

The servant of the Lord an outcast stranger in an evil world.

(vv. 17-18) The young man who cleanses his way is prepared and meet for the service of the Lord (2 Tim. 2:21). He confesses that with God are the issues of life: he looks to the bountiful mercy of the Lord to spare him, to keep him walking in obedience, and to open his eyes to behold wondrous things out of the law. This is more than discovering in the law a rule of life. The natural man can do this much; only the servant with the opened eyes will behold “wondrous things.”

(vv. 19-24) The remaining verses present the effect of an obedient walk as a servant of the Lord in a world of sin.

First, the one who serves, and is subject to God, in the midst of a rebellious world, will of necessity find himself “a stranger in the earth.” But earth's strangers are God's friends; hence the desire of the soul to walk in closest intimacy with God, — “Hide not Thy commandments from me” (cp. Gen. 18:17). Such an one values the intimacies of God. They fill his soul, not with occasional desire, but continual longing (v. 20).

Second, the servant of God finds he is, not only a stranger in the earth, but opposed by the wicked, who in their pride and princely prosperity heap reproaches and contempt upon the one who walks in lowly obedience of God. The godly man forms a just estimate of such. He sees they are rebuked of God and under a curse. There is no need to answer those whom God rebukes, and hence the psalmist is silent in the presence of their hard speeches, finding his delight and counsel in the testimonies of God.

Division 4 (Daleth) Psalm 119:25-32

The Lord the alone resource in the time of trouble.

(v. 25) With the power of evil pressing upon his spirit, the godly man looks only to the Lord for relief. He does not seek to find relief by escaping from the pressure. He seeks God in the pressure, praying that God would raise his drooping spirits according to the comfort of the word.

(v. 26) This confidence in God is the outcome of confession to God. The soul having made known all its ways to God was conscious of having been heard, “I have declared my ways and thou heardest me.”

(vv. 27-28) Having confessed his own ways, the psalmist desires to be taught God's way, and God's wondrous works, and thus find relief from his felt weakness by God's strength.

(vv. 29-32) Desiring God's way the soul prays to be delivered from man's way — the way of lying. He has confessed his way (v. 26), learned God's way (v. 27), refused man's way (v. 29), and chosen God's way (v. 30) — the way of truth. In the confidence that springs from this definite choice of the way of truth, the soul intreats the Lord that he may not be put to shame. Moreover, being 'enlarged,' or 'set free' from heaviness, he desires with renewed energy to run the way of the Lord's commandments.

Division 5 (He) Psalm 119:33-40

A prayer for divine teaching, and an opened understanding, “to go in the path” of the Lord, apart from covetousness and vanity.

(vv. 33-34) The desire of the soul to be taught by the Lord the way of His statutes — “Teach me, O Lord.” Teaching, however, is not enough; we need the opened heart as well as the opened Scriptures, hence the prayer, “Give me understanding” (cp. Luke 24:27, 45; 2 Tim. 2:7).

(v. 35) Further we are dependent upon the Lord for any practical results that may follow divine teaching. So the prayer follows, “Make me to go.” Well indeed for every saint to pray these three prayers, and in their divine order, “Teach me O Lord,” “Give me understanding,” and “Make me to go.”

(vv. 36-37) Following upon these requests, the psalmist remembers the two great hindrances to a walk of practical godliness: — the root of evil within — covetousness; and the incitement to evil from without, the vanity on every hand. The godly man prays that his heart may be kept from covetousness, and his eyes from beholding vanity.

(vv. 38-40) Thus kept from evil within and vanity without, he prays to be established in the truth, and devoted to God, walking in His fear, and kept from any occasion of reproach in himself. In the knowledge that God's judgments are good, the godly man, with deep longing after the Lord's precepts, desires to be energized in the path of righteousness.

Division 6 (Vau) Psalm 119:41-48

A prayer for the Lord's deliverance, that the godly man may silence the reproaches of the wicked.

(vv. 41-43) The psalmist looks to the Lord for deliverance from his enemies according to the Word. Thus will there be an answer to those who reproach him with being forsaken of God. He had put his trust in God's Word; if abandoned of God the Word of truth would be utterly taken out of his mouth. He would have no answer to the reproaches of the wicked. He has confidence in delivering grace, for his hope is in God's judgments.

(vv. 44-48) In the confidence of an answer to his prayer, the psalmist anticipates the blessedness of God's deliverance. The delivered man, free from the opposition and reproaches of the enemy, would continually keep the law and walk in liberty. In freedom of soul he would have no shame in speaking of God's testimonies before the greatest on earth. This, surely, is ever God's order from His servants: first, to “keep” the Word in the soul; followed by a right “walk” — the Word having its practical effect in the life; finally, to “speak” to others, the lips speaking of that which is expressed in the life.

Further, the heart of the godly man delights in that of which he speaks. Loving the Lord's commandments his lips find no shame in speaking of that which fills his heart (cp. Ps. 14:1).

He would openly avow his allegiance to God's commands — for such is the force of lifting up the hands — with no mere lip profession, but as an avowal of the law that he loved. Moreover, that which he loves would be the theme of his meditations.

Division 7 (Zain) Psalm 119:49-56

Confidence in the Word of the Lord in the presence of the derision of the wicked.

(vv. 49-50) God has caused His servant to trust in His Word; therefore, with the utmost confidence, he can look to God to fulfill His Word. He knows that God must be true to His Word. This confidence in the stability of God's Word had been his comfort in the midst of affliction. His confidence in the Word was the outcome of being quickened by it.

(v. 51) Nevertheless, confidence in the Word of God made the servant of the Lord an object of derision to the proud men of the world — those who had thrown off allegiance to God and His Word. In spite of derision the soul was not moved from its confidence.

(vv. 52-53) In the face of derision the godly man was comforted and strengthened in steadfastness, by the remembrance of God's judgments upon the wicked in the days of old. God's past judgments lead the soul to shrink with horror from those who had forsaken God's law.

(vv. 54-56) Nevertheless, while waiting for God to fulfill His word — while yet in the house of pilgrimage and surrounded by the darkness of night — the godly man found his joy in the Word and the Name of the Lord. This confidence was the outcome of obedience to the Word.

Division 8 (Cheth) Psalm 119:57-64

Blessing through having the Lord for the portion of the soul.

(vv. 57-58) The godly man acknowledges that the Lord is the portion of his heart. The immediate result being that he desires to do the will of the One who is his portion — “I have said that I would keep Thy words.” Moreover he desires to be in the favour of the One whose Word he obeys, “I intreated thy favour with my whole heart.”

(vv. 59-60) The desire to obey the Word, and enjoy the favour of the Lord, of necessity leads to exercise of heart as to his ways. Are they suited to one who has the Lord for his portion? Therefore, he says. “I thought on my ways;” with the practical result that he turned his feet to the testimonies of the Lord, not reluctantly, but with diligent haste.

(vv. 61-62) The one who is set to obey the Lord will at once find that the wicked are against him; but having the Lord for his portion, he is steadfast and unmoved. However much evil presses upon him he does not forget the Word. At midnight — the darkest moment — he can rise to praise the Lord.

(vv. 63-64) Freed from the bands of the wicked he finds that having the Lord for his portion brings him into fellowship with others that fear the Lord and keep His Word. Thus in the midst of evil he discerns the mercy of the Lord, to find that it is greater than man's evil, “The earth, O Lord, is full of thy mercy.”

Division 9 (Teth) Psalm 119:65-72

Blessing through the chastening of the Lord.

(vv. 65-67) The servant of the Lord justifies God in His dealings, however painful. “Thou hast dealt well with thy servant.” Time was when the servant dealt ill with God, for he says, “I went astray.” Then God, in mercy, dealt with him in chastening — “I was afflicted.” His will broken by affliction, he now submits to God's will.

(v. 68) He recognizes that behind all God's dealings in chastening there is the goodness of God, so that he can say, “Thou art good, and doest good.” God being good he desires to be taught of God.

(vv. 69-70) When going astray the wicked were indifferent to the godly man: now that he has returned to the path of obedience, they speak lies concerning him. But the lies of the enemy only energize the psalmist to keep the truth with his whole heart. The wicked in their prosperity are perfectly indifferent to God's law; the restored soul delights in it.

(vv. 71-72) He has learned in affliction to value the Word above the thousands of gold and silver in which the proud boast; hence he can say, “It is good for me that I have been afflicted.”

Division 10 (Jod) Psalm 119:73-80

God acknowledged as the Creator, and justified in all His dealings with His creature.

(vv. 73-74) The Lord's servant, acknowledging that he is the creature of God's hands, pleads for understanding that he may learn the will of God in order to walk suitably to his Creator. The one that thus owns God, and confides in His Word, will be gladly acknowledged by all that fear the Lord.

(vv. 75-77) Moreover, he not only owns that God has fashioned him, but, he justifies God in all His dealings with him. Even in afflicting him God had acted in faithfulness. While submitting to God's faithful dealings, he can, in the midst of affliction, count upon God's merciful kindness to comfort him, and in His tender mercy to spare him. He can thus plead with conscious integrity, for God's law is his delight. Time was when he went astray, and sought his own will; now he delights in God's will.

