

counsel of God will stand. The natural man knows neither the love nor the anger of God.

“Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their lot.”

But the Psalms reveal, above all, the ravishing and heart-rejoicing

glories of Messiah's reign. Let us so comport our lives by the spirit of this book that it may be our happy lot to share in the coming joys so that we shall be able to say

“This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.”

A.T.J.

Theme For Study

THE PSALMS

The Woodville Ecclesia's Sisters Class has commenced a study upon the Psalms; and for this purpose, meets every other Tuesday morning. As there has been made a request for notes, we have decided to include them in Logos in order that others might benefit therefrom. The study has introduced the book of Psalms, outlined its division into five sections, briefly epitomised the teaching of each Psalm in the first section (Pss. 1-41), and has considered in detail the first Psalms. We propose to include this matter here, that readers may ponder it and perhaps use it as a basis for Bible marking.

Introduction

The book of Psalms is the second of five poetical books of the Bible: Job, Psalms, Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, and Song of Solomon. Both the number and the order of these poetical books are significant. Five is the number of grace, and these books set forth for us the song of grace. Their setting is also significant, for they show in progressive stages, the elevation to true happiness, thus:

Job tells of blessing through suffering.

Psalms sets forth rejoicing in hope.

Proverbs reveals practical wisdom for life at present.

Ecclesiastes teaches us not to set our affection on anything under the sun, but let us aim for the greatest good: co-operation with God.

Song of Songs foretells the sweet intimacy of communion with Christ.

Notice how one step leads to the next. If we can derive blessing through suffering, we will be led to rejoice in hope. This will cause us to act wisely now, to “fear God and keep His commandments,” to ultimately attain unto the marriage of the Lamb.

The Author

Whoever penned the Psalms, the Holy Spirit was the real author. Notice how that fact is emphasised in Heb. 3:7, and elsewhere. Paul wrote:

“Wherefore, as the Holy Spirit saith, To day if ye will hear his voice”

He quoted from a Psalm of David, but he declared it was the Holy Spirit who spake. Again, Peter, in quoting the second Psalm, declared that "God by the mouth of His servant David hath said . . ." (Acts 4:25).

The Holy Spirit was the real Author, therefore, and "holy men of old" were but the amanuenses through whom the Spirit spake.

Of the mediums thus used to record the Psalms, the most prominent, and certainly the most prolific in writing, was David. His name is ascribed to more Psalms than all the other recorded authors put together. Moreover, many of the so-called orphan Psalms, to which there is appended no note of authorship, can be traced to David by internal evidence, or other means. For example, it will be noted that Psalm 2 is not ascribed to anybody, and yet Peter, in his discourse, claimed David as its author (Acts 4:25). We shall see, as we develop our subject, that other Psalms likewise, can be attributed to David.

The Title

The Hebrew title to *The Book Of Psalms* is *Tehellim* which signifies *praises*. A cognate word is rendered *prayers* in Ps. 72:20. The title in the A. V. is derived from the Greek *Psalmos* (singular) or *Psalmoi* (plural). The Greek word signifies: *a poem to be sung to a stringed instrument*. Though this significance does not always strictly apply, the title *Psalms* is endorsed by N. T. usage (Luke 20:42; Acts 1:20; 13:33).

The Book Of Psalms, as with other poetical books of the Bible, are designed to influence our emo-

tions governed by the word. They guide our feelings, as other Scriptures do our faith and action. From the time of their composition onwards, they have been in continuous use. The Israelites used them in the Temple; the Jews use them in dispersion, in the synagogues; the Ecclesias use them to express their worship. Yahweh would have us draw frequently upon the Psalms; notice the instruction of the inspired writers concerning them, thus:

"Speak to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19).

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:16).

"Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms" (James 5:13).

The *Halleluyah chorus*, of Rev. 19:1-5 is drawn directly from the Psalms, indicating that they are prophetic in their scope (cp. Matt. 13:35), where they inspire us to lift up our voices in joyful anticipation of the future.

Singing forms an important part of worship. The singers in the Temple prophesied by song (1 Chron. 25:1). In Ecclesial service, it is the sole feature of worship in which every member of the congregation can participate in vocally. Therefore, the thought and feeling that we give to hymn-singing is important. Paul exhorted:

"I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also" (1 Cor. 14:15).

He suggests complete identification of the singer with the words uttered; a full concentration of the

mind and the emotions therewith. Hosea suggests that it can comprise a form of sacrifice:

“Take with you words, and turn to Yahweh: say unto Him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips” (Hos. 14:2).

His statement includes prayer for forgiveness of sins, appeal for divine grace to be extended, and response in wholehearted ascription of praise in song, during which our lips are offered as “the calves” dedicated in sacrifice. Other references in the word are similarly exhortatory:

“Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows to the most High” (Psalm 50:14).

“By him (Christ) therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name” (Heb. 13:15).

The Keys David Struck

We believe that the evidence shows David to be the author of the majority of the Psalms, including many of those to which no claim of authorship is appended.

In the light of that it has well been said:

The keys that David struck have reverberated ever since. They have found harmony in the heart of the exile, the sufferer, the joyful, the triumphant. They have helped in moments of sadness and of joy, in sorrow and in happiness, in disaster and in triumph, in sin and in righteousness. The Psalms provide the right note for moods of thankfulness, sorrow, despair, hope, rage, love, mercy, doubt, vengeance, faith. In the vicissitudes of David's life, we have a companion who can utter the words we feel in all the trials that come our way: in wandering, escapes, captivity, banishment, bereavement, persecution. He expresses for us the exaltation that comes from the quiet contemplation of nature

(Pss. 8,29,104), the excitement of the battlefields of Israel (Pss. 20,60,110), the splendour of great occasions (Ps. 45). The Apostles dwell often on these moods and quoted freely from the Psalms. They are prophetic; they take us into the future, and cause us to thrill at the prospects of the great drama yet to be brought about in the earth, and which is fittingly expressed in many of these songs of Zion.

In 2 Sam. 23:1-7, in a Psalm described as *The Last Words Of David*, the king outlines the theme of the Psalms. We reproduce the Psalm based upon renditions of the Hebrew supplied by Brother Thomas and others:

The Last Words Of David

*David the son of Jesse said,
Even the man elevated on high,
Concerning the Christ (anointed) of the
Elohim of Jacob,
Even the pleasantest theme of Israel's
Psalms.*

*The Spirit of Yahweh spake by me,
And His word was in my tongue.
The Elohim of Israel said,
The Rock of Israel spake to me.
There shall be a Ruler over mankind, a
Just One,
Ruling in the fear of God.
And as the brightness of morning he
shall arise,
The sun of an unclouded dawn,
Shining forth after rain
Upon tender grass out of the earth.*

*For is not my house thus through God?
For He has made with me an everlasting
covenant,
Ordered in all things and secure.
For will He not cause to prosper
All my help and my desire?*

*But those of Worthlessness,
Shall all of them as thorns be thrust away,
For they cannot be taken with the hand;
But the man that shall touch them
Must be pierced with iron and the staff
of a spear;
And they shall be utterly burned with
fire
In the same place.*

We will provide verse by verse notes on this Psalm, and in doing

so, we suggest that the reader compare the rendition above with that of the A. V.

VERSE 1

"David the son of Jesse" - Consider the humility of the writer. David does not write as king in his own right, but as the *son of Jesse* who had *been elevated*. The family of Jesse was not particularly well known in Israel, so that Saul used it as a mark of contempt for David's humble origin (see 1 Sam. 20:31; 22:7). Nabal imitated Saul's attitude (1 Sam. 25:10), as did other enemies of David (2 Sam. 20:1; 1 Kings 12:16). Now, in the Psalm before us, David draws attention to his humble beginning, in order to emphasise with gratitude, the great privilege that Yahweh had conferred on him.

"The man who was raised up on high" - In the Hebrew, *the man is hagibbor*, the *hero*, or *mighty man*. Under God, David was the conqueror of Goliath, and earned the title of *hagibbor*. The verb, *raised up* signifies to be elevated to rule. A similar expression is used of the Lord Jesus (Acts 3:26). Thus one of humble origin, by his victory of faith, was elevated to rule.

"The anointed of the God of Jacob" - The A. V. aligns this with David the composer of the Psalm, but the Hebrew gives a different application. The Hebrew words are *ol Meschiach Elohai*, but the A. V. takes no notice of the *ol* in the statement. Brother Thomas renders it: *concerning an Anointed of Elohim*. In this he is supported by Dr. Strong who gives *ol* as signifying *concerning*. David was writing *concerning* the Christ of God, not *as* the Christ of God, though he could claim that title. The *God of Jacob* was the one who overshadowed the life of Jacob through all its vicissitudes of trial and trouble to the point where his name was changed to *Israel*, and he was given an unconditional promise of ultimate glory. The title is only used in a context of trouble leading to deliverance therefrom.

"And the sweet psalmist of Israel" - Brother Thomas renders the Hebrew *-uneimzemroth Yisrael- as even the pleasantest (theme) of Israel's songs*. Dr. Parker renders the phrase: *he that is pleasant in Israel's Psalms*. The coming

Messiah is the great theme of the Psalms, David himself being witness. He clearly saw the prophetic import of much that was set before him in type. Consider his grasp of the subject as proclaimed by Peter on the Day of Pentecost:

"Therefore (David) being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption" (Acts 2:30-31).

VERSE 2

"The Spirit of Yahweh spake by me" - Divine inspiration is claimed by David, and is endorsed by New Testament usage (see Heb. 3:7). The revelation came from Yahweh to Israel through David, and these "last words" of the king (see v. 1) underline the great prophetic theme of all that was uttered.

VERSE 3

"The God of Israel said" - Notice the transition from the *God of Jacob* (v. 1). The *supplanter* (Jacob), becomes a *Prince with El* (Israel). This will be the case with all those who attain unto life eternal.

"The Rock Of Israel" - Heb. *Tzur*. See the use of this title in Deut. 32:4,15, 18 etc. The rock in the desert is a symbol of strength and stability in the midst of instability; a sure foundation amid the shifting sands of life with all its doubts and troubles. Yahweh is likened to a rock because of His enduring faithfulness and unchangeableness (Mal. 3:6). Like the granite crags of Sinai, He is immutable and immovable, a shelter from the winds of the desert, or a shade from the heat of the blazing sun above. Like the Rock that gave Israel water, so He refreshes His people; like the cleft rock that sheltered Moses, so He shelters those who seek His refuge; like the rock-foundation upon which the immovable house was built (Matt. 7:24-25), so His people can build on the foundation He provides with every confidence.

"He that ruleth over men must be just" - Brother Thomas renders (see

also R. V. margin): *There shall be a Ruler over mankind, a Just One ruling in the fear of God.* The statement is prophetic, pointing to what will be; not exhortatory, indicating the manner in which a king should rule. *Yirath* (fear) terror, reverence etc., but metonymically, the precepts of righteousness. Hence Brother Thomas renders: *in the righteous precepts of Elohim.*

VERSE 4

"And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth" — Christ is likened to the sun whose rays destroy the darkness of night. See John 8:12; Mal. 4:2; Hab. 3:3-4; Isa. 60:1-2. Brother Thomas renders this verse: *And as the brightness of morning, he shall arise, the sun of an unclouded dawn shining forth after rain upon tender grass out of the earth.* The golden rays of the sun dispel the darkness of the night, and symbolise the brilliant glory of Messiah's reign.