(v. 78) God had dealt with him faithfully for his good, but the proud had dealt perversely with him without a cause. He looks that they may be ashamed.

(vv. 79-80) He has sought the comfort of the Lord in his affliction, now he desires the sympathy of the saints — “Let those that fear thee turn to me.” Thus encouraged he desires that his heart may be found perfect in God's Word, that he may not, like the proud, be ashamed.

Division 11 (Caph) Psalm 119:81-88

The exercises of a saint whose prayer remains for a while unanswered.

(vv. 81-84) The godly man in trouble had looked to the Lord for comfort (v. 76), but the answer is delayed and the pressure expands. He faints for deliverance; the eyes fail in looking for the fulfilment of the word. He becomes dried and withered in soul like a bottle in the smoke. Nevertheless, the deepening trial only serves to bring out his confidence in God. His soul may faint, but hope in the Word of God remains: his eyes may fail, but faith still looks to God for comfort. His soul may be withered, but it does not forget God's statutes. Life is brief, the days are slipping away; when will God end the trial?

(vv. 85-87) In confidence of heart, the afflicted soul spreads out the trial before God. The proud had digged pits to entrap him;

they persecuted him wrongfully; they almost consumed him from the land. Moreover, not only do the wicked oppose the people of God but, they oppose God Himself. Their actions are not after God's law; they are wrongful in God's sight; they forsake God's precepts. God is not unmindful of the sorrows of the saints, and He cannot ignore the evil ways of the wicked.

(v. 88) In the consciousness of this the saint turns to God, not only for outward deliverance, but for inward quickening that, revived in soul, he may be able to walk in obedience to the Word.

Division 12 (Lamed) Psalm 119:89-96

The abiding faithfulness of God to His immutable Word, the stay of the godly in the midst of trial.

(v. 89) The godly man, looking beyond his trials, sees that God's Word is “settled in the heavens.” Thus beyond the reach of man, it is unaffected by all that takes place on earth.

(vv. 90-91) Not only is God's Word settled in the heavens, but, on earth God is faithful in fulfilling His Word throughout all generations. Moreover, creation is the abiding witness of God's

faithfulness to His Word. All created things continue according to the fixed laws by which they were set in motion. They are His servants doing His bidding. Thus the purpose of God is settled in the heavens; the faithfulness of God to carry out that purpose continues on earth; and all created things in heaven and earth bear continual witness to this faithfulness of God.

(vv. 92-93) The psalmist has thus expressed his confidence in God's Word. There comes a time, however, when his faith is put to the test. Adverse circumstances are allowed of such an overwhelming character that to sight they would appear to be beyond the control of God. Will the tried soul, in these circumstances, retain its faith in God? It is indeed sustained, for in his inward soul he delights in God's Word, when, in his outward circumstances, he can no longer see God's hand. With this inward delight in God's Word the soul is revived.

(vv. 94-96) As quickened and revived, the godly man can say, "I am thine." He had prayed for comfort (v. 76), and waited for comfort (v. 82); now he receives the comfort in learning the settled purpose of God. However, he still looks for final deliverance from his enemies, who have waited to destroy him. While waiting for God's salvation, he finds his present strength

in considering God's testimonies (v. 95). Around him he sees nothing but universal failure. Amongst men nothing reaches to perfection. Nevertheless, he finds that God's Word is exceeding broad — broad enough to reach to every detail of life, and thus guide in every circumstance that can arise.

Division 13 (Mem) Psalm 119:97-104

The effect of the Word when loved for its own sake.

(v. 97) The godly man expresses his affection for the Word. It is loved, not simply for the blessing that it brings, or the effects it produces, but for its own sake. That which the psalmist loves is the subject of his meditation all the day.

(vv. 98-100) Results follow from the Word having its place in the affections. It makes the godly man wiser than his enemies. So Peter and John found when before the Jewish leaders: and again Stephen, whose enemies were “not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake” (Acts 4:13-16; Acts 6:10).

Further, the Word in the heart is above all teaching, however good and right in its place; therefore by the Word the godly

man can acquire understanding above all his teachers. Again, the Word when loved and obeyed, will give more understanding than all the human experience of the aged.

(v. 101) Moreover love for the Word not only produces inward effects in the soul, but it has a practical effect upon the walk. It turns the feet from every evil way, so that in separation from evil the Word can be obeyed.

(v. 102) Above all, the Word held in affection brings the believer into direct contact with God, “thou hast taught me.” (cp. Luke 10:39; 2 Tim. 2:7). This is the secret of a wisdom beyond anything that can be acquired from man, teachers, or human experience. It is a wisdom acquired in the presence of God, and held in faith with God.

(vv. 103-104) Thus loving the Word, and realizing its blessed effects, it becomes more precious to the soul than natural things however sweet. The one who knows the sweetness of the Word not only has understanding to discern between good and evil, but learns to refuse the evil, and thus say, “I hate every false way.”

Division 14 (Nun) Psalm 119:105-112

The effect of the Word on the path of the believer

(v. 105) In the last section the Word filled the heart; in this it is acknowledged as a guide to the feet; and not only does the Word keep the feet from evil, but it marks out a path for the saint through this world.

(v. 106) In order to benefit by the light of the Word, it must be obeyed. Hence the saint devotes himself to perform the Word, here referred to as the Lord's "righteous judgments" in contrast to man's unrighteous ways.

(vv. 107-108) However, the path the godly man has to tread is often one of deep affliction; even so, the light of the Word reveals a path through the trial. Thus, in this instance, there is no prayer for deliverance, but the desire to be energized in the trial (v. 107), to offer acceptable praises in spite of it, and to be taught of the Lord through it (v. 108).

(vv. 109-110) So real is the trial that the godly man's life is continually in his hand, while surrounded by the snares of the wicked (1 Sam. 19:5; Job 13:14). Nevertheless, the continual presence of evil does not lead to the Word being forgotten: hav-

ing the light of the Word the soul escapes the snares of the wicked.

(vv. 111-112) The Word that guides the godly through all trial remains as his eternal heritage, even when trials are forever past. He rejoices in it; the set purpose of his heart is to walk in obedience “to the end.”

Division 15 (Samech) Psalm 119:113-120

God and His Word, the resource of the one who refuses man's vain thoughts.

(vv. 113-114) The believer hates the reasoning of the double-minded man (JND), the one who halts, or wavers between two opinions.

(Comp. 1 Kings 18:21, and James 1:6-8). In contrast to such he loves the Word that reveals the mind of God. This hatred of man's thoughts, and love of God's Word, arouses the hatred of man. In the presence of this opposition, God and His Word are the alone resource and confidence of the soul, “Thou art my hiding place and shield: I hope in thy word.”

(v. 115) However, to have God for our protection demands separation from evil. Therefore, evil doers are desired to depart, for the godly man has definitely decided to walk in obedience to God.

(vv. 116-117) As a separate man he can look with confidence to be upheld by God in the presence of evil, so that he may not be put to shame before his opposers by any failure on his part. Only as he is held by God will he be safe, and free to continually give heed to God's statutes.

(vv. 118-120) He sees that those who wander from God's statutes are “set at nought” (JND). They come to nothing and are treated as dross in God's sight. The judgment of such fills the soul with holy fear.

Division 16 (Ain) Psalm 119:121-128

In the midst of evil, ripe for judgment, the upright soul looks to God to secure its good.

(vv. 121-122) Conscious of his own uprightness, the psalmist can, with a good conscience, look to God not to be forsaken, “Leave me not to my oppressors.” But while appealing to God

on the ground of his own integrity, it is to God, Himself, the servant looks to vindicate him against pride and oppression, and not to his own estimate of his righteousness (cp. 1 Cor. 4:4-5).

(vv. 123-125) Having turned to God, he waits for God's Word of “righteousness” to deliver him from his enemies, and God's “mercy” to deal with himself. As God's servant he desires, not only deliverance from evil, but, to be instructed in the truth, to have his understanding opened that he may know God's testimonies, and thus learn God's mind.

(v. 126) Further the servant of the Lord discerns the time (cp. Luke 12:54-59). He sees that God's authority must be maintained, and that evil is ripe for judgment; so that the extreme of evil gives the assurance that deliverance is at hand.

(vv. 127-128) The knowledge that God is about to act in judgment only makes the true soul increasingly value God's Word. Its value is esteemed far above the gold that man values so highly. God's precepts about “all things” are seen to be right. All is measured by the Word, and all that is false is refused.

Division 17 (Pe) Psalm 119:129-136

The effect of the Word as light in the soul.

(v. 129) The godly man expresses his appreciation of God's Word in itself, apart from the blessing that it brings. It is wonderful, therefore it is cherished.

(vv. 130-132) There is also what the Word does: it gives light and understanding — light, where it enters, and understanding where there is simplicity. Moreover, it creates a thirst and longing, which can only be met by the mercy of God fulfilling His Word, and thus doing as He is wont to do to those that love His Name.