"A morning without clouds" — The storm of Armageddon is over; the symbolic clouds (Heb. 12:1) have emptied their rain upon the mown grass, in the divine teaching that shall be proclaimed to the nations (Ps. 72:6; Deut. 32:1-2), and the millennial "day" of a thousand years has commenced (2 Pet. 3:8).

"As the tender grass springing out of the earth" — Grass symbolises flesh (Isa. 40:6; Ps. 37:2). The figure before us speaks of it being revived.

"By clear shining after rain" — The sun shines forth with all its healthy influence on such occasions.

VERSE 5

"Although my house be not so with God" — The A. V. reads as though David was deprecating his house, which would be rather a strange comment at this stage. The Hebrew *ki* signifies *for*. The R.S.V. renders: "For is not my house thus through God?" The Psalm is an expression of thanksgiving for the goodness of *El* towards David's house.

"Yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant" — The R. V. mg. renders "yet" as *for*, thus following on from the previous line. The everlasting

covenant is the covenant of the age; a covenant that points forward to the future: *for He hath made with me an everlasting covenant.*

"Ordered in all things and sure" — Like a carefully prepared legal document, providing for any contingency, and so explicitly worded as to prevent any misconception.

"For this is all my salvation, and all my desire" — See Ps. 27:4,13; 17:15.

"Although he make it not to grow" — This, again, is a strange statement. Would not an "everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure" be certain to grow? Again, "although" is given as a rendition for *ki*, so that the line can read: "For shall He not cause it to prosper?" Being what it is, it is sure to prosper.

VERSE 6

"But the sons of Belial shall be all of them as thorns thrust away" — Belial signifies *ungodliness*, or *worthlessness*, from *beli*, *without*; and *yal*, *use*. Thus without use, profit or advantage. In this statement, the words *the sons* can be eliminated, and *Belial* remains as a personification of worthlessness and wickedness multitudinally manifested through its various agents represented in the text as *all*. The political representative of Belial at the Return will be Gog. All these forms of wickedness, including Gog, are represented as "thorns." It is significant that the forces of Belial placed a crown of thorns on the head of the greater son of David, as symbolic of their power, for thorns represent sin (Heb. 6:8). As such, they are to be thrust away.

"Because they cannot be taken with hands" — The handling of such "thorns" is too painful for flesh. Some more effective means must be discovered: even divine power (see Dan. 8:25).

VERSE 7

"But the man that shall touch them must be fenced with iron and the staff of a spear" — Brethren J. Thomas and C. C. Walker both render "fenced" as *pierced* (see mg.). The man (*ish*) is the Lord Jesus. He was pierced with iron nails in hands and feet; and with the staff of a spear, as he hung from the cross. But his death led the way to a

great victory over the devil (Heb. 2:14), for, because of his perfect righteousness, he was raised to life eternal, and therefore capable of dealing with the forces of Belial.

"And they shall be utterly burned in the same place" — The forces of Belial, headed up by Gog, will be destroyed at Jerusalem (Zech. 14:1-2), the very place where the Lord was crucified. In a perfect act of divine justice, both Jew and Gentile will be drawn to the same spot as where they crucified the Lord 1900 years ago, that they might witness his triumph over the forces of Belial.

These last words of David thus comprise the great theme of the Psalms. It speaks of the Lord's humiliation and final glory. As inspiration moved David, he could see that Yahweh had guided his life so that he enacted the future of his more glorious son. These glorious types and shadows provided the foundation of many of the utterances of these songs of Zion.

— H.P.M.

Jews in the News

Israel, during the past month, has witnessed the end of an era. For the first time in over 2,000 years (since the Maccabean age), a native-born Israeli has been given control of the nation. This has taken place with the displacement of Mrs. Golda Meir by Yitzhak Rabin as Prime Minister. Mrs. Meir was the last of the pioneers to exercise that power. Until now, all those who have occupied the major positions in Israel, have been those who have migrated from abroad under the inspiration of Zionism. They have witnessed terror or persecution in the countries of their nativity, and have known the urgency of the establishment of a "national home for the Jews in Palestine." Now, for the first time, a sabra, a home-born Israeli is in charge as Prime Minister. What that will mean in regard to international policy, the future will reveal. Minister. Mrs. Meir was the last of the pioneers to exercise that power.

Israel's New Prime Minister

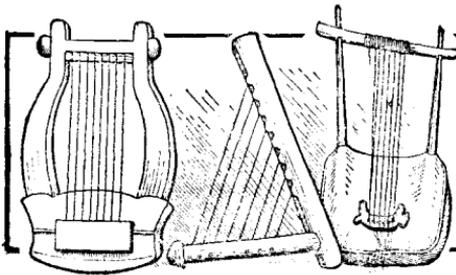
Yitzhak Rabin, Israel's new Prime Minister, has successively been guerilla fighter, soldier, diplomat, and politician, before accepting his new post as leader of the country. He has been described as "an intense man with cool blue eyes and a no-nonsense bearing, born of a life-long career as a soldier," which is blended with a "wry sense of humour."

He is also known to be a man with a "volatile temper" which often led to fiery clashes with such men as Ben-Gurion

and Levi Eshkol. As a result of his close friendship with Henry Kissinger, he began lobbying "a more flexible policy of territorial concessions towards the Arabs." This brought heated opposition from Golda Meir and other high ranking Israeli officials.

In the new Israeli Cabinet, four senior members of the old Government are missing: Golda Meir, Sapir, Dayan and Eban. The *Jerusalem Post* has this to say of Mrs. Meir:

"After a life-time of devoted, single-minded, courageous service, often spiced



The Book of Psalms

2. BOOK ONE - OF THE PSALMS

In this article we consider the first section of the Book of Psalms in a general way, as preparation for a more detailed consideration of each one. We make a suggestion as to how the Psalms should be individually interpreted.

The Five Sections of The Psalms

The Hebrew Bible divides the Psalms into five sections or books. *Book One* comprises Psalms 1 - 41; *Book Two*, Psalms 42 - 72; *Book Three*, Psalms 73 - 89; *Book Four*, Psalms 90 - 106; *Book Five*, Psalms 107 - 150. Some limit *Book Five* to Psalms 107 - 145, and find in the last five Psalms, a repetition of the basic principles set forth in each of the five books.

The five books of Psalms are aligned with the five books of the Pentateuch. One Jewish writer has expressed the idea in the following terms:

"Moses gave to the Israelites the five books of the Law; and corresponding with these, David gave to them the five books of the Psalms."

There is a close link between the work of Moses and that of David. As the writings and labour of Moses brought Israel to nationhood, so the writings and labour of David formulated the Kingdom. David acts as a bridge between Moses and Christ, between the lawgiver and the King. Thus the Psalms commence with the proclamation of blessing (Ps. 1:1), and Christ's public ministry, in the Sermon on the Mount, likewise proclaimed bles-

sings upon those who acted upon his principles.

By many writers, the various divisions of the Psalms have been aligned with the divisions of the Law. It is suggested, that the Psalms selected to make up the various divisions (for they are not set down in chronological order), answer to the main thought in the corresponding book in the Pentateuch. We will examine this thought as we consider each section in detail, but we merely note it at this time, setting out the five books accordingly. Thus:

Book 1 - Genesis Psalms;
Book 2 - Exodus Psalms;
Book 3 - Leviticus Psalms;
Book 4 - Numbers Psalms;
Book 5 - Deuteronomy Psalms.

Dissecting The Five Sections

We have noted that the Hebrew Bible divides the Psalms into five sections. Now notice that this division is incorporated into the Psalms themselves, for each Book is completed with an ascription of praise unto Yahweh. This is found in the last verse of each of the sections, which rules off, as it were, that particular division of the Psalms. It will be found helpful to mark off each of these ascriptions of praise

with a distinguishing colour, so that the finality of each of the books is clearly set out before the mind. The relevant verses are:

1. Psalm 41:13: "Blessed be Yahweh God of Israel from everlasting and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen.
2. Psalm 72:19-20: "And blessed be His glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with His glory; Amen and Amen. The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended."
3. Psalm 89:52: "Blessed be Yahweh for evermore. Amen and Amen."
4. Psalm 106:48: "Blessed be Yahweh God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting; and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye Yahweh."
5. Psalm 145:21: "Let all flesh bless His holy name for ever and ever." Psalm 150:6: "Let every thing that hath breath praise Yahweh. Praise ye Yahweh."

Thus each section is carefully divided off from that following it; suggesting five distinct books.

Method Of Interpreting The Psalms

It seems evident, that the five books of Psalms answer to the five books of the Pentateuch, and, therefore, a valuable avenue of study would be to trace the link between both. For example, if *Book One* of the Psalms should be aligned with Genesis, in what way does it do so? This soon becomes evident with a little research. Genesis commences with Adam in Eden, in a state of blessedness, and obeying the law of his God. Psalm 1 commences on a similar note. But Genesis reveals how that a note of discord entered Eden with the advent of sin, and this led to rebelliousness and violence. Notice how the succeeding Psalms do likewise. The basic thought of Psalm 2 is the useless rebellion of flesh, and the succeed-

ing Psalms speak of rebellion and violence.

Here, then, is an intriguing avenue of study. But is it of any practical value? We believe that it is. It teaches that a state of blessedness can deteriorate into rebellion, evil and violence; and it reminds us to be on our guard against such. It also reaffirms that salvation is possibly only through the Lord Jesus. Finally, it teaches us that the experience of life revealed in Genesis from Eden onwards is not only a literal account of what actually happened, but comprises a parable of world history and individual experience.

What about individual Psalms. How do we proceed to study them? We have found it profitable to look for certain things in each Psalm.



A scroll of Psalms found at Qumran.

They are:

- (1) Who wrote the Psalm?
- (2) Under what circumstances was it written?
- (3) What practical lesson in morality does it teach?
- (4) What is its typical or prophetic significance?
- (5) What is its basic theme, or heading?

In considering the Psalms individually, we propose to adopt this procedure, and invite the reader to follow us in this excursion.

Book One:

The Genesis Psalms — Concerning Man (Psalms 1—41)

Synopsis: *The counsels of Yahweh concerning man. All blessing bound up in obedience (cp. Gen. 1:26-28; 2:15-17). Obedience to the Word is as a tree of life to man (Ps. 1:3; Gen. 2:16). Disobedience brings ruin (Gen. 3; Ps. 2). The ruin redeemed only by the Son of Man in his atoning work as the Seed of the woman (Ps. 23; Gen. 3:15). The book concludes with a benediction and a double Amen. (See Companion Bible).*

We now sectionise this first book of the Psalms, provide a heading for each one, and suggest a dominant verse expressive of the Truth.

The section is divided into three parts:

1. Man in relation to the Son of Man — Psalms 1—8.
2. The man of the earth — Psalms 9—15
3. The Man: Christ Jesus — Psalms 16—41.

Man In Relation To The Son Of Man — Psalms 1—8.

We suggest the following headings, and dominant verses for the Psalms of this section.

Psalm 1: The Truly Happy Man — *In complete communion with Yahweh.*

Dominant verse: "His delight is in the law of Yahweh; and in His law doth he meditate day and night." (v. 2).