(vv. 133-136) Where the light finds an entrance there is the desire on the part of the believer for a condition in accordance with all that the light reveals.

First, as to himself, the godly man desires that his steps may be governed by the truth, and not by sin, as in the natural man (cp. John 8:32).

Second, as to his circumstances, he desires that he may be delivered from the oppression of man, in order to obey God.

Third, as to God, he desires to sit a learner at His feet in the conscious sunshine of His favour (cp. Luke 10:39).

Fourth, as to the wicked, he is filled with sorrow as he thinks of their portion in disobeying the Word.

Division 18 (Tzaddi) Psalm 119:137-144

The maintenance of the rights of God in a world of evil.

(vv. 137-138) The psalmist recognizes that God is righteous and all His judgments in accord with Himself. His testimonies — the witness of Himself and His ways — are according to righteousness, and very faithful, in contrast to man's testimonies which, too often, are given only to deceive.

(vv. 139-141) The recognition of the righteousness of God and the faithfulness of His testimonies brings the God-fearing man into conflict with those who forget God's words. His earnest zeal in conflict with evil was not simply hatred of evil, but rather love of the truth. He can say of God's Word, "Thy servant loves it." Nevertheless, the one who is zealous for the Word in a scene of evil will be insignificant and despised in the

eyes of the world. Even so, the servant of the Lord does not forget His precepts.

(vv. 142-144) He knows the truth will prevail, and that God's righteousness is everlasting. Enemies may surround him, trouble and anguish may take hold of him, but trial and sorrow will pass away, while the righteousness of God's testimonies will abide. Therefore, he finds his delight in God's commandments, and looks to God for guidance into the path that leads to life beyond all trouble and anguish.

Division 19 (Koph) Psalm 119:145-152

Whole-hearted dependence upon the Lord when surrounded by enemies bent on mischief.

(vv. 145-146) The psalmist expresses his whole-hearted dependence upon the Lord, seeking the consciousness that his prayer is heard. True dependence leads to obedience, therefore, he adds, "I will keep thy statutes." Further, he desires, not only to be heard, but that his prayer may be answered by a complete deliverance that would set him free to obey the Lord's testimonies without hindrance.

(vv. 147-148) His dependence is not merely the passive acknowledgement of general indebtedness to God; it is an active, whole-hearted dependence that calls upon God, and does so with diligence that leads the believer to rise before the dawn to cry to the Lord. Moreover, his dependence is the outcome of confidence, for he can say, “I hoped in thy word.” The godly man is thus marked by dependence, obedience, and confidence. Further the Word in which his confidence is placed becomes the meditation of His heart, in the quiet of the night watches.

(vv. 149-150) Nevertheless, his whole-hearted diligence is not the ground of his appeal to the Lord; but rather the loving-kindness in the heart of the Lord. To this he looks for the quickening energy of life to sustain him, though his enemies draw near with mischief in their hearts.

(vv. 151-152) As a result of his whole-hearted dependence upon the Lord, he finds, that, though his enemies draw near to do him harm, the Lord is near to preserve, and that His commandments are truth and firmly established for ever.

Division 20 (Resh) Psalm 119:153-160

Faithfulness in persecution, hatred of evil, and love of the truth.

(vv. 153-154) The psalmist is conscious that God is not indifferent to the trials of those who remain faithful to His Word. Therefore he appeals to the Lord to look upon his affliction. Moreover, the interest of God's people must be God's interest; therefore the psalmist can put his case into God's hands. Without attempting to answer his enemies, he seeks that God would plead his cause, deliver him from his afflictions, and keep his soul in the energy of life.

(vv. 155-157) Surrounded by the wicked, who have no respect for God's Word, and who hate and persecute the godly, he remains faithful to God; as he says, “Yet do I not decline from thy testimonies.” He finds that his enemies are “many” (JND). Again he appeals to be quickened, or sustained in a life according to the Word.

(v. 158) Faithful to the Lord and His Word, he shrinks from the ways of the transgressors who care nothing for the Word. Their ways are a grief to the godly man.

(vv. 159-160) If the evil of transgressors is hated, it is because the truth is loved. Thus the psalmist can say, “I love thy pre-

cepts.” The evil that he hates will pass away; the truth that he loves will endure for ever.

Thus the godly man is marked by faithfulness in persecution, hatred of evil, and love of the truth.

Division 21 (Schin) Psalm 119:161-168

The blessing of the man who owns the supreme authority of the Word, and walks in subjection to it.

(v. 161) The great ones of this world may persecute the godly without a cause; but, for the believer the authority of the Word of God is above the authority of man. He trembles at the Word of God rather than stand in awe of the power of princes. For him God's Word is supreme in its authority (cp. Acts 4:19-20).

(vv. 162-168) The psalmist recounts the blessings that flow to the one whose life is governed by the supreme authority of the Word.

First, the Word becomes the joy of his heart, as he discovers the treasures it contains, even as one finds great spoil (v. 160).

Second, it leads him to discern between good and evil, and thus to abhor the false and love the truth (v. 163).

Third, it calls forth constant praise throughout the day (v. 164).

Fourth, it brings great peace into his life, so that he is no longer governed by circumstances, nor stumbled by trials (v. 165).

Fifth, it leads the soul to look beyond the opposition of princes, and the trials of circumstances, and wait in hope for the salvation of the Lord (v. 166).

Sixth, while waiting for the Lord's deliverance, there is submission and obedience to the Lord's Words (v. 167).

Seventh, walking in obedience to the Lord, there is nothing in his life hidden from God. He can say, "All my ways are before thee" (v. 168).

Thus the Word having its place of supremacy over his soul, the godly man has joy in the Word, hatred of evil, continual praise, great peace, hope in the Lord, obedience to the Lord, and openness before the Lord.

Division 22 (Tau) Psalm 119:169-176

Praise to God, and testimony to man, from a restored and delivered soul.

(vv. 169-170) The prayer of the godly man for a mind formed by the Word of God, and for the Lord's deliverance from his trials.

(vv. 171-172) The result of his deliverance will be praise to God, and testimony to men. Praise and testimony can, however, only flow from a soul that is taught of God. Therefore the psalmist says, “My lips shall utter praise, when thou hast taught me thy statutes;” and immediately he adds, “My tongue shall speak of thy word.” The psalm opens with prayer, continues in praise, leading to testimony. This is ever the divine order.

(vv. 173-174) Moreover, the one that renders a testimony in an evil world will find opposition that calls for support; thus the cry goes up, “Let thine hand help me.” He can plead for this help, seeing his heart is set on the things of the Lord. His choice, his longing, and his delight, centre in the Word and salvation of the Lord.

(vv. 175-176) His one desire is to live for the Lord's praise, as sustained by the Lord, in contrast to his past life in which he followed his own will, going astray like a lost sheep. If he went astray, the Lord sought him, and still he can say, "Seek thy servant;" for, he can add, in contrast to the days when he went astray, "I do not forget thy commandments."

Psalm 120

In the midst of the distresses of the captivity, the godly man finds his resource in the Lord.

(v. 1) The soul in its distress had cried to the Lord, and had been made conscious that he was heard. From this past experience he draws encouragement in his present distress.

(vv. 2-4) The remaining verses of the psalm present the occasion of the distress. First, the godly man finds himself in a world of corruption. "Lying lips" proclaim that which is false; "a deceitful tongue" affects to speak the truth. The lies of the world are often hidden under an affectation of the truth. Plausible words may be a cover for deadly error. The psalmist realizes that judgment upon judgment is coming upon the wicked

man; therefore he asks, “What shall be given to thee? or, what shall be added to thee?” It is not, however, for the godly man to vindicate himself: Christ, the Mighty One, (JND) will use sharp arrows and fire, against those who have spoken evil of His people (Ps. 14:5).

(v. 5) Secondly, the godly man deplores that he is still in a foreign land, captive to those who treat him with hostility and barbarity.

(vv. 6-7) Thirdly, the godly man is in the midst of the violent world. For long he has dwelt with those who hate peace.

Thus, though a captive in a world of corruption and violence he finds his resource in God.

Psalm 121

The godly assured of the presence and support of the Lord, in view of their journey from the land of captivity to the house of the Lord.

(vv. 1-2) The godly man would fain escape from the land of his captivity; but mountains block his way. Looking at the diffi-

culties, the cry is forced from him, “Whence shall my help come?” (JND). Immediately his faith replies, “My help comes from the Lord, who made the heavens and the earth.” The Maker of the mountains can lead him across the mountains.

The remaining verses of the psalm give the answer of the Spirit of God to the faith of a godly man who looks to the Lord alone for his help. The one ever recurring thought is the care of the Lord. The word “keep” is the characteristic word of the psalm. Bearing in mind that the word “preserve,” in verses 7 and 8, should be translated “keep,” it will be noticed that this encouraging word occurs six times in the last six verses.