Psalm 2: Man In Rebellion — *Ultimately conquered by the Son of Yahweh. Dominant verse: "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: Yahweh shall have them in derision" (v. 4).*

Psalm 3: A Morning Prayer In View Of Rebelliousness — *Confidence in Yahweh the Shield. Dominant verse: "But Thou, O Yahweh, art a Shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head" (v. 3).*

Psalm 4: An Evening Prayer Of Thanksgiving For Protection — *Confidence in Yahweh's help. Dominant verse: "Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer" (v. 1).*

Psalm 5: A Morning Plea For Help — *In view of the unscrupulous and hypocritical enemies. Dominant Verse: "Lead me, O Yahweh, in Thy righteousness because of mine enemies; make Thy way straight before my face" (v. 8).*

Psalm 6: A Plea For Help Under Great Trial — *In view of the Psalmist's lack of confidence induced by a powerful opposition. Dominant verse: "O Yahweh heal me; for my bones are vexed." "Yahweh hath heard my supplication." (vv. 2,9).*

Psalm 7: Shall Not The Judge Of All The Earth Do Right! — *Though for the moment the wicked seem to triumph. Dominant verse: "Yahweh shall judge the people." "My defence is of God which saveth the upright in heart" (vv. 8,10).*

Psalm 8: The Glory Of Yahweh Revealed In The Son — *The triumph of his victory over sin. Dominant verse: "How excellent is Thy name in all the earth" (vv. 1,9).*

The Man Of The Earth — Psalms 9—15

His days, character and end, including the "time of trouble" (cp. Psalms 9:9; 10:1).

Psalm 9: The Vindication Of Truth — *The certainty of vengeance upon the enemy. Dominant verse: "Thou hast maintained my right and my cause" (v. 4).*

Psalm 10: The Character And Ultimate Destruction Of The Man Of The Earth — *In spite of Yahweh's seeming indifference. Dominant verse: "Yahweh, Thou hast heard the desire of the humble; Thou wilt prepare their heart, Thou wilt cause Thine ear to hear; to judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress"* (vv. 17-18).

Psalm 11: Yahweh: A Refuge For The Righteous — *In the face of oppression. Dominant verse: "In Yahweh put I my trust"* (v. 1).

Psalm 12: Yahweh: A Saviour From Man's Treachery — *so openly manifested in the earth. Dominant verse: "For the sighing of the needy, now will I arise saith Yahweh"* (v. 5).

Psalm 13: Yearning For Help From Yahweh — *The need for patience. Dominant verse: "How long wilt Thou forget me, O Yahweh? for ever? How long wilt Thou hide Thy face from me?"* (v. 1).

Psalm 14: Redemption From Mankind's Universal Corruption — *The prevailing wickedness illustrates the need. Dominant verse: "There is none that doeth good, no, not one"* (v. 3).

Psalm 15: A True Citizen Of Zion — *Providing a contrast to the world of wickedness. Dominant verse: "He that doeth these things shall never be moved"* (v. 5).

The Man Christ Jesus — Psalms 16-41

Psalm 16: Yahweh: His Portion In Life And Deliverance In Death — *His sustaining power in trouble. Dominant verse: "Yahweh is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: Thou maintainest my lot." "I have set Yahweh always before me; because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved"* (vv. 5,8).

Psalm 17: A Plea for Vindication And Protection — *In the face of the fleshly attacks of men. Dominant verse: "As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness"* (v. 15).

Psalm 18: The Deliverance And Victory Of Yahweh's Servant — *Manifested in the power of an answered prayer. Dominant verse: "Great deliverance giveth He to His king; and sheweth mercy to His anointed"* (v. 50).

Psalm 19: The Glory And Influence Of The Word Of Yahweh — *Manifested in natural and spiritual creation. Dominant verse: "Let the words of My mouth, and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O Yahweh my strength and my redeemer"* (v. 14).

Psalm 20: Intercession Through The King — *His power to help. Dominant verse: "Now I know that Yahweh saveth His anointed; He will hear him from His holy heaven, with the saving strength of His right hand"* (v. 6).

Psalm 21: Thanksgiving And Prayer For The Davidic Covenant — *The encouragement of Yahweh's blessing. Dominant verse: "The king shall joy in Thy salvation, how greatly shall he rejoice"* (v. 11).

Psalm 22: The Lord As Sin Offering — *From tragedy to triumph. Dominant verse: "For He hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath He hid His face from him; but when he cried unto Him, He heard"* (v. 24).

Psalm 23: Yahweh As The Good Shepherd — *Comfort in the shadow of death. Dominant verse: "Yahweh is my Shepherd; I shall not want"* (v. 1).

Psalm 24: The Lord As Victorious Sovereign — *Triumph at Jerusalem. Dominant verse: "Lift up your heads O ye gates; and the king of glory shall come in"* (v. 8).

Psalm 25: A Prayer For Help And Forgiveness — *At a time of affliction, and trouble. Dominant verse: "Look on mine affliction and pain; and forgive all my sins"* (v. 10).

Psalm 26: A Plea For Vindication And Protection — *When misunderstood by opponents. Dominant verse: "But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity; redeem me, and be merciful unto me"* (v. 11).

Psalm 27: Yahweh: My Light And Salvation — *At a time of darkness and depression. Dominant verse: "One thing have I desired of Yahweh, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of Yahweh all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of Yahweh, and to enquire in His temple"* (v. 4).

Psalm 28: A Plea For Help And Praise For Assistance Received — *When enemies are powerful. Dominant verse:*

"Blessed be Yahweh, because He hath heard the voice of my supplications" (v. 6).

Psalm 29: Yahweh's Majesty In Storm And Peace — "Yahweh will give strength unto His people; Yahweh will bless His people with peace" (v. 11).

Psalm 30: Rejoicing in Yahweh Ropheka — *An appeal in time of sickness.* Dominant verse: "O Yahweh, I cried unto Thee, and Thou hast heard me. O Yahweh Thou hast brought up my soul from the grave" (vv. 2-3).

Psalm 31: A Prayer In Time Of Desperate Need — *Depressed in mind, worn out physically, defamed and persecuted.* Dominant verse: "Into thy hand I commit my spirit" (v. 5).

Psalm 32: The Blessedness Of Divine Grace — *Relief at confession and forgiveness of sin.* Dominant verse: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven; whose sin is covered" (v. 3).

Psalm 33: Praise To Yahweh For His Goodness — *Revealed in deliverance from evil.* Dominant verse: "Behold the eye of Yahweh is upon them that fear Him; upon them that hope in His mercy" (v. 18).

Psalm 34: A Hymn Of Praise And Instruction — *When delivered out of trouble.* Dominant verse: "O magnify Yahweh with me; and let us exalt His name together" (v. 3).

Psalm 35: A Prayer For Help Against Enemies Within — *When subjected to attacks of treachery.* Dominant verse: "For without cause have they hid for me their net in a pit; which without cause they have digged for my soul" (v. 7).

Psalm 36: Man's Wickedness Contrasted To God's Righteousness — *Dominant verse: "He setteth himself in a way that is not good" (v. 4). "Thy righteousness is like the great mountains" (v. 6).*

Psalm 37: Fret Not Because Of Evil-doers — *The experience of life.* Dominant verse: "I have seen the wicked

in great power; and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and lo, he was not" (vv. 35-36).

Psalm 38: A Penitent Sinner's Lamentation — *Christ pleads for his own.* Dominant verse: "I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin." (v. 18).

Psalm 39: Seeking Strength In Times Of Weakness — *When silence is a virtue.* Dominant verse: "Yahweh make me to know mine end; and the measure of my days what it is; that I may know how frail I am" (v. 4).

Psalm 40: Confidence And Hope In The Midst Of Trial — *Christ as a burnt offering.* Dominant verse: "I delight to do Thy will, O my God" (v. 8). "Let all those who seek Thee rejoice and be glad in Thee; let such as love Thy salvation say continually, Yahweh be magnified" (v. 11).

Psalm 41: The Blessed State Of Those Who Bless — *Rendering good for evil.* Dominant verse: "Blessed is he that considereth the poor; Yahweh will deliver him in time of trouble" (v. 1).

Summary

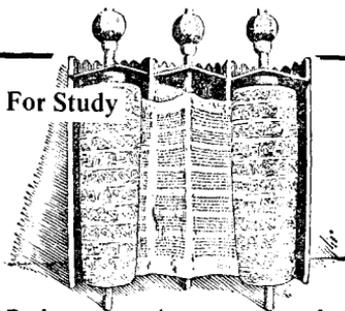
The above comprises suggested headings for all the Psalms in *Book One*. We suggest that you use them as a basis for improvement. Read the Psalms as they appear, and try and assess the dominant thought of each one. You may find words to express them than those we have outlined above. In that case, we would be pleased to hear from you, to improve upon our own work.

We plan, in our next article, to consider in detail the first Psalm, using the four lines of investigation for its interpretation as suggested above.

— HPM

"Who likes adversity? No one. Yet without it our best experience is unattainable, for a man cannot be known, either to himself or others until he is brought under the pressure of evil circumstances. The fire not only supplies the brightness, but shows the gold."

Theme For Study



PSALM ONE— The Truly Happy Man

This Psalm comprises an introduction or Preface to the Book of Psalms. The Book, as a whole, dramatises man's conflict between good and evil; between the Righteous One and the Wicked One (cp. Ps. 18); whilst this Introduction reveals that true happiness and success is in doing the will of Yahweh. From other Psalms we learn that the Psalmist endeavoured to put into effect his own counsel (cp. Ps. 26:3-12), providing an example of Godly conduct (Ps. 112), exhorting Yahweh's people to follow those ways (Ps. 37), and warning of the danger of being led astray by false impressions of seeming prosperity and happiness on the part of the wicked (Ps. 73).

Background To The Psalm

There is no direct indication as to authorship of this Psalm, but as it is closely connected with Psalm 2, and as it can be established that David was the author of that Psalm (under divine inspiration of course), it would appear that this one was also.

If so, it was probably penned before David's transgression with Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11), when he was at the height of his prestige and power: great, glorious, triumphant, renowned; a king and a conqueror in every sense. The tribes had besought him to lead them, and had acknowledged him as king; he had united the nation after the disastrous civil war under the successors of Saul; he had driven its enemies from its borders; extended its conquests in every direction; revived the worship of Yahweh; and ordered the manner of service. He stood before the people as blessed, happy, the ruler of a theocracy. This was as the result of his ad-

herence to the ways of Yahweh, providing a basis for the expressions of the Psalm.

But from this state of happiness, of blessedness, David was taken off guard and grievously sinned, to be plunged into the depths of sadness and sorrow.

Probably at some such time as is described in 2 Samuel 10:19, David composed the Psalm before us. In doing so, he typified the Lord Jesus Christ, the truly blessed one, who fulfilled the requirements of the Psalm to perfection.

The Enduring Prosperity Of the Righteous — Vv. 1-3.

The Psalmist sets forth progressive steps in a life of wisdom or folly, and reveals the ultimate enduring prosperity of the righteous.