(vv. 3-4) First, the godly man who looks to the Lord for his help is assured that the Lord will not suffer his foot to be moved: he will be kept from all dangers.

Second, he is assured that the care of the Lord is unceasing, “He that keeps thee will not slumber.” He keeps each individual believer, and He is the Keeper of Israel as a whole.

(v. 5) Third, the Lord is not only our Keeper, but He is a present Keeper, One who is always at our right hand, ever available for faith, whatever the difficulties may be (Ps. 16:8).

(v. 6) Fourth, the Lord is our Keeper at all seasons, “by day,” and “by night.”

(v. 7) Fifth, the Lord is a Keeper from “all evil.” We see but a few of the evils that beset our path. The Lord sees and keeps us “from all evil.”

Sixth, not only does the Lord keep the body, but He keeps the soul. He holds our souls in the positive good of life.

(v. 8) Seventh, the Lord keeps us in all circumstances of life, in our “going out” and “coming in.”

Finally, the Lord will keep through all time, for evermore.

Thus the soul is assured that the Lord is our Keeper from all danger (v. 3); He is unceasing in His care (v. 4); He is ever available (v. 5); He keeps us at all seasons (v. 6); He keeps from all evil; He keeps the soul as well as the body (v. 7); He keeps us in all circumstances, and for all time (v. 8).

Psalm 122

The joy of a godly man in view of the return to the house of the Lord, and the city of Jerusalem.

(vv. 1-2) The psalm opens with an expression of joy on the part of the psalmist on hearing the decision of the godly to journey together to the house of the Lord. In the confidence that the Lord is their keeper, as set forth in Psalm 121, the remnant are emboldened to take the pilgrim way to the house of the Lord. The immediate effect of this decision is to fill their hearts with assurance. If the Lord will not suffer the feet of His saints to be moved (Ps. 121:3), they can boldly say, “Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.”

(vv. 3-5) In the confidence of faith, the godly man is led to view Jerusalem — their journey's goal — not as it has been through the ages, but, as it will be according to the purpose of God. In the day of Nehemiah the wall of Jerusalem was broken down, and the gates thereof burned with fire. Now, the godly man, looking beyond the ruin, sees it, not only building but “builded, as a city that is compact together.” No longer are there breaches in the wall.

Second, it is seen as the gathering place of the tribes of the Lord. None will be missing in the day of the coming glory.

Third, the universal gathering of the earthly people of God will become a testimony to Israel. At last they will be a true witness setting forth God's purpose to have a united people.

Fourth, when the earthly people of God are at last gathered together it will turn to the praise of the Lord. God is going to dwell in the midst of a praising people.

Lastly, when Israel are regathered, Jerusalem will not only be a centre of worship, it will be the seat of royal administration. Praise will ascend to Jehovah, and blessing will be dispensed to the people.

(v. 6) In contrast to Jerusalem according to the purpose of God, the centre of praise and blessing, the godly man thinks of the city in its present ruined condition, a centre of strife and sorrow through long ages. If the view of the city in its coming glory leads to praise, the view of the city in its ruin calls for prayer. Thus the psalmist can say, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem," coupled with the assurance that they that love Jerusalem will prosper. To think with God about His people, to feel their sorrows, and pray for their peace, is the way to spiritual prosperity.

(vv. 7-9) The last three verses present the response to the call for prayer. At once the desire is awakened for the peace and prosperity of the city. The soul taught of God couples prosperity with peace. The divisions and contentions amongst the people of God have ever been a source of spiritual poverty and scattering. With the healing of the breaches and the restoration of peace, prosperity is assured.

Then, thinking of his brethren and companions, and their blessing, the godly man puts up the prayer, “Peace be within thee.” Finally the highest motive for his prayer is the good of the house of the Lord.

Psalm 123

The exercises of the godly when faced with the contempt and scorn of men of the world.

With the blessedness of the house of the Lord and the city of Jerusalem filling the soul (Ps. 122), the godly decide to face the pilgrim journey that leads to the city of God. Such a decision, however, on the part of a feeble remnant calls forth the contempt and scorn of the ease-loving and proud men of the world.

The same decision of faith will lead to like results in this the Christian day. The believer who enters into the blessedness of the House of God, and the heavenly calling, will most readily take up the pilgrim path though only to find that he is in contempt with those who have their portion in this life.

(v. 1) His own weakness, together with the contempt of the world, only serves to call into exercise the faith of the godly man. Sustaining grace is found in turning his eyes to the One that dwells in the heavens.

(v. 2) The one who thus turns to the Lord takes the place of subjection, looking to the Lord for His guidance, even as servants wait upon their Master to direct them by a motion of the hand. With this subjection there is the perseverance that waits for the Lord's gracious direction; for the godly look to the Lord, “until he be gracious to us” (JND).

(vv. 3-4) The closing verses present the prayer in which the godly man appeals to the Lord for needed grace, and spreads out the grief that fills his soul. Grace gives the soul to look to the Lord with quiet patience: nevertheless, the reproach of the world is deeply felt. Twice the godly man speaks of being “ex-

ceedingly filled” with the contempt and scorn of the world. The contempt speaks of their attitude towards God's people; the scorn, of their open derision.

Psalm 124

The godly remnant praise the Lord for having answered their prayer, and set them free from captivity.

The last psalm presented the grief of the exile in the land of captivity: this is the joy of the soul that has escaped from bondage and commenced the journey that leads to the city of Jerusalem. There they lift up their eyes in prayer to the Lord; here they praise Him for having acted on their behalf.

(vv. 1-5) The godly acknowledge the Lord's intervention on their behalf. Powerless themselves, in the presence of an enemy that appears all-powerful, they are as those who sink in an overwhelming flood. When, to all appearance, their destruction is imminent, they find the Lord is on their side and is working for their deliverance.

(vv. 6-7) They bless the Lord for not having left them as a helpless prey to their enemies, and for breaking the snares by which

they had been held in bondage. In answer to their prayers they can say, “We are escaped.”

(v. 8) Having experienced the delivering mercy of the Lord, they express their confidence in the help of the Lord for all that may yet lie before them.

“Men rose up against us,” they say, and “their wrath was kindled against us,” and we were about to be “overwhelmed.” Then it was — in their extremity — that they found the Lord was on their side.

Psalm 125

The godly remnant prove the faithfulness of the Lord on their way to Zion.

Psalm 124 presents the Lord's mercy in setting the godly free from captivity, calling forth their confiding trust in the Lord. Psalm 125 presents the security of those who thus trust in the Lord as they pursue their pilgrim way to Zion.

(vv. 1-2) In the presence of all opposition, and amidst all changes, those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion which

cannot be moved and therefore abides for ever. The ground of their security is that, even as Jerusalem is protected by the surrounding mountains, so the Lord is round about His people.

In captivity they had been assured that the Lord would keep them in going out and coming in, and for evermore (Ps. 121:8). Having left the land of captivity, and on their way to Zion they find that the Lord is indeed their “keeper,” and “about His people from henceforth even for ever.”

(v. 3) Having experienced the deliverance of the Lord, the godly remnant express their confidence that the Lord will complete what His grace has begun. Thus they are assured that the city to which they are journeying will be delivered from the rule of the wicked. Their inheritance thus freed from the scepter of the wicked there will be no temptation to the righteous to enter into an unholy alliance with the wicked, and thus abandon their confidence in the Lord.

(vv. 4-5) The psalm closes with a prayer to the Lord, based on the known governmental ways of God (see Ps. 18:25-26). The Lord will do good to those who are good and upright in their hearts; while those who “turn aside to their crooked ways” will

at last find themselves in company with “workers of iniquity.” The psalmist closes with the desire, “Peace be upon Israel,” involving the confidence that Israel will be found at last to be those who trust in the Lord.

Psalm 126

The ransomed of the Lord return to Zion with songs and everlasting joy (Isa. 35:10).

In Psalm 124:7, the godly are viewed as having escaped from their enemies; in Psalm 125, they realize that, being set free, the Lord is their protection on every hand; in Psalm 126, reviewing the way the Lord had wrought on their behalf, they break forth into praise and singing.

(vv. 1-3) The intervention of the Lord had been so unforeseen and complete that, like a dream, it was almost beyond belief (Comp. Luke 24:41). This intervention is of a twofold character. Zion itself is set free from the rule of the enemy, to be followed by the full deliverance of the whole nation of Israel. The city to which they are going is delivered from its long ages of captivity. This leads to the joy of Israel, and to the Lord being

glorified among the heathen. They will say, “The Lord has done great things for them”; while the remnant themselves gladly ascribe all praise to the Lord, saying, “The Lord has done great things for us.”

(vv. 4-5) Zion is delivered, but Israel is not yet fully established in their land. Thus they pray that their return from captivity may be as the streams in the south which, commencing as a trickling rill, become swollen with the rain into rivers that bring blessing and fertility to the parched land.

During long years of captivity they had sown in tears; now they will reap in joy the fruits of all the chastening they had passed through.

(v. 6) In the closing verse it would seem that the Spirit of God leads the psalmist to see that Christ had been before them in the path that they are treading. He speaks no longer of “They that sow in tears,” but of One, “He that goes forth and weeps.” In the days of His humiliation Christ had sown “precious seed,” and watered it with His tears, and He will come again with a great harvest of souls. He will see of the fruit of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.

Psalm 127

The Lord the builder of the house and the keeper of the city.

(vv. 1-2) Already the godly remnant have owned that “If it had not been the Lord who was on our side,” they would have been swallowed up by their enemies. Looking back on their captivity they can say, “Blessed be the Lord ... our soul is escaped” (Ps. 124:1, 6, 7). Now they look on to the “house” and “the city,” the goal to which they are journeying, and they own, “Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it”; and “except the Lord keep the city, the watchman wakes but in vain.”

Thus, in the course of these pilgrim psalms, the godly own that it is the Lord who sets them free; it is the Lord who keeps them on their pilgrim journey; and it is the Lord who establishes them in the home to which they are going. They had seen the purpose of the Lord to have Jerusalem “builded” and “compact together” (Ps. 122:3). Now they recognize that only the Lord can carry out His purpose.

We know that in a day to come men will rebuild the temple; but the godly, guided by the Spirit of God, will realize that all the

labours of men will be in vain. The Jewish nation, returning to the land in unbelief, will neither be able to maintain their temple or keep their city. However great the energy they may put forth, in rising up early and sitting up late, and eating the bread of sorrows — human efforts will be in vain.

In contrast to the restless energy of the flesh, the godly who trust in the Lord are kept in perfect calm, surrounded though they may be by sorrows and toil. In the midst of all human unrest, “He gives His beloved sleep.”

(vv. 3-5) Further, the house and the city will not be complete without the inhabitants. If the Lord builds the house and keeps the city, He also gives “the children of youth” (JND) those who, with strength and vigour of youth, will be used under the hand of the Lord to defend the house and meet the enemy in the gate.

Psalm 128

The godly anticipate the millennial blessing of those that fear the Lord.

In this psalm the thoughts of the godly remnant are carried beyond the time of building, watching and fighting, to millennial rest and prosperity.

(v. 1) The first verse presents the spiritual condition and character of those who enjoy the favour of the Lord. They are marked by the fear of the Lord, and a practical walk in accord with His ways. Their walk is not governed by the fear of man, nor the legal fear of consequences. Their godly practice flows from a spiritual condition.

(vv. 2-4) Verses 2 to 4 describe the blessings of the God-fearing man. The Millennium being in view, the blessings are of an earthly order, rather than heavenly as with the Christian. Such will be blest in his labours, happy in his spirit, blest in his circumstances, and in the relationships of life. “Thus shall the man be blest that fears the Lord.”

(vv. 5-6) If the God-fearing man is thus blest, he is ever to remember that his blessing comes from the Lord. It flows from Zion as the centre of blessing for the earth; for when the Lord rules from Zion, Jerusalem will prosper, and Israel be in peace.

It is well to see that in the course of these psalms how constantly all blessing is ascribed to the Lord. It is the Lord that sets the captive free (Ps. 124:6-7). It is the Lord who is round about His people as they take their pilgrim way (Ps. 125:2); the Lord sets Zion free from the enemy (Ps. 126:1); the Lord builds the house and keeps the city (Ps. 127:1); and the Lord is the source of all millennial blessing.

Psalm 129

The godly own the righteousness of the Lord, both in His ways with Israel, and His judgments of the nations.

In Psalm 128, the godly contemplate the bright prospect that lies before them: in Psalm 129, they review their sorrowful past.

(vv. 1-3) Looking back over the past Israel may say that, from the time of the nation's childhood in Egypt, when their history as a distinct nation commenced, the nations of the world have afflicted them. Egypt, with its world power, led the way in the persecution of God's ancient people. In the days of Israel's power they were constantly opposed by nations, great and

small, that surrounded their country. Throughout the centuries of their dispersion, in every country, and at different times, the nation has been subjected to petty persecution as well as wholesale massacres. Every atrocity that human wickedness could devise has been used to seek their extermination. The plowers have indeed plowed his back and made long their furrows. Yet Israel can say, “They have not prevailed against me.” Hated and opposed by powerful nations and world-wide empires, they have been preserved; while the empires that opposed them have fallen into decay and passed away. A mere handful in the midst of the great mass of mankind, they have maintained their nationality, preserved their traditions, and remained a separate people.

How true is the word of Jehovah, “Though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee” (Jer. 30:11).

(v. 4) The nations confess the Lord as the source of their preservation through the ages. The unrighteousness in Israel may have governmentally called for their afflictions; nevertheless, the righteousness of the Lord had not allowed the nations to prevail against Israel. Thus they own, “The Lord is righteous.”

They justify the Lord in all His dealings, whether in allowing their afflictions, in preserving them in their afflictions, or finally cutting asunder the cords of the wicked and setting them free from their enemies (Jer. 30:8-9).

(vv. 5-8) Based upon the truth that the Lord is righteous in all His dealings, the godly remnant look for the final discomfiture of their enemies. They view the wicked, not merely as the opposers of Israel, but the haters of Zion. Behind the hatred of Israel is the hatred of the Lord and His centre of rule for the earth. Let such be like the withered grass on the housetops, useless for man, and unblessed by the Lord (cp. Ruth 2:4).

Psalm 130

The anguish of soul of the godly remnant on account of the sins of Israel.

Psalm 129 reviewed the outward afflictions of Israel in the presence of the righteousness of the Lord. Psalm 130 describes the inward distress of soul on account of sins seen in the light of the mercy of the Lord.

(vv. 1-2) The first two verses present the cry of anguish from a soul conscious of its guilt, and yet accompanied with faith which turns the soul to the Lord in spite of the conviction of sin.

(vv. 3-4) In the presence of the Lord the repentant soul learns three great truths. First, no sinner can stand before God on the ground of his own merit. If the Lord marks iniquities in the sense of observing them, or keeping them in memory in order to punish, there is no hope for man — none can stand (Job 10:14; Job 14:16). Second, if there is no standing before God through our own merits, there is forgiveness through His mercy. Third, if God forgives it is that He may be feared, and not that men may think lightly of their sin or of God's mercy. Grace does not lead to a careless walk; on the contrary, it teaches us to live soberly, righteously, and godly (Titus 2:12).

(vv. 5-6) The two following verses describe the condition of the soul that fears the Lord. Such wait upon the Lord, and confide in His word. There is an eager longing that leads the soul to wait for the delivering mercy of the Lord, more than those who, through a night of sorrow, watch for a morning without clouds.

(vv. 7-8) Realizing that the Lord will bring in a day of blessing for His suffering people, the godly man exhorts Israel to hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is plenteous redemption to ransom His people from all their enemies, and redeem them from all their iniquities.

Psalm 131

The lowly condition of soul that follows the confession of sins to the Lord.

Psalm 130 describes the anguish of soul before the Lord on account of iniquities. Psalm 131 depicts the chastened spirit that results from the realization of the grace of the Lord when in the depths of anguish on account of sins.

(v. 1) Through the exercises of his soul the godly man becomes marked by lowliness that makes nothing of self, and meekness that gives place to others. Thus the natural haughtiness of the heart, that makes everything self, is judged, and the lofty eyes that look down upon others are condemned.

With a chastened spirit the soul ceases to exercise itself with things unrevealed by God, and therefore too wonderful for its comprehension.

(v. 2) The second verse describes the calm repose of a soul that has learned to be lowly, and meek, in heart and ways. Natural pride and ambitions being restrained the soul is composed, like a weaned child that after its first outburst of grief learns to rest with quiet composure with its mother (JND).

(v. 3) The psalm closes with the desire that the experiences of the individual may become the experience of the nation. If such are the ways of the Lord in bringing a weary soul to rest, “Let Israel hope in the Lord from henceforth and for ever.”

Psalm 132

An appeal to the Lord to remember David's afflictions, and the Lord's promises.

The godly remnant brought into a right moral condition, as described in Psalm 131, can appeal to the Lord to fulfill the desires of David, and His own unconditional promises, by estab-

lishing His King in Zion, and taking up His abode in the midst of His people.

(vv. 1-5) The psalm opens with an appeal to the Lord to remember the afflictions of David when rejected by man, and his zeal for the house of God. The sufferings and the zeal of David are but a foreshadowing of the yet deeper sufferings and greater zeal of Christ, who, in the day of His rejection, could say, “The zeal of thine house has eaten me up” (John 2:17).

Moreover, the afflictions and desires of David will once again be realized in the future experiences of the godly remnant as foretold in these Pilgrim Songs, which express their sorrows as well as their longings after the house of God.

(vv. 6-7) Thus the godly remnant identify themselves with the thoughts of David, and his desires become their desires. Like David, they long that the ark may have its true place in the midst of God's people. They heard of the ark in the place of its neglect, after having been in the hands of the enemy, and they find it “in the fields of the wood,” as that which was forgotten and valueless in the eyes of the nation (See 1 Chr. 13:3-5). “The fields of the wood,” or “the fields of Jair” is probably a

poetic allusion of Kirjath-jearim, meaning “the city of woods” where David found the ark.