VERSE 1

"Blessed" — The emphasis of the *Book of Psalms* as a whole is upon rejoicing in hope. Two related Hebrew expressions are used to describe this, both of which are translated *blessed*. They are *esher*, a word found in the

plural as here, expressing a state of happiness; and its root *ashar*, to be straight, go forward, prosper. Both words are closely related. The state of blessedness, or happiness, expressed by the former word, is applied in the following relationships throughout the *Book of Psalms*:

Those who live Godly lives (Ps. 1:1; 106:3);

Those who put their trust in Yahweh (Ps. 2:12; 40:4; 84:12);

Those whose sins are covered (Ps. 32:1-2);

Those who help the afflicted (Ps. 41:1);

The nation whose God is Yahweh (Ps. 33:12);

The man whom God chooses for fellowship (Ps. 65:4);

Those who will dwell in Yahweh's house (Ps. 84:4);

They who derive their strength from Yahweh (Ps. 84:5);

They who know the joyful sound of the Gospel (Ps. 89:15).

They who submit to Yahweh's discipline (Ps. 94:12);

They who fear Yahweh (Ps. 112:1; 128:1);

They who seek Him with the whole heart (Ps. 119:2);

The man who enjoys the support of many sons (Ps. 127:5);

They who fear Yahweh and walk in His ways (Ps. 128:2);

They who oppose Babylon and seek to destroy her influence (Ps. 137:8-9).

The word *ashar* is found in the following places and relationships:

In relation to the man who considers the poor (Ps. 41:2);

In relation to earth's future king (Ps. 72:17).

Further unrelated words, likewise translated *blessed* are the Hebrew expressions *barak* and *berakah*. The word *barak* is used of man's attitude towards Yahweh; and Yahweh's attitude towards man. When used of man towards Yahweh it signifies to kneel in adoration; when used in relation to man, it signifies His condescension to meet with man.

The word *blessed* in the verse before us is *ashrey* in Hebrew. It is the plural form of *esher*, and signifies *blessings*. The blessings are manifold, as are shown by the words of the Lord in Matthew 5:1-12.

The Hebrew expresses the superlative by a plural of intensity: "O how very happy the man," or "O the happiness of the man" etc. The teaching of this verse reveals that the man who renders perfect obedience inherits great happiness, many blessings. But there has been only one man who has done that: the Lord Jesus Christ. What of all other men? Do the Psalms indicate that they lack happiness because of failure? The answer is in the negative. Happiness is available for the sinner by seeking the cover provided in Christ. Hence, though we cannot obtain the blessedness of perfect obedience, we can obtain it through the covering provided of Yahweh. Psalm 32:1-2 proclaims the blessed lot of the sinner who shelters under the cover provided of God. Therefore, when we fail to attain unto the blessedness of Psalm 1, we should seek that of Psalm 32.

What is the doctrinal import of all this? It is that happiness is the keynote of the Psalms. Yahweh made man for happiness (Deut. 33:29; Ps. 114:15); and the references above reveal the various channels through which it can be attained. Every person craves for happiness, and hates the thought of being miserable. But so perverse is the human heart, that it seeks for its ideal where it cannot be found; and indulges in practises that destroy the basis of true happiness.

The Psalms reveal that happiness can be obtained now (1 Tim. 4:8), though its full fruits await the future age, when the ultimate triumph of the righteous will be openly manifested. Then the present "success" of the wicked as well as the present reverses of the righteous, will be shown to be but temporary.

"The man" — The Hebrew is emphatic: "that man." The Psalm is obviously prophetic of the Christ, the perfect man.

"Walketh" — The verse expresses the gradual decline that can take place in the life of a person who is not motivated by the Word. This decline is expressed in the words: walketh, standeth, sitteth; counsel, way, seat; ungodly, sinners, scornful. To "walk" with a person implies, at least, a passing acquaintance with him (cp. Mic. 6:16; Jer. 7:24; 2 Chron. 22:3-4). A person will walk along a street with a mere acquaintance; but if he knows him well enough, he will pause to stand for a while to speak to

him before parting; however, he will *sit* down to converse at length with a more familiar friend. The use of these verbs in this verse therefore spell out the idea of gradual moral deterioration; a closer familiarity with evil influence. So also with the next three. A person may hearken to counsel without acting upon it; but *way* signifies performance; whilst *seat* suggests endorsement of it. Finally, *ungodliness* is negative wickedness, an attitude of mind that ariseth out of ignorance of Yahweh; *sinner*s, however, implies active wickedness, wrong-doing performed in realisation of it being wrong; whilst *scorners* defines contemptuous wickedness, open rebellion against Yahweh.

“Counsel” – The counsel of the ungodly is advice not hedged about by the law of Yahweh; and, therefore, indifferent to His requirements.

“Ungodly” – The Hebrew *reshaim* is from *rasha*, signifying *unrest*. It suggests people who are restive against restraint; who break in pieces the order of things, and bring unrest and affliction by so doing. Ungodliness is negative wickedness, stemming from ignorance, and therefore forgivable (cp. 1 Tim. 1:13). The ungodly know not that they are doing wrong. They are not as extreme in their folly as the scorners, who realise that they oppose the teaching of Yahweh, but are scornfully indifferent to the fact.

“The way of sinners” – Sinners is *chattaim*, from a root word signifying *to miss the mark*. The singular, negative form of the word is rendered *not miss* in Jud. 20:16, and is used in relation to the skill of Benjamite warriors in hitting the mark at which they aimed. The word, therefore, suggests active sin, in contrast to the negative sin of the ungodly; for one who *misses the mark* is fully conscious of that for which he should aim. For the way of sinners, see Ps. 36:4; Prov. 14:12; 2 Chron. 22:3-4.

“Sitteth in the seat of the scorners” – This describes the final and most hateful form of sin: contemptuous indifference to what is required. A sinner may attempt to hit the mark but fail to do so through personal weakness; a scorner is one who ridicules any such effort, or the restrictions that Yahweh has imposed upon conduct. A person sitting in the

seat of the scorners, is not only indifferent himself to the way of righteousness, but is advising others to be the same. He is a wicked counsellor, encouraging others to a life of rebellion. The word *seat* is literally *session*. It is significant that Psalm 2:1 describes such a session, and the folly of those participating therein. The *Book of Proverbs* particularly warns against scorners. It describes them as manifesting complete disregard for God or man (Prov. 21:4); as being impervious to the appeal of the truth (Prov. 13:1; 15:12); as being beyond the appeal of wisdom (Prov. 14:6). It warns that it is folly to reason with such (Prov. 9:7-9), and therefore advises to avoid them (Prov. 22:10), leaving it to Yahweh to discipline them (Prov. 19:29). Finally, it shows that Yahweh will deal with the scorner ultimately, to the edification of all mankind (Prov. 21:11).

VERSE 2

“His delight is in the law of Yahweh” – This describes the attitude of the man who avoids the pitfalls of verse 1. It expresses positive righteousness. A person who *delights* in Yahweh’s law has progressed far beyond mere formalised religion: he finds pleasure in his worship. The design of the law is for true happiness, and a believer who finds it his delight has discovered the secret of contentment from whence springs true happiness.

“In His law doth he meditate day and night” – He will naturally do so because he has learned to “delight” in it. This is not natural to flesh, and comprises an appetite that must be cultivated. When that is done, fleshly thoughts will be superceded by spiritual ones, and he will learn to “meditate” upon the things that he has discovered out of the Law (cp. Ps. 119:18). “Meditate” is *yehgeh* in Hebrew, and signifies deep, serious, affectionate thoughtfulness. The person described in the Psalm gives such meditation to that in which he delights. He is found doing so at all times, and not merely at formal meetings or occasions. Such meditation becomes habitual to him.

VERSE 3

“He shall be like a tree planted” – This suggests cultivation, not mere haphazard growth. Moreover, the place

where it is planted — “by the rivers of water” implies careful selection, so as to provide for all requirements. The tree referred to is most likely the palm (see Ps. 92:12 where saints are likened to palms). The palm is noted for its love of water, its stately appearance, evergreen foliage, and health-giving fruit. In the desert, it betokens the existence of water, and draws men to it. Therefore it is an appropriate symbol for a true worshipper. Let such drink deeply from the well of truth, manifesting the results of so doing in a righteous character, and health-giving fruit ripened to the glory of Yahweh.

“By the rivers of water” — Figurative of the spirit-word. See John 4:14; Rev. 22:1-2.

“Bringeth forth his fruit in his season” — The fruit referred to is the fruit of the spirit, enumerated in Gal. 5:22-23. Each has its particular season of development, whether it be joy, peace, longsuffering, meekness, and so forth. Individual circumstances develop the appropriate fruit when a person is motivated by the Word.

“His leaf also shall not wither” — He is an ever-green, for he will be clothed upon with immortality. Moreover, his influence on others is for good. The leaves of trees help to purify the air, as well as assisting in the development of fruit. The man who delights in Yahweh’s law will become a medium of purification to others, as well as developing fruit to himself.

“Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper” — The word rendered *prosper* literally signifies to *carry through to a successful end*. That ultimately will be the case with the Godly in spite of temporary setbacks and disappointments.

The Ultimate Ruin Of The Wicked — Vv. 4-6.

The seeming prosperity of the wicked is but temporary; it will not survive the judgment that is pending.

VERSE 4

“The Ungodly are not so” — See the definition of the word *ungodly* in the comment on v. 1. The basic meaning is *restlessness*. All wickedness stems from such a state of spiritual insecurity.

“Like the chaff which the wind driveth away” — The chaff comprise the the useless husks that remain after the grain is withdrawn (Amos 9:9). It is left to the wind, and is soon blown away (see Ps. 37:10,35-36; Matt. 3:12). Withered and worthless, restless and scattered, without form or stability, the heap of chaff is driven by every wind, and scattered into every corner (see Dan. 2:35). As the grain is first removed, so at the coming of the Lord, the saints will first be withdrawn after which judgment shall be poured out upon the gross darkness of a wicked world (Isa. 60:1-2; 26:20-21).

“The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment” — They shall fall. See Ps. 5:1; 130:3; Mal. 3:2.

“Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous” — A sinner is one who knows what is right but does not do it. Such are found in Ecclesias today, but will not be permitted to remain in the perfected Ecclesia of the future. The Hebrew word for congregation is the Greek *Ecclesia*, and the Septuagint so renders the word.

VERSE 6

“Yahweh knoweth the way of the righteous” — Yahweh will acknowledge both it, and them, as such by granting life eternal to those who walk therein. The “way of the righteous” is the way of life (Ps. 16:11), peace (Isa. 59:8), and eternity (Ps. 119:24). The identity of the righteous is frequently hidden from flesh, but not from Yahweh (see 2 Tim. 2:19; Rev. 2:2). The names of such are written in His book of remembrance.

“But the way of the ungodly shall perish” — This is the way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof is death (Prov. 14:12). That way of wickedness, the broad way (Matt. 7:13), will not lead to the Kingdom of God.

God Manifestation In The Psalms

It is profitable to seek out principles of God-manifestation in the Psalms. In this Psalm, Yahweh is revealed as the perfect Judge, discriminating between the wicked

and the righteous; and judging with complete understanding and insight of heart. Accordingly, one of the titles by which He has revealed Himself, and which finds expression in this Psalm is *Yahweh the Judge*, or *Yahweh Hashaphat* (Jud. 11:17).

The Hebrew *shaphat* signifies *to judge by pronouncing sentence; to vindicate or punish; and by extension, to govern*. The Judges were *shophetim*, ruling for Yahweh.