(vv. 8-10) Verses 8 to 10, present the prayer of the godly to the Lord. First, they pray that the Lord would come into their midst, finding His rest in His tabernacle, and His righteous power, to bless His people, in the ark of His strength — the ark that we know speaks of Christ. Then they pray that the priests may be clothed with righteousness — that their practical ways may be in accord with their holy office. Thirdly, they pray that the Lord's people may shout for joy. Finally they pray that the King may be established in the favour of the Lord.

(vv. 11-12) In verses 11 and 12, the godly remnant assure their hearts of the ultimate blessing of Israel on the ground of the unconditional promises made to David, while recalling the conditional promise in respect of which Israel's failure had incurred all the sorrows of their long captivity.

(vv. 13-18) The closing verses of the psalm very blessedly set forth the Lord's answer to David's desires, as voiced by the godly. David had said, “Arise O Lord, into thy rest.” The Lord answers that He “has chosen Zion; he has desired it for his hab-

itation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it.” But the Lord's answer, as ever, exceeds the desires of His people, for He adds, “I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread.”

David had prayed that the priests might be clothed with righteousness. The Lord answers, “I will also clothe her priests with salvation.”

David had said, “Let thy saints shout for joy.” The Lord answers, “Her saints shall shout aloud for joy.”

Finally, the throne of David will not only be established in the Person of Christ, the Horn of David, whose enemies will be clothed with shame, “but upon himself shall his crown flourish.”

Psalm 133

The blessedness of Israel restored and re-united.

Psalm 132 closes with a beautiful picture of Christ reigning in Zion. To this scene of blessedness the remnant have come in the faith of their souls. In Psalm 133 they celebrate the full

blessing for Israel that will follow when Christ reigns and all His enemies are put to shame.

(v. 1) The first verse depicts the blessedness of the nation of Israel when restored and reunited. Judah and Israel, so long divided and scattered, will at last meet in the land and realize how good and pleasant it is for those that are brethren, not only to meet, but, to dwell together in unity (Ezek. 37:22).

(v. 2) Two figures are used to set forth the blessedness of this brotherly concord. First, it is like the precious oil that, at the consecration of Aaron, was poured upon his head and flowed to the skirts of his garment, so that the whole man came under the sanctifying effect of the oil (Ex. 29:7; Lev. 8:12). In like manner, when brethren dwell together in unity there is nothing to hinder the full expression of the fruits of the Spirit, of whom the oil is a type, in all their preciousness and fragrance. The Church should enjoy this blessedness now (Eph. 4:3): Israel will not enjoy it “until,” as Isaiah says, “the Spirit be poured upon us from on high” (Isa. 32:15-18). To this time the psalm looks on.

(v. 3) Secondly, the blessedness of the unity is set forth by the dew of Hermon. The dew of this lofty and dominating mountain descending upon the lower mountains of Zion is surely a figure of heavenly blessing poured upon restored Israel. When brethren dwell together in unity, there is nothing to hinder the grace of the Spirit, and the flow of heavenly blessing.

At last, restored Israel has reached the place where the Lord has commanded the blessing and are found in a condition in which they can enjoy life for evermore.

Psalm 134

The godly remnant, not only in the land, but standing in the house of the Lord, reach the desired end of their pilgrim journey.

(vv. 1-2) The closing psalm of these pilgrim songs presents the crowning experience of the godly in Israel. In the previous psalm the godly are viewed as brethren dwelling together in unity. Here they are seen as the servants of the Lord, occupied in the highest service — the worship of the Lord. Their worship is without cessation, even by night (1 Chr. 9:33); and is

offered in an holy place — the sanctuary of the House of the Lord. Many a time they had raised their hands in prayer on their desert journey; now they are called to lift up their hands in praise in the house of the Lord.

(v. 3) When the people at last bless the Lord in the sanctuary, the Lord will bless His people out of Zion. When praise goes up blessing flows out.

Psalm 135

The restored nation of Israel called upon to praise the Name of the Lord.

(vv. 1-3) Israel, delivered from all their enemies, and brought to the house of the Lord, are called to praise the goodness of the Lord, and the greatness of His Name.

(vv. 4-12) In the verses that follow the psalmist presents the different ways in which the goodness of the Lord, and the greatness of His Name, have been expressed.

First, the Lord in His sovereign goodness has chosen Israel (v. 4).

Second, the Lord is great above all the gods of the heathen, as set forth in His absolute supremacy over creation. Whatsoever He pleases, He has done in the sphere of creation. He directs all the forces of nature according to His power and pleasure (vv. 5-7).

Third, the Lord has redeemed His people from Egypt (vv. 8-9).

Lastly, the goodness of the Lord is seen in the deliverance of His people from all their enemies, and in bringing them into the land (vv. 10-12).

It will be noticed that in these verses, the deliverance from Egypt is immediately followed by the possession of the land. The wilderness journey is passed over in silence. Thus the psalm celebrates the goodness of the Lord, and the blessing into which He brings His people because of the goodness of His heart; rather than the failure of the people, and the way He takes with them in their wilderness wanderings because of the evil and unbelief of their hearts.

(vv. 13-14) The two verses that follow are cited from Exodus and Deuteronomy. The first, at the beginning of their history in Egypt, presents God in His enduring unchanging character as

Jehovah — the ground of all blessing for Israel (Ex. 3:15). The other quotation, from the song sung by Moses just before the people entered the land, shows that when through their own folly their power is gone and there is none to help, the Lord will act on their behalf (Deut. 32:36).

(vv. 15-18) When the Lord acts on behalf of Israel, He will say, “Where are their gods, their rock in whom they trusted” (Deut. 32:37). Here we get Israel's answer as they pass judgment on the idols of the heathen, and all that put their trust in them.

(vv. 19-21) In view of the goodness and greatness of the Lord, as set forth in His ways with Israel, the whole house of Israel, with the priests and Levites, and all that fear the Lord, are called to bless the Lord out of Zion.

Psalm 136

Restored Israel acknowledges that all Jehovah's ways with His people are marked by loving-kindness.

This psalm presents the response of Israel to the call to praise of the previous psalm. The first half of each verse presents the theme of praise; the second half the refrain of praise, “For His

loving-kindness endures for ever.” Every stage of Israel's history is recounted to make manifest that throughout their checkered history the loving-kindness of the Lord had endured.

(vv. 1-3) The opening verses present the goodness of Jehovah, the unchangeable God, the One who is supreme above all that rule in the heavens, or that exercise dominion on earth — the God of gods and the Lord of lords.

(vv. 4-9) The verses that follow present the wonders of God, as well as His infinite wisdom in creation according to the order of the second, third, and fourth day's work as presented in Genesis 1.

(vv. 10-15) Verses 10 to 15 present the way God has wrought on behalf of His people in delivering them from Egypt.

(v. 16) The following verse sets forth the mercy that brought the people through the wilderness.

(vv. 17-22) Following the wilderness journey, the mercy of the Lord is set forth in destroying every opposing force and bringing His people into their heritage.

(vv. 23-24) Finally, when His people, through their folly, had fallen into a low state, the Lord remembers them and delivers them from all their enemies.

(vv. 25-26) The restoration of Israel brings blessing to all flesh, who are called upon to give thanks to the God of heaven.

Psalm 137

The godly remnant in Israel faithful in heart to Zion, though in captivity.

Historically, the psalm sets forth the sorrows of Israel in captivity: prophetically, it expresses the sorrows of the godly in Israel in a latter day.

(vv. 1-3) The psalm opens with the captives of Israel at Babylon in the day of its prosperity and earthly joy, as set forth by its rivers, its mirth, and its songs.

The captives belong to another city — Zion, a city that has its own joy, its song of the Lord, and its “day” yet to come (v. 7). Nevertheless, Jerusalem is razed to the ground; praise is silent in Zion, and the godly, strangers in a foreign land. They can

only weep when they remember Zion. The glory and joy of Babylon are as nothing in their eyes compared with the blessedness of their own city. The world that had wasted the people of God, and ruined their city, would fain hear one of the beautiful songs of Zion.

(vv. 4-6) How can the godly sing the Lord's song in a strange land? What can the world know of the joy of the Lord, or of the sorrows of Jerusalem? To join with the world in its songs and its mirth would be to forget Jerusalem and its sorrows. The godly man would rather forget his skill in playing the harp, than forget Jerusalem; he would rather his tongue be silent altogether, if Jerusalem is not remembered and preferred above all worldly joys.

(vv. 7-9) The psalm closes with an appeal to the Lord to remember the enemies of Jerusalem when the day of Jerusalem comes. In the time of Jerusalem's sorrow, Edom had expressed its implacable hatred of Jerusalem. Without mercy Edom had said, "Rase it, rase it, even to the foundations thereof."

Babylon may be in prosperity, demanding songs and mirth, but the godly are assured that its day of judgment is coming. It is

devoted to destruction, for one will arise to deal with Babylon — or the world system of which it is the figure — as it had dealt with God's people.

Psalm 138

The godly man praises the Lord for answering his cry in the midst of trouble.

(vv. 1-2) The psalmist praises the Lord, not only with lip profession, but, with his whole heart — an undistracted heart engrossed with its object. Moreover he publicly acknowledges the Lord by praising before the judges of the earth; here called gods, as representing God in their positions of authority (Ps. 82:1, 6-7).

Furthermore the psalmist worships towards Jehovah's holy temple. This would indicate that the godly man is not yet established in the land. Like Daniel, though not in the temple, he prays towards it, in the faith of Solomon's prayer. Solomon had asked that God would hear His people if, in their time of trouble, they prayed toward the city that God had chosen, and

toward the house that was built for the glory of His Name (cp. 1 Kings 8:44, 48 and Dan. 6:10-11).

The praise is called forth by God's Name and God's Word. God's Name declares God's character as marked by loving-kindness and truth. God's Word declares His Name, and must ever be in accord with that Name. God is ever faithful to His Word, and, by fulfilling His Word, He magnifies it above all His Name. Men profess the Name of God, but set aside the Word of God. God, Himself, magnifies His Word above His Name.

(vv. 3-5) In his trouble the godly man had cried to the Lord, and had been answered. Thus the confidence of his soul is strengthened through the trouble.

The Lord's answer to his prayer encourages him to look on to the time when all the kings of the earth will praise Jehovah, when at last they will listen to His words, walk in His ways, and behold His glory.

(vv. 6-8) Though the Lord is high and His glory great, yet He has respect to the lowly (cp. Ps. 147:3-4). The proud He knows

afar off. God regards them, but at a distance. He does not admit them into His favour or confidence.

The psalmist's heart is full of praise, though in circumstances he walks “in the midst of trouble.” Nevertheless if the trouble tends to cast him down, the Lord will revive him. The hand of the Lord that deals with the believer's enemies supports the believer himself (cp. Acts 11:21; Acts 13:11).

In the end the Lord will perfect that which concerns the godly. The trouble will pass, the enemies will be judged, and the godly will be blessed, for the mercy of the Lord endures for ever, and the Lord cannot forsake His own.

Psalm 139

The godly man welcomes the searchings of God into the inmost recesses of his heart, desiring that he may be delivered from every evil way and led “in the way everlasting.”

In the experience of the psalmist the consciousness of the omniscience of God at first plunges his soul into the deepest distress as he thinks of his own broken responsibilities towards God. When, at length, he realizes that God's “works” and God's

“thoughts” are toward him in grace, the omniscience of God becomes the source of his deepest comfort.

(vv. 1-6) Psalm 138 had closed with the recognition that we are the work of God's hands. This psalm opens with the realization that, if this is so, we must be fully known to God, and ever in His hands. Thus the first six verses speak of the omniscience of God. First, we are searched and known (vv. 1-2); furthermore God searches into our paths, and takes note of all our ways; lastly, His hand is upon us, dealing with us according to His perfect knowledge. Such knowledge is too wonderful for us.

(vv. 7-12) Thinking of his own failure in responsibility, the godly man is overwhelmed in the presence of the omniscience of God. He would fain flee from the presence of God, and escape His all-searching gaze. He finds, however, that God is not only omniscient but also omnipresent. There is no escape from the Spirit of God; no place that God cannot penetrate; no solitude where God is not; no darkness that can hide from God.

(vv. 13-18) Here, however, there comes a great change in his experiences, as the result of turning from himself, and his own works, to God and His marvellous works as the Creator. With

this change of experience he breaks into praise. He realizes that he is God's possession, formed by God for God's own purposes settled before ever he was fashioned. Above all, he realizes that God's thoughts are towards him and not against him. They are precious and beyond comprehension. God is not only for him, but he is ever with God, the object of His unceasing care.

(vv. 19-24). Conscious that God is with him, the godly man realizes that he cannot associate with the wicked, who will be dealt with in judgment as those that speak against God.

Psalm 140

Opposed by outward enemies, the godly man looks to the Lord for deliverance, finding in Him his sole and sufficient resource.

Psalm 139 expresses the desire of the godly for truth in the inward parts, that he may be led in the way everlasting. In this psalm the godly man seeks deliverance from outward enemies, who seek to overthrow the godly in their steps, and turn them from the way everlasting.

(vv. 1-3) The psalmist appeals to the Lord for deliverance from evil men who are marked by violence, work corruptly, plot to-

gether against the godly, and prove themselves to be the instruments of Satan by speaking lies in hypocrisy.

(vv 4-5) Again the psalmist looks to the Lord for deliverance and preservation from those whose set purpose is to overthrow the godly, and, by hidden snares, to turn them from the right way.

(vv. 6-8) The soul strengthens himself in God. He has definitely put himself under the protection of God as His God. He confesses that God is His strength for deliverance, the One who can preserve him in the day of battle. God is the all sufficient resource to save and preserve the godly, and frustrate the devices of the wicked.

(vv. 9-11) He desires that the holy government of God against evil may take its course in regard to the wicked and that the mischief of their own lips may cover them, and those who lay snares to overthrow the godly may themselves be hunted by evil and overthrown.

(vv. 12-13) The psalm closes with an expression of the confidence of the psalmist that the Lord will maintain the cause of the

afflicted, and the right of the needy, resulting in the righteous praising the Lord's name in the Lord's presence.

Psalm 141

The godly man desires that there may be nothing in his word, ways, or associations that would hinder his prayers being acceptable to God.

(vv. 1-2) In this psalm the distress of the godly man deepens, and his prayer becomes more urgent. He desires that his prayer may be acceptable to God as incense, and as the evening oblation.

(vv. 3-4) If, however, his prayer is to be acceptable, he feels that certain moral conditions are necessary.

- First, a watch must be set upon his words, that nothing may be uttered inconsistent with the presence of the Lord.
- Second, his heart must be kept from every evil thing, and his hands from practicing evil works.
- Third, he feels the deep necessity for separation from those who work iniquity.

Such are the moral conditions that in every age enable the godly to lift up “holy hands” in prayer (1 Tim. 2:8).

(vv. 5-6) To be ever characterized by these moral conditions may necessitate the discipline of God. Thus, while the godly man deprecates the pleasant things of the wicked, he accepts the smiting and reproofs of the righteous.

With a chastened spirit the psalmist is able to pray not only for his own deliverance, but also for his enemies in the calamities that will surely overtake them. Thus he desires that his words may be acceptable to God (v. 2), and sweet even to his enemies.

(vv. 7-10) Outwardly it would appear as if the circumstances of the godly are such that all hope is gone. The godly would appear to be as lifeless as bones scattered at the mouth of the grave. In this extremity the psalmist finds his resource in God. Trusting in the Lord he looks to be kept from the snares of the wicked while asking that, in the government of God, they may fall into their own nets.

Psalm 142

The godly man looks to the Lord as his only refuge when every other refuge has failed.

(vv. 1-2) In the midst of his sorrows the godly man finds relief in spreading his trouble before the Lord.

(vv. 3-5) Though his spirit is overwhelmed with grief, his confidence is that the Lord knows every detail of his path. All that follows in his prayer flows from this confidence that all is known to the Lord.

In his path there are snares for his feet hidden by the enemy; but nothing is hidden from the Lord who knows his path. There is no man that “knows” him, but the Lord knows. Every earthly refuge fails him, and no one cares for his soul. Misunderstood, cast out and neglected by man, he turns to the Lord to find in Him a refuge from every trial, and the source of every blessing — his “portion in the land of the living.”

(vv. 6-7) Having spread his trouble before the Lord, he looks for an answer to his cry, and deliverance from his persecutors. He takes the place where God can meet a needy soul, for he

owns that he is “brought very low,” and that his enemies are “stronger” than himself.

Being brought out of trouble, he will be free to praise the Name of the Lord in company with the righteous. Having thus poured out his grief before the Lord he is made conscious that the Lord will deal bountifully with him.

Psalm 143

The godly man appeals to the Lord to act in righteousness on behalf of his tried and afflicted servant.

(vv. 1-2) The psalmist appeals to the Lord to hear his prayer and act on his behalf in faithfulness and righteousness, while confessing that he cannot stand before God on the ground of his own righteousness.

(vv. 3-6) The next verses present the sorrowful circumstances that call forth the prayer. The godly man is persecuted by the enemy; his life is crushed; his way is dark, and, he himself, forgotten as one long dead.

The inward effect is that his spirit is overwhelmed, and his heart desolate. He remembers the days of old, and meditates upon all God's works, but finds no relief for his soul. This persecution of the enemy may, indeed, be the chastening of the Lord, allowing him to fall into darkness and desolation of soul in order that he may learn that by no efforts of his own can he be justified. He is shut up to God and His righteousness. Thus, at length, he stretches forth his hands to the Lord as his only hope.