As Judge, Yahweh vindicates the right, and condemns the wrong (Ecc. 3:17; Luke 16:15). He cannot look upon sin with allowance, for He is essentially just (Hab. 1:13); yet, in His mercy, He has provided for the forgiveness of the sins of those who acknowledge them (Rom. 3:24-25).

Abraham interceded for Sodom on the ground of Yahweh as the Judge Who would be scrupulously just (Gen. 18:25). David invoked the judgment of Yahweh in vindication of his conduct towards Saul (1 Sam. 24:12). Solomon called upon Him to reveal Himself in judgment (1 Kings 8:32). Jehoshaphat (whose name means *Yahweh judged*) pleaded with Him to judge the enemy (2 Chron. 20:12). Ezekiel proclaimed that He is a just Judge, and will yet manifest Himself as such (Ezek. 33:20; 34:

17-22). The prophets declared that He is coming to judge the earth (1 Chron. 16:33; Ps. 9:8; 67:4). For other references to *Yahweh Hashaphat* see Ps. 26:1; 35:24; 43:1; 2 Chron. 19:6; For future manifestations of Yahweh as Judge through Christ, the Elohim, and the saints, see Ps. 50:6; 75:7; 82:8. Christ as Ruler-Judge (the manifestation of *Yahweh Hashaphat*) is referred to in the following places: Ps. 72:4; 75:2; 96:13; 98:9; Isa. 11:3-4; Jer. 3:12; Dan. 7:9; Matt. 25:31-34; 2 Tim. 4:8. The glorified saints, likewise, will become channels of Divine judgment as predicted in Obad. 21; 1 Cor. 6:2; Rev. 5:9-10.

Direct references to *Yahweh Hashaphat* as a Divine title are found in Judges 11:27; Isa. 33:22; Heb. 12:23.

Yahweh Hashaphat, therefore, is a most important title of Deity, proclaiming an aspect of Divine omnipotence and omniscience of vital importance to the saints as individuals, and to the world at large. Its significance is summed up in the words of Acts 17:31:

"He (God) hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised him from the dead."

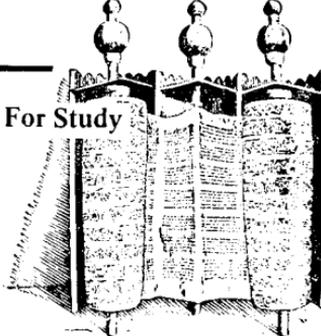
— HPM

Psalm One

*How bless'd is he who ne'er consents by ill advice to walk;
Nor stands in sinners' ways, nor sits where men profanely talk.
But makes the perfect law of God his business and delight;
Devoutly reads therein by day, and meditates by night.*

*Like a fair tree, which fed by streams, with timely fruit doth bend,
He still shall flourish, and success all his designs attend.
Ungodly men and their attempts no lasting root shall find;
Untimely blasted and dispers'd like chaff before the wind.*

*Their guilt shall strike the wicked dumb before the Judge's face;
No formal hypocrite shall them among the saints have place
For God approves the just man's ways, to happiness they tend;
But sinners, and the paths they tread, shall both in ruin end.*



Theme For Study

PSALM TWO

Man in Rebellion

Psalm two follows Psalm one in thought as well as in number. It illustrates the truth of the declaration contained in the first Psalm:

*"The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment,
Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.
For Yahweh knoweth the way of the righteous;
But the way of the ungodly shall perish."*

Rebellious man ultimately will be restrained by Yahweh through His son, in order that the fulness of Divine glory may be manifested in all the earth.

Background To The Psalm

Although the Psalm itself gives no indication of authorship, Acts 4:25 reveals that it was composed by David. The Apostles and disciples are there represented as praying unto Yahweh:

"Thou, by the mouth of Thy servant David hast said, 'Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?'"

If David be its author, does it have any historical basis? In other words, does it have application to David's own times as typical of those of Christ?

We believe that it has; and that it was called forth by events that took place after the covenant had been confirmed to David: the covenant that promised him a son who would also be son of Yahweh (2 Sam. 7). Prior to that time, David had cleared Zion of the Jebusites, and had made it the capital of his realm (2 Sam. 5:7-10); had learned that Yahweh had selected Jerusalem as the place in which He would place His name

(Psalm 132:13-14), and had brought the Ark of the Covenant to the city with great rejoicing (2 Sam. 6). The kingdom was consolidated under his power, for "Yahweh had given him rest round about from all his enemies" (2 Sam. 7:1).

That rest was broken by renewed war. In 2 Sam. 8:1-11:1, we read of seven great campaigns by which surrounding nations were brought under his power. Probably the previous scene of peace, prosperity, and growing political power, aroused mutterings of opposition from the nations round about, for the next chapter records how David invaded their territories. This was probably incited by belligerent activity on their part. Probably "the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers took counsel together, against Yahweh and against His anointed (David), saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us" (Ps. 2:2-3).

Certainly, these events of David's life are typical of Christ's future

reign. As David first reigned over Judah, and later over the united kingdom, so the Lord Jesus will "save the tents of Judah first" (Zech. 12:7) and afterwards incorporate the rest of the tribes into his rule. Having set up his power in Jerusalem (as did David -- and Christ will constitute the anti-typical Ark of the covenant), he will extend his kingdom into an empire. It is quite significant that 2 Sam. 8:1-11:1 records seven conquests of foreign powers undertaken by David, and that Rev. 10:3 implies that Christ will do likewise: his conquests answering to the seven thunders of this chapter. Having defeated the Gogian Confederacy in the land, he will "go forth" and "rebuke strong nations afar off" (Mic. 4), and so fulfil the type of David.

It was probably after the giving of the covenant (2 Sam. 7), and when faced with the military opposition of surrounding nations (2 Sam. 8:1) that David composed this Psalm. We believe that he would have done so in complete understanding of its prophetic implications (Acts 2:29-31).

Prophetical Foreshadowing

At what stage will the prophecy be fulfilled? The Psalm refers to the "tumultuous assembling" of nations together for war, and of the divine rebuke that will be administered them. There will be a "tumultuous assembling together" of nations under Gog which shall lead to the attack upon Jerusalem (Ezek. 38; Zech. 14:1), but this will not be open rebellion against Christ such as the Psalm requires. Gog will "ascend" to "take a spoil and a prey" in the land itself; and

not in order to cast off the bands that Christ would establish upon him.

Such an attitude will be manifested later, and to this the Psalm makes reference.

Following the destruction of the Gogian confederacy at Jerusalem Christ will issue an ultimatum to the nations, calling upon them to voluntarily surrender their power to him (e.g. Rev. 14:6-7). Some nations will submit, among them being Tarshish (Isa. 60:9); but the Catholic powers of Europe will reject the summons and make ready to resist the Lord's power. They "shall make war with the Lamb" (Rev. 17:13-14), but he "shall overcome them." In Revelation 19:11-15 he is represented as invading their territories, and "in righteousness, both judging and making war." The tumultuous assembling of the nations to war against Christ will be at that time when with "one mind," they shall "give their power and strength unto the beast" (Rev. 17:13).

One would imagine that the amazing overthrow of Gog by Christ and the Saints, would be sufficient to cause the nations to recognise the superhuman power of the Victor of Armageddon, and so submit to his demands. But that will not be so, and there are very natural reasons for the obdurate attitude adopted by the Catholic countries. For some time, Catholicism has taught that Anti-Christ is yet to arise, and that when he does so, he will set up his power in Jerusalem, proclaiming himself as king. Even some Protestant denominations today are setting forth the same idea, and this could well

contribute to the repudiation of the ultimatum of Christ when it is conveyed to the Governments of the nations.

But on what grounds will the superhuman destruction of Armageddon be explained away as normal phenomena? There certainly would be no difficulty in explaining away the earthquake as mere fortuitous circumstances, and it is obvious that earthquake will cause part of the slaughter at least. Panic shall seize the warring hosts, and they will turn their weapons one upon the other (Ezek. 38:20-21).

Moreover, the very plague with which Yahweh will smite the nations, doubtless may be explained away as the effect of the fallout of some new form of nuclear power, rather than divine intervention. Zechariah declares:

“This shall be the plague wherewith Yahweh will smite all the peoples that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongues shall consume away in their mouth” (Zech. 14:12).

If this “plague” is considered as the result of nuclear “fallout” the nations may imagine that they can match it with their own sophisticated weapons. Thus, rather than submit, and deliver up to Judaism (as they will view it) the resources of the Catholic Church, and its millions of worshippers, they will make preparations to resist the new power then rising in Zion.

But Christ will invade their countries. The Revelator reported that following the stand taken by the rainbowed angel upon the sea and earth, “seven thunders uttered their voices” (Rev. 10:3). Though

John was not permitted to record the events that the thunders portended, it is obvious that thunder symbolises war. The seven thunders, therefore, are suggestive of seven campaigns conducted by Christ (as the antitype of David) answering to David’s seven conquests following the giving of the covenant to him. It will be at that time that the Psalm will find its fulfilment. The nations will tumultuously and rebelliously rage against Christ (though they will not recognise the new power as such), and will refuse to submit to his rule.

A Preliminary Fulfilment

There was a preliminary fulfilment of the Psalm at the first advent of the Lord. For quoting the first lines of the Psalm in communal prayer, the brethren, led by the Apostles, declared;

“For of a truth, against Thy holy servant Jesus (see *Diaglot*), whom Thou hast anointed; both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before should be done . . .” (Acts 4:25-28).

The Psalm has found frequent citation in the New Testament. In Acts 13:33, it is quoted by Paul to illustrate that the resurrection of the Son was necessary to the fulfilment of prophecy. In Hebrews 1:5 it is quoted to show forth the greatness of his status: that he is the Son of God, higher in certain regards than the angels. In Matt. 3:17, Mark 1:11, and Luke 3:22, it is included in the heavenly declaration in favour of the Lord, endorsing his divine Sonship. Again, on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mark 9:7) it was incorporated in the heavenly Voice of

advice directed to the three Apostles who accompanied the Lord into the Mount. The complete fulfilment, however, awaits the future.

It can be seen, therefore, that the Psalm is significant both from the viewpoint of doctrine and prophecy. It anticipated the begetting, resurrection to glory, and coming reign of Christ. It predicted the opposition he received at his first advent and which led to his crucifixion; as well as the opposition he will yet receive, but which will be followed by his wars of conquest through which the nations will be compelled to submit to his rule.



National Tumult — Vv. 1-3

The question is asked, "Why do the nations rage?" No answer is given, and none is required. The question is asked rhetorically, as emphasising the unreasonableness of such ungodly tumult. The opposition that Christ received at his first advent was unreasonable: for he had done nothing to deserve it. The refusal of the nations to submit to his reign at his second coming, and their tumultuous raging, will be equally unreasonable. The first two verses of the Psalm are cited in Acts 4:25, and from that citation, we learn that David was the author of it.

VERSE 1

"Why do the heathen rage?" — Why indeed! Nothing will be accomplished by it; so that the insurrection will be both foolish and hopeless. The R.V. renders "heathen" as *nations*; and the

margin of the A.V. has *tumultuously assemble* in place of "rage." The nations will tumultuously assemble, first under Gog, and subsequently under Catholic direction, but on both occasions they will fail to accomplish their objectives. The defeat of Gog will not end the opposition to Christ's rule. The Catholic countries of Europe will combine to oppose the decree of the Lord Jesus as proclaimed in his ultimatum to the nations (Rev. 17:12-14). They will "tumultuously assemble" for the purpose of deciding their policy.

"And the people imagine a vain thing" — The Hebrew *amim* should be rendered "peoples" as in the R.V. Where the plural of this word is used, the nations are invariably referred to; though the singular form of the word is sometimes used for Israel. It will be the nations who will *meditate* (see margin) a vain thing. This vain thought will comprise the idea that they can successfully resist the new Government then set up in Zion.

VERSE 2

"The kings of the earth set themselves" — These are the rulers referred to in Rev. 17:12-14, who give their "power unto the beast." The "beast" represents the flesh in political, or religious manifestation. Apocalyptically, this is Babylon the Great, to be completely overthrown by Christ at his coming (2 Thess. 2:8; Dan. 7:11), though the nations that form it will be converted and incorporated into Christ's realm (v. 12). See the following references to the "kings of the earth" submitting themselves to Christ — Ps. 72:11; 76:12; 89:27; 138:3. Before doing so, however, they will resist his will, will "set themselves," or take their place, in the "seats of the scornful" (cp. Ps. 1:1). Notice the development of ideas thus presented. In v. 1, there is predicted the stir and tumult of the gathering of the nations, consequent upon receiving the decree from Jerusalem; whereas v. 2 describes the conference of the scorners as in session. It implies that the members thereof have taken their seats in a settled plan to overthrow the new power. Thus:

"The rulers take counsel together,
Against Yahweh, and against His Messiah."

VERSE 3

"Let us break their bands asunder" — The ground of their opposition is the unwillingness of rebellious human nature to submit to the righteous decrees and restrictions of Christ. "Bands" are fastenings by which yokes were secured on the necks of oxen (cp. Jer. 27:2; 30:8). Here they are used symbolically of the limitations that Christ in authority would place upon the nations.

"And cast away their cords from us" — "Cords" are the reins by which an animal is guided (cp. Hos. 11:4). They here represent that righteous guidance and control that Christ would seek to impose upon the nations. Those who will align themselves with Catholic influence will refuse the guidance of Christ. They will view the new power in Jerusalem as Anti-Christ, and will refuse to submit to its decrees.

Yahweh's Contempt For The Petition — Vv. 4-6

Yahweh is represented as surveying the scene from His lofty eminence, and treating the puny efforts of man to defeat His purpose with contempt. It is said that "he who laughs last, laughs loudest." That will be the case, not only in regard to Yahweh and His Son, but also in regard to all the members of His divine family, both in heaven and on earth. The verses before us disclose a wonderful title of Deity seldom considered. He is revealed as "The Sitter in the Heavens."

VERSE 4

"He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh" — The Hebrew reveals a title of Deity: *Yoshebh Bashshamayim* — *The Sitter in the Heavens*. It refers to the lofty and exalted position and status of the Father: remote above all earthly limitations. From His lofty eminence, He surveys the vain and noisy rebellion of flesh upon the earth. It cannot escape His omniscience, nor successfully resist His omnipotence. He, alone, can say: "heaven is My throne; and the earth is My footstool" (Isa. 66:1). His awe-inspiring creative power, and superb, divine wisdom are described in Isaiah 40:12-22. It includes the statement: "All nations before Him are as nothing; and they are counted to Him less than

nothing, and vanity." The question is asked: "To whom then will ye liken God? Or what likeness will ye compare unto Him?" The answer, of course, is that He is incomparable.

He is *The Sitter In The Heavens*, and He mocks at man's puny efforts to defy His will. In another Psalm, the statement is made:

*"Yahweh is high above all nations,
And His glory above the heavens.
Who is like unto Yahweh our God,
Who dwelleth on high,
Who humbleth Himself to behold,
The things that are in the heaven, and
in the earth!"*

(Ps. 113:4-6).

The lofty status of *The Sitter In The Heavens* is described in the following rendition of a portion of Psalm 93:

*The floods may storm, O Yahweh,
The floods may storm aloud,
The floods may storm and thunder!
But high above the roaring billows,
High above the ocean breakers,
Yahweh stands supreme.*

In times of difficulty, when "the floods of ungodly men might make us afraid," let us remember that *The Sitter In The Heavens* is heedful of our circumstances, and will "never leave us nor forsake us," though He may require that we submit to the disciplinary influence of necessary chastening.

"The Lord shall have them in derision" — According to the Companion Bible, this is one of the 138 places where the ancient Sopherim (Jewish revisers of the Hebrew text) altered Yahweh to Adonai. The text, therefore, should read Yahweh.

VERSE 5

"Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath" — Men or nations that spurn the mercy of Yahweh, invariably feel the heat of His wrath. So Paul exhorts: "Behold the goodness and the severity of the Lord" (Rom. 11:22). We should keep in mind both aspects of the divine character (Exod. 34:6-7).

"And vex them in His sore displeasure" — The margin renders "vex" as *trouble*. He will cause them to tremble in fear, as they witness amazing victories won by the new power in Zion.

VERSE 6

"Yet have I set My king" – The margin gives this as "anoint." But the Hebrew does not provide the normal word for anoint. It is the verb *nacak*, and signifies to pour as a libation. The word is rendered *dukes* in Josh. 13:21, doubtless indicating the purpose of the outpouring, or libation. Prophets, priests and kings were all appointed to their high offices by being anointed with oil, symbolising the divine source of their authority to teach, minister or rule as the case might be. The Lord Jesus was anointed as prophet when he was baptised; he was anointed as priest upon the Mount of Transfiguration; and he will be anointed as King upon Zion's hill in the age to come.

"Upon my holy hill of Zion" – The alternative rendition suggested by the margin, would permit of this line being rendered as: "Upon Zion the hill of My sanctuary." This would constitute a direct reference to the Temple to be erected in Jerusalem in the Age to come (Ezek. chpts. 40-48). The Temple, constituting a "house of prayer for all nations" (Isa. 56:7; Mark 11:17), will become a centre of universal worship during the Millennium (Zech. 14:16), uniting all nations in one common worship. It will be completed and ready for use at the beginning of the Millennium, which will commence after the nations have been subjugated to Christ, or in the terms of the Psalm, after He has "vexed them in his sore displeasure." The order of events suggested by the prophets is as follows: (1)–Overthrow of Gog by Christ and the saints at Jerusalem; (2)–Submission of Israel in the land to the authority of Christ; (3)–Decree of ultimatum to the nations demanding their submission to the new power of Zion; (4)–Rejection of it by the Catholic Countries of Europe; (5)–Final restoration of scattered Israel in their cantonnments as outlined in Ezekiel 48; (6)–Complete subjugation of all nations following invasion by Christ; (7)–Establishment of universal peace and commencement of the thousand years' millennial reign of Christ, with inaugural service in the Temple.

**Christ's Delegated Authority –
Vv. 7-9**

The status, authority and power of

the Son is proclaimed by Yahweh. Notice that the first stanza of the Psalm ended with the defiant words of the rebels: the second with the reply of Yahweh; and now follows the basis of it: the Divine decree as revealed to him.

VERSE 7

"I will declare the decree" – The decree repeated by David as author of the Psalm comprises the promise of 2 Sam. 7:12-16. This was constantly in the mind of David, and became the desire of his heart (2 Sam. 23:5).

"Yahweh hath said unto me, Thou art My Son" – The reference is to David as typical of Christ (see Ezek. 37:24). The statement, "Thou art My Son," as applicable to David, relates to his position in the family of God, revealing him as the special object of Yahweh's paternal love (Ps. 89:24-29). As applicable to Christ, the statement points to his resurrection to divine nature (cp. Acts 13:33; see Rom. 1:3-4).

"This day have I begotten thee" – These words form part of the citation in Acts 13:33, relating to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and really pointing to the purpose of the divine begetting of the Son. The divine decree relating to the Son was pronounced at his baptism (Matt. 3:17), his resurrection (Acts 13:33; Rom. 1:4), and will yet be proclaimed at his investiture as king (Ps. 2:7).

VERSE 8

"Ask of me" – This forms part of Yahweh's decree. In the Lord's prayer of John 17:4-5, Christ made request of the Father.

"And I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance" – cp. Ps. 22:27; 72:8; Dan. 7:13.

"And the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession" – Both people and land will be brought under control of Christ.

VERSE 9

"Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron" – The Septuagint renders this as "rule." In the Hebrew the same consonants are used for both words, but with different vowel points, suggesting that originally the text read *rule*. These words are cited in Rev. 2:27; 12:5; 19:15.

"Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" — Those who refuse to accept Christ's rule will be destroyed (Isa. 60:12).

Christ's Authority Established — Vv. 10-12

The Psalm gives its form of the ultimatum that will be sent to all nations urging upon them to peaceably accept the authority and rule of Christ. See also Rev. 14:7; Isa. 14:32.

VERSE 10

"Be wise now therefore, O ye kings" — The ultimatum sent forth by the new King in Zion will include an appeal urging upon the nations to accept his mercy by submitting to his rule. Some will accept; see Ps. 45:12; 72:10-11; Isa. 49:23, 52:15; 60:9; Ps. 82:8. Others will not, so that he will "rebuke strong nations afar off" (Mic. 4:3; Isa. 60:12).

"Be instructed, ye judges of the earth" — This verse appeals to the rebellious authorities as listed in v. 2.

VERSE 11

"Serve Yahweh with fear" — The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of knowledge (Prov. 1:7), for it induces respect and obedience.

"And rejoice with trembling" — Respect and obedience provides the basis for true rejoicing.

VERSE 12

"Kiss the Son, lest he be angry" — The Hebrew is *bar*, elsewhere translated *ground* (Dan. 2:38; 4:12,15,23 etc), and not *ben*, the Hebrew word for *son*. The idea is "prostrate yourself to the ground," submit to him in humility. The R.V. margin gives: *receive instruction*. Only by so doing will the nations avoid the divine wrath that will be unleashed against a rebellious world.

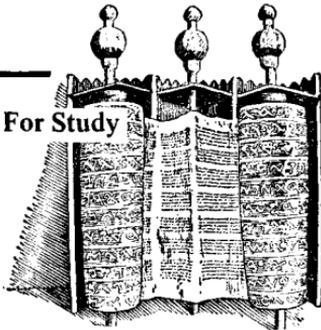
"And ye perish from the way" — The R.V. has *in the way*. The way referred to is the way of rebellion, the way of sinners (Ps. 1:1). For "the way of the ungodly shall perish" (Ps. 1:6).

"When his wrath is kindled but a little" — The R.V. renders: "For his wrath will soon be kindled." The ultimatum will be sent to the nations, and instant acceptance will be expected. If there is any delay in this, the nations will experience the fruits of wrath rather than the blessings of mercy and peace.

"Blessed are all they that put their trust in him" — The conclusion of this Psalm thus links with the thought at the beginning of Psalm 1. It will be when Christ's power is established in the earth that the promised blessings will be fully appreciated. See also Jer. 17:7-8.

"Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31; 6:20). It matters not whether our enterprise be ecclesia, commercial, or social — this is to be the guiding motive. "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord, and not unto men," is a further Scripture expressive of this duty. Are we obedient? That we shall fail oftentimes is natural and is expected, but do we endeavor to obey? The flesh insinuates that the command is calculated to make our lives a misery. Away with the suggestion! It is not true. The command, first, is reasonable. We are not creatures of our own creating. God has made us for His pleasure, and for us to forget or ignore Him cannot yield this pleasure. If we had made the race we should object to be left out of account by it. Even as parents, we are displeased if our children forget us, or act contrary to our will. It depends on ourselves as to whether the command will make us miserable. If we heartily comply it will not, but if we arrange only to render a partial obedience it will. To endeavor to serve God and self is naturally an irritating exercise. Let us take the reasonable view, and we shall soon experience, more or less, the Psalmist's mind—"Oh, my God be not far from me" (Psa.38:21); "Oh, how love I thy law, it is my meditation all the day" (Psa.119:97); "How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me" (Psa.139). God is no tyrant that we should flee from Him. He is our best friend—abundant and marvellous in kindness. Every good thing that we enjoy is of His bestowing, and it is to Him that we have to look for an endless and joyous existence. Shall we grudge to give Him glory?

(A. J.)



Theme For Study

PSALM THREE

Confidence in 'Yahweh Our Shield'

This Psalm comprises a morning prayer after night of worry and danger. It follows in sequence the theme of Psalm two. The second Psalm describes the Kingdom of God of the future as threatened by enemies from without; the third and fourth Psalms tell of a time when it was in danger from foes within. All three alike reveal that human schemes are impotent to frustrate the Divine purpose.

Background To The Psalms

The title attributes the Psalm to David "when he fled from Absalom his son." As J. W. Thirtle has shown in his book *The Title Of The Psalms*, these titles are to be highly regarded as authentic indications of authorship; and we accept them as such. The title of this Psalm identifies both the author, and the circumstances in which it was composed.

Absalom signifies *Father of peace*. He proved to be the very opposite to David his father; for he conspired with powerful men of the realm to revolt against the king. In consequence, David was driven from Jerusalem weeping, with his clothes rent, with dust upon his head (2 Sam. 15:1), and with the curses of Shimei ringing in his ears. Leaving the Mount of Olives, he made his way east, across the Jordan, to seek a place of refuge.

The Psalm expresses the feelings of David when, after a depressing and worrying day, he slept, to awake refreshed, confident that Yahweh was with him. So we read (v. 5):

*"I laid me down and slept;
I awaked; for Yahweh sustained me."*

Can we pin-point an occasion during David's flight from Jerusalem when this happened? We believe that we can. Consider the circumstances of 2 Samuel 17:27-29.

"And it came to pass, when David was come to Mahanaim, that Shobi the son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and Machir the son of Ammiel of Lo-debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim, brought beds, and basons, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley . . . for David, and for the people that were with him, to eat: for they said: 'The people are hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness.'"

There are several features of this incident that are significant. *Firstly*, the place was significant, for it was at Mahanaim that Jacob had the vision of the heavenly host that sustained him when he was in fear of Esau (Gen. 32:1-5). *Secondly*, it is thought-provoking, that at a time when his own son was leading a rebellion of the people against him, that David should be succoured by Gentiles. It illustrates the proverb of the Lord: "A prophet is not without honour, save in his own house among his own people." The incident surely foreshadows the acceptance of the Truth by Gentiles at a time when Israel has rejected him. *Thirdly*, among

the things that were brought to refresh David were *beds*, linking the incident with the statement of Psalm 3:5. They would contribute to a refreshing night's sleep for David and his followers. *Fourthly*, if we link the Psalm with the occasion, it is obvious that David was greatly encouraged by the action of these Gentiles, and on the morning, refreshed from his night's sleep, he viewed the incident as a token of good from Yahweh.

How could David interpret the matter thus, considering that the problem in which he found himself, actually stemmed from his own guilt and sin? For it is obvious that, according to 2 Sam. 12:10, the whole train of evil consequences that befell his house had been set in motion by his own sin in the matter of Bathsheba and Uriah. The answer surely is that in historical sequence Psalms such as 51 and 32 preceded the one before us. Certainly, the incident that gave rise to them occurred a considerable number of years before Absalom's revolt. Some twelve months after his sin with Bathsheba, David had sought the forgiveness of Yahweh, and in full assurance of such, now expressed his confidence in God's grace.

Prophetical Foreshadowing

As a general principle, it will be noted, that incidents that happened to David prior to his sin with Bathsheba are Messianic in character, foreshadowing Christ, the sinless Saviour, Sacrifice and Sovereign of the future; whereas those that occurred after his great sin are typical of the multitudinous Christ, in need of forgiveness for sins committed.

If that is applicable here, the Psalm foreshadows the experiences of the multitudinous Christ in following the sufferings of the Lord Jesus (Phil. 3:10). Such experiences are incidental to the present walk (see 2 Cor. 1:5-7; Acts 14:22; 2 Tim. 3:12). Thus Peter wrote to the brethren:

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy” (1 Pet. 4:12-13).

In this Psalm we see David in tribulation (cp. Acts 14:22), but also burdened with the consciousness that he has contributed to the state in which he finds himself. That is precisely the situation in which the members of the multitudinous Christ find themselves. Hence the typical application of the Psalm as suggested by us.

We do not find that the Psalm is directly cited in the New Testament. However, there is an echo of v. 8 in the acclamation of the glorified multitude of the redeemed in the age to come: “Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb” (Rev. 7:10). That song of victory will be sung by all those who experience the grace of God in overcoming sin, as did David.

The Dominant Name Of God In The Psalm

Our studies to date have revealed that each Psalm has a specific Name of God expressed therein. In Psalm One, He is revealed as *Yahweh Hashaphat*, or *Yahweh the Judge*. Psalm two revealed Him as

Yoshebh Bashshamayim, or The Sitter in the Heavens.

What of Psalm Three?

In this Psalm, He is presented as a *Shield* (cp. v. 3). The Hebrew word is *Magen*, and it signifies a small Shield designed to turn the thrusts of the enemy. Figuratively, the title speaks of Yahweh as a Defence, a Protection. It was a title appropriate to the circumstances David found himself in at the time; for his enemies were many, and they turned against him, from all sides. As a warrior, David would know the value of such a defence, for he was skilful in the use of such a weapon.

Long before the turbulent times of David, the title had been used concerning God, and by Yahweh Himself. Abram was told: "Fear not, Abram: I am thy Shield . . ." (*magen*). Here, again, the title was appropriate to the circumstances. Abram had just defeated Chedorlaomer who had invaded the land; and he must have realised that the victory had been through Yahweh's intervention. To emphasise that truth, this declaration was proclaimed unto the patriarch.

Moses, likewise, addressing the assembled company of the children of Israel, used this figure of speech, and in a context that speaks of war and victory. He described Yahweh as both a Shield and a Sword: "O people saved by Yahweh, the Shield of thy help, and the sword of thy excellency" (Deut. 33:29).

David, in using the title, referred to Yahweh as both a *Magen* (a small shield), and a *Buckler* (Ps. 18:2 — a large shield protecting the whole body). In a time of grave danger,

he called upon Yahweh to "take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for mine help" (Ps. 35:2).

Paul refers to this title as "the shield of faith which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17). The Lord Jesus is the Word made flesh. Following his victory over sin and death, all power was delivered into his hands (Matt. 28:18); as a result of which, the names and titles of Deity are now manifested by him. He is our Shield.

David, as a skilful warrior, used martial terms in his prayers to Yahweh, for he recognised that his defence was from Him (e.g. 2 Sam. 22:3). Notice his description of Yahweh's warrior as outlined in Psalm 18:34-35. Though a warrior of outstanding ability, David did not put his confidence in personal skill, but realised that success required trust in a Shield not visibly present: "Yahweh is a buckler to all those who trust in Him" (Ps. 18:30). The knowledge that Yahweh is a Shield to those who trust Him, instills confidence in time of trouble (see Ps. 28:7). Yahweh will prove Himself to be such to those who walk uprightly before Him (cp. Prov. 2:7). For "Yahweh is our defence" declares Ethan in Psalm 89:18). The word "defence" in this place is the same word *Magen*, a *Shield*.

The title is used in a curious context in Psalm 47:9:

*"God reigneth over the Gentiles;
God sitteth upon the throne of His holiness.
The princes of the people are gathered together,
Unto the people of the God of Abraham;
For the shields of the earth belong unto God;
He is greatly exalted."*

The princes of v. 8 are the king-priests of the age to come (Rev. 5:9-10). According to the "nation of the Elohim of Abraham," or restored Israel. For "the shields (or defence) of the earth belong unto God." The "shields" in this context must relate to the saints in glory, who, as such, manifest the strength of Yahweh to defend. It is significant that the bride of Christ is said to be decorated with bucklers, "all shields of mighty men" (Song. 4:4).

It is also significant that Solomon had two hundred large shields of gold and three hundred small shields of gold placed in the palace described as "the house of the forest of Lebanon." These shields of gold symbolised the defence of faith. However, Rehoboam's faithlessness resulted in his defeat at the hands of the Egyptians, who "took away all the shields of gold which Solomon had made" (1 Kings 14:26). The impoverished kingdom could not afford to replace them with new shields of gold, and so they were substituted with shields of brass — a symbol of the flesh (v. 27).

All these references signify what an important Divine title is that of *Magen* in the mouth of such a warrior as David, and applied to such a One as Yahweh. In a time of extreme danger; when enemies were numerous and powerful, David sought for his defence in Yahweh, and sought not in vain.

Structure Of The Psalm

The Psalm is divided into four parts of two verses each:

The Present Distress — Vv. 1-2.

The Source of Help and Protection — Vv. 3-4.

Confidence in Danger — Vv. 5-6.

Prayer for Deliverance and Blessing — Vv. 7-8.

In each case, except for the third division, the sections are lined off with the word *Selah!* Consider!



The Present Distress — Vv. 1-2.

The Psalmist is oppressed by enemies, and, pressured by problems. He can see no way of escape unless Yahweh move to his defence.

VERSE 1

"Yahweh, how are they increased that trouble me" — The widespread revolt stimulated by Absalom affected all classes of society; even the counsellor of David was influenced against him, and many of his warriors (2 Sam. 15:12-13; 16:15; 17:1) were won over to the cause of Absalom. David's feelings of depression at that time are expressed in Psalm 55:12-14:

"For it was not an enemy that reproached me,

Then I could have borne it;

Neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me,

Then I would have hid myself from Him.

But it was thou, a man mine equal,

My guide, and mine acquaintance.

We took sweet counsel together;

And walked into the house of God in company."

The R.V. renders the first line of Psalm 3: "Yahweh how are mine adversaries increased." Though David's folly undoubtedly contributed to the condition in which he then found himself, this did not justify the action of his adversaries who unrighteously used it to drive him from the throne. Therefore he with confidence turned to Yahweh for help.

"Many are they that rise up against me" – The *Hebrew Student's Manual* gives this in the present tense: "Many are rising against me." David recognised that there were many hidden enemies, who had not as yet revealed themselves, but who would use the opportunity of Absalom's rebellion to get their revenge upon him. This became obvious as the revolt gathered force, and became generally known. Consider the answer of Cush, after the *Battle of the Wood* when David enquired of him, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" The answer came: "The enemies of my lord the King, and all they that rise against thee, to do thee hurt, be as that young man is" (2 Sam. 18:32). This statement implied that all of David's enemies had not then manifested themselves.