(vv. 7-10) The latter part of the psalm presents his prayer. He sincerely longs for the favour of the Lord's face, for without the favour he is as one dead. He longs for the loving-kindness of the Lord to bring him out of the darkness of soul into the light of the morning. He desires to know the way in which the Lord would have him to walk; to be delivered from his enemies; to learn God's will, and to be led into the land of uprightness.

(vv. 11-12) In the closing verses the psalmist uses a threefold plea. First, he pleads the Name of the Lord; second, the righteousness of the Lord; and third, that he is the servant of the Lord. The Lord cannot be indifferent to the glory of His Name;

His righteousness cannot overlook the wickedness of man; His mercy cannot be unmindful of the troubles of His servants.

Psalm 144

The godly man comforts his soul in the thought of the greatness of the Lord in contrast to the frailty of men by whom he is opposed.

(vv. 1-2) The psalmist, in the presence of his enemies, finds comfort in the blessedness of the Lord, in whom he finds all his resource. The Lord is his strength in weakness; his teacher in conflict; his mercy in the presence of needs; his fortress for a refuge in the storm; his high tower from which to keep watch; his deliverer in trouble; and his shield for a defence; the One who will subdue “the peoples” (Grant) under him.

(vv. 3-4) Having contemplated the greatness of the Lord, the psalmist realizes the feebleness of man. What is man (Adam), or the son of man (Enosh) — man in all his frailty and feebleness, that the Lord should take account of him. He is but vanity, and his days as a shadow that pass away.

(vv. 5-8) Seeing the greatness of the Lord and the frailty of man, who dares to exalt himself against God, why should the judgment be delayed? Hence the psalmist beseeches the Lord to intervene in judgment upon the enemies of His people, and thus bring the godly out of their deep distress — the “great waters,” and deliver them from the power of strangers who are marked by corruption.

(vv. 9-10) Thus delivered, the godly will find a fresh occasion for praise to God who gives salvation, and rescues His servant from the sword.

(vv. 11-15) Thus rid of all their enemies the godly will reach the earthly blessing of millennial days, when men will be blessed in their children, and prospered in their circumstances. Complaints and discontent will no longer be heard amidst a people made happy in the acknowledgement of the Lord as their God.

Psalm 145

The godly man celebrates the power, the grace, and the glory of the everlasting kingdom of the Lord.

This is the last of the alphabetical psalms. The acrostic arrangement is not strictly complete as the letter Nun is omitted.

(vv. 1-2) The godly man delivered from all his enemies can look on to an eternity in which he sees no evil to intrude, and no trace of sorrow to dim his joy in the Lord. Thus he can say, “I will bless thy name for ever and ever,” “I will praise thy name for ever and ever.”

(vv. 3-7) First the psalmist celebrates the greatness and power of God. The Lord is great with a greatness that is unsearchable. His acts are “mighty,” “wondrous,” and “terrible.” The generations of men will declare the greatness of His works, the glory of His majesty, the terror of His acts of judgment, and keep alive the memory of His goodness to His people, founded on righteousness.

(vv. 8-12) Secondly, the psalmist celebrates the grace of God. The Lord is gracious, full of compassion, slow to anger, and of great mercy. How different to man; and even His own people who too often lack grace and compassion, are quick to anger, and show little mercy.

Moreover the Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works. In response to His goodness all His works praise Him, and all His saints bless Him and bear witness to the glory of His kingdom to the sons of men.

(vv. 13-20) Thirdly the psalmist celebrates the glory and blessedness of the kingdom of the Lord. In contrast to the kingdoms of men, that pass away, and while they last are marked by earthly pride and arbitrary power, this kingdom is an everlasting kingdom marked by the condescending grace of the Lord who lifts up the fallen, raises the crushed, provides for the need of every living thing; who listens to the cry of all that call upon Him; who fulfills the desire of those that fear Him, and preserves all them that love Him, but deals in judgment with those that oppose Him.

(v. 21) With the greatness and grace of the Lord filling His soul, the psalmist calls all flesh to “bless his holy name for ever and ever.”

Psalm 146

Israel, delivered from all their enemies, realize the folly of trusting in man, the happiness of trusting in the Lord in whom they trust.

(vv. 1-2) The godly in Israel delivered from all their enemies look on to a life of unbroken praise to the Lord in which they see no shadow of sorrow. Each one can say, “I will sing praise to my God while I have any being.”

(vv. 3-5) By past experience they have learned, first, the folly of trusting in men whether great or small. In such there is neither help, nor continuance, nor the fulfillment of their purposes. Second, Israel has learned the blessedness of having the God of Jacob for their help and hope.

(vv. 6-9) They have found, and delight to own, that Jehovah is a mighty God who has made heaven and earth, and all that is therein.

He is a faithful God, who keeps truth for ever. “He is true and His Word is truth, and that Word He keeps, not for a time, but for ever” (Perowne).

He is a righteous God that executes judgment for the oppressed.

He is a bountiful God “who gives bread to the hungry.”

He is a gracious God, who looses the prisoner, opens the eyes of the blind, and raises up them that are bowed down.

He is a loving God that loves the righteous.

He is a compassionate God that has pity on the defenceless, — the stranger, the fatherless and the widow.

He is a holy God that deals with the wicked.

(v. 10) Such is the One who will reign for ever, even the God of Zion. Well indeed may the psalmist say to all generations, “Praise ye the Lord.”

Psalm 147

The regathered nation of Israel called to praise the Lord for His restoring grace, His providential goodness, and His preserving care.

(vv. 1-6) Israel, delivered from all their enemies, rejoice in the favour of the Lord. They celebrate His restoring grace, gladly recognizing that they owe all their blessing to what He had done.

Man can break down, but only the Lord can “build up Jerusalem.” We in our folly can scatter the people of God; but it is only the Lord who “gathers together” His outcast people. We can break hearts; it is only the Lord who “heals the broken in heart.” We can open old wounds; it is the Lord who “binds up” our wounds.

Yet the One who, with tender compassion can stoop to heal a broken heart on earth, is the One who, in the greatness of His power, can tell the number of the stars, and in His infinite wisdom, call them all by names.

Man may crush the meek; but the Lord lifts them up. Alas! man may exalt the wicked, but the Lord casts them down to the ground.

(vv. 7-11) A further call for praise is found in the providential goodness of the Lord. He orders the clouds and sends the rain, and “makes the grass to grow” to provide for His creatures. He

delights not in those who trust in mere animal strength, but in the God-fearing who hope in His mercy.

(vv. 12-20) For the third time in the course of the psalm the people are called to praise the Lord. Already they had praised the Lord for His restoring grace that had gathered the outcasts and rebuilt Jerusalem; now He is praised for His preserving care, that keeps the gates of the city, maintains peace, satisfies the needs of His people (vv. 13-14); commands the seasons for their blessing (vv. 15-18); reveals His mind, and gives His statutes and judgments to Israel (vv. 19-20).

Psalm 148

The whole creation, in its two great divisions, heaven and earth, is called to praise the Lord.

(vv. 1-6) The heavens are called to praise the Lord. The great host of angelic beings are called to praise. Then, descending to creation, the sun, moon, and stars of light add their mead of praise. The highest heavens with the clouds above the lower heavens are called to praise. Let the heavens praise the Lord, for He commanded and they were created, “He spake and it

was done” (Ps. 33:9). He established the spheres for ever, and decreed their movements from which they will not diverge.

(vv. 7-13) The earth is called to praise the Lord. The sea-monsters and the deep to which they belong; the changing elements, lightning and hail, snow and vapors, and stormy wind fulfilling His Word; the solid mountains and the hills; the trees and animal creation, are all called to praise. Lastly man, the crown of the earthly scene — kings and peoples, men and maidens, old and young — are called to join in praising the One whose Name alone is exalted, and His glory above the earth and heavens.

(v. 14) In all this scene of earthly praise, rising from the children of men, Israel will ever have a special place as a people near to the Lord. For this high privilege the call goes out to Israel, “Praise ye the Lord.”

Psalm 149

Restored Israel called to be joyful in their King, as the sharers of His glory and His government.

(v. 1-4) The earthly congregation of the saints is called to praise the Lord. Their Maker is their King, who at last can take pleasure in His people, and save the meek.

(v. 5) Their long history of sorrow over, the day of glory has come, and, at rest, they can sing aloud the praises of God.

(vv. 6-9) If the praise of God is in their mouth, the sword of government will be in their hand; for in the day of glory they will share with the King in His government of the world, executing judgment upon the enemies of the King. This honour have all the saints.

Psalm 150

Earth and heaven, with everything that has breath, called to praise the Lord.

(v. 1) Very blessedly these five psalms of praise close with a call to earth and heaven to join in the praise of the Lord. God is to be praised in His earthly sanctuary of His holiness, and in the firmament of heaven in which His power and majesty are displayed. He is to be praised for His mighty acts, and His excellent greatness.

Every instrument in the temple service is to be employed in His praise; but, over and above all, the voice of man is to sound the praise of the Lord. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.