VERSE 2

"Many there be which say of my soul" – There were faint-hearted friends as well as insolent enemies like Shimei, who saw in David's reversal, evidence of divine judgment, and accordingly heaped reproaches upon him.

"There is no help for him in God" – The same word, here rendered "help," is rendered "salvation" in v. 8. David's fair-weather friends claimed that he was forsaken of God and man, and therefore completely abandoned to his fate. Consider the expressions of Shimei's bitter curse: "Yahweh hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul in whose stead thou hast reigned; and Yahweh hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son; and, behold, thou art taken in thy mischief, because thou art a bloody man" (2 Sam. 16:8).

"Selah" – This word is derived from *salah*, signifying "to strew, spread out." Parkhurst renders it, "to think upon, to meditate." Selah is more than a musical notation: it signifies "to pause, consider." It is a thought-link, calling upon the reader to pause and consider what has been said, in relation to what is about to be stated.

The Source Of Help And Protection – Vv. 3-4.

David's enemies claimed that he was forsaken of Yahweh, but he knew that

this was not so. He appeals to Him to defend him from his adversaries.

VERSE 3

"But, Thou O Yahweh, art a Shield for me" – See our notes on the word *Magen* in our introductory comments. Yahweh has revealed Himself as a Man of war (Exod. 15:3). He is such in aspects of both offensive and defensive warfare. Consider the expressions of Psalm 35:1-2:

*"Plead my cause, O Yahweh, with them that strive with me;
Fight against them that fight against me.
Take hold of shield and buckler,
And stand up for mine help.
Draw out also the spear, and stop the way
Against them that persecute me."*

"My glory, and the lifter up of my head" – The honour, position and authority of David, as king over the Kingdom of God (cp. 1 Chron. 29:23) was derived from Yahweh, as also will be the case with the Kings of the future age (Ps. 21:5; 62:7). Contrast the attitude of David's enemies, who turned "his glory into shame" (Ps. 4:2). Yahweh was "the lifter up of his head" inasmuch as his advancement from shepherd boy to sovereign was from Him (Ps. 78:70-72). Having advanced him to that honour, God would not abandon him to his powerful foes.

VERSE 4

"I cried unto Yahweh with my voice" – The literal rendering is: "as often as I called." Past experiences of answered prayer gave David confidence at this point of time. Paul found similar comfort. He declared: "We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience (endurance); and patience (endurance), experience (or the proving of one), and endurance, hope. Endurance brings hope in that it provides confidence that He who has sustained us in the past will do so in the future even unto the Kingdom. David "cried unto Yahweh" in his urgent need as he fled from Jerusalem. For one told David saying, "Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom." David was disheartened at the news. Ahithophel was his counsellor, a man to be feared because of his considerable influence. He was a man of wisdom, highly respected in Israel, and well able to turn

many against David. In that moment of urgency and crisis, David turned to Yahweh and "cried unto Him with his voice"; "O Yahweh, I pray Thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness" (2 Sam. 15:31). He perhaps now refers to this in his Psalm.

"He heard me out of his holy hill" – The holy hill was the place where the Ark of the Covenant reposed; and the symbol of Yahweh's presence in Israel (Exod. 25:22). When David fled from the city, he met Zadok the priest with the Levites carrying the Ark into exile with the king, but he ordered it back to the "holy hill" saying, "If I shall find favour in the eyes of Yahweh, He will bring me again, and shew me both it, and His habitation" (2 Sam. 15:25). Now, in prayer he turns in that direction.

"Selah" – See note v. 2.

Confidence in Danger – Vv. 5-6.

Not only past but present experience justifies David's confidence in Yahweh. He sees a token of good in the refreshing sleep that he enjoyed the night before.

VERSE 5

"I laid me down and slept" – In the Hebrew, the pronoun "I" is emphatic. I who am surrounded by enemies, and deserted by friends, was able to rest confident in the assurance that none can hurt me without Yahweh's permission. The fact that he had been met by friends who had supplied his needs, and that he had enjoyed a night's repose (see introductory notes) suggests the overshadowing presence of Yahweh. He saw it all as "a token of good" (Ps. 86:17).

"I awaked; for Yahweh sustained me" – The verb is in the continuous present tense: "Yahweh sustaineth me." David's troubled spirit had been quietened by the kind action of Barzillai and the others (2 Sam. 17:27-28) who brought beds and provisions for the exiles. Feeling that Yahweh was with him, David enjoyed a refreshing night's sleep, free from the worries that had perturbed his mind earlier. "Ye shall lie down and none shall make you afraid," Yahweh had promised Israel (Lev. 26:6). "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for

Thou, Yahweh, only makest me dwell in safety" David declared (Ps. 4:8). "When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid; yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet," Solomon stated in the Proverbs (Ch. 3:24). Worry and trouble drives sleep away from one; but if he can repose confident in Yahweh, the things that normally perturb the mind will be driven away.

VERSE 6

"I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people" – This is a symbolic number indicating a large but undefined total. See 1 Sam. 18:7. Absalom had stolen away the hearts of the people of Israel (2 Sam. 15:6,10,13), and they constituted the figurative "ten thousands of people" of this verse. David could see only trouble on all sides, with enemies rising as a flood. But yet his confidence was in Yahweh, and therefore found strength to rise above his troubles. Numbers were on the side of Absalom, and but for the divinely sent infatuation which made him reject Ahithophel's wise counsel, in all probability, David's few followers would have been overwhelmed (see 2 Sam. 17:1)

"That have set themselves against me round about" – He is hemmed in by enemies; their power is beyond his ability to cope; he can but pray Yahweh as indicated above. See note v. 4.

Prayer For Deliverance And Blessing – Vv. 7-8.

The Psalm concludes with a prayer for deliverance as in times past, and for a blessing upon the people of Israel who suffered from the rebellion.

VERSE 7

"Arise O Yahweh; save me, O my God" – The problem is beyond David's ability to cope with, and so appeal is made to Yahweh. Significantly, this prayer is an echo of the ancient morning prayer when Israel was on the march to the land of Promise: "Rise up Yahweh, and let Thine enemies be scattered" (Num. 10:35). It is a call for action on the part of God.

"For Thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek bone" – David

recalls the past deliverances that he has experienced from Yahweh, and calls upon Him to again act consistently in the present distress. To smite one's enemies upon the cheek, is to treat them to a gesture of insult and reproach. See 1 Kings 22:24; Job 16:10; Micah 5:1.

"Thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly" — The wicked are pictured as wild beasts suddenly deprived of their power to hurt. See Psalm 58:6:

*"Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth;
Break out the great teeth of the young lions, O Yahweh."*

A wild beast without teeth is not to be feared. David had seen Yahweh deprive the wicked with the power to harm in the past, and on the basis of that experience, pleads for it to be done again.

VERSE 8

"Salvation belongeth unto Yahweh" — The R.V. mg. renders this as "victory," and that is what David desired in the coming contest for power in Israel. Nevertheless, the idea of deliverance with freedom to worship in Zion, doubtless was the main consideration of David as he presented this prayer unto Yahweh. Salvation, help, or victory belongs to Yahweh, and to nobody else. This is clearly stated in Psalm 127, where the statement is made that "unless Yahweh keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." David in distress and difficulty, found that he never placed confidence in Yahweh in vain. Nor will we do so, in times of trouble. We may have to go through much in the way of pain and suffering, but, at least, we can be strengthened to endure it through leaning upon God in such times of need. He will "never leave us nor forsake us, so that we may boldly say, The Lord is my Helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13:5-6).

"Thy blessing is upon Thy people" — The R.V. renders this: "Thy blessing be upon Thy people." David's concern was for the people. He realised that they needed sound rule and guidance, and he recognised that they would not receive this under Absalom. Later, when he was restored to the throne, and a punishing plague swept the land, he pleaded for the people, and invited Yahweh to punish him instead of them: "These sheep, what have they done? let Thine hand, I pray

Thee, be against me, and against my father's house" (2 Sam. 24:17). His deep concern was ever for them, for pre-eminently, he was the shepherd of the sheep. So now, though troubled on every side, and beset by enemies on every hand, he pleads for his people. Only Yahweh's blessing can cancel the disastrous harm that may result to Israel from the threatening disorders.

"Selah" — See note, v. 2. If *Selah* is a thought-link as suggested above (see also Companion Bible), why conclude the Psalm with it? The answer is, because the Psalm is closely intertwined with the next Psalm, so that they should be studied in conjunction one with the other.

The Subscription

Most Psalms comprise a title, the body of the Psalm, and a subscription or conclusion. However, the titles and subscriptions are lacking in Psalms one and two, so that Psalm three is the first to supply them.

Unfortunately, for reasons we will outline in our next article (for already this one has gone beyond the allocated space) the subscription to Psalm 3 is given in the A.V. as part of the Title to Psalm 4.

The Title to Psalm 4 is "*A Psalm of David,*" and the words that precede it: "*To the chief musician on Neginoth*" really form the subscription to Psalm 3. They should be detached from Psalm 4, and included on the end of Psalm 3.

Psalms dedicated "*to the chief musician*" were given into the care of those who had the charge of the musical arrangements of the Temple. Prophetically, the title points forward to the Lord Jesus who will fulfil the requirements of the Psalm, overshadowing the saints for their good, and avenging them upon their enemies.

The term *Neginoth* indicates how the Psalm was to be rendered. The word is a plural word, in the feminine gender, and is from a root signifying "smitings." It implies that the Psalm should be accompanied by a percussion instrument such as a harp or the modern piano; the staccato notes of which,

imply the smitings suggested by the Psalm. As the enemies of David were smitten and overthrown, so will also the enemies of the multitudinous Christ. And hence the musical notation which is the subscription to the Psalm, and which is itself, prophetic in its significance.

— H.P.M.

Logos: Improving Or Deteriorating?

WHICH ONE IS RIGHT?

Critics continue to voice their opinion on this question. For other comments see vol. 40, p. 358, vol. 41, p. 24. Reader L.D. writes:

"I cannot resist your invitation to write you regarding 'which one is right' in this month's *Logos*. Most certainly, I did not agree with your Australian critic!

"As I turned the page and finished the little article on Hannah, I thought how improved *Logos* is, and how its articles are now more in tune with our needs in the daily environment of these times. So I was astonished to read such criticism in the very next item.

"Ten years ago, when first baptised, I commenced taking *Logos*. But for me many articles did not hold much interest, and certainly they did not help in the daily problems I was trying to cope with. Often the copies remained unread on the shelf; though I found your *Story Of The Bible* most helpful. It gave me comfort and inspiration in troublous times. The descriptive way in which it was written helped me in my daily life.

"Recently, I have begun to welcome *Logos*, and put everything aside for a quick look to see what the articles are about. Then, later, I read it more carefully. I have found it helpful in supplying many answers to questions I have been pondering. For example, the following comment in a recent exhortation gave me much food for thought: 'They are those who elevate the divine requirements over personal wants, and are willing to sacrifice personal advantage to perform that which they are called upon to do.' The exhortation, while simple and based on wellknown Bible words, is very powerful. And that is what we need in these perilous times.

"The section on the Psalms is an excellent one; and I hope to mark up my Bible as you go through. Such detailed exposition is very welcome, for there appears to be little written on the Psalms.

"The article on Russia is interesting and informative, enlarging the prophetic facts given by Brother Thomas. Such data brings home the reality of today's news to Christadelphians.

"While you may be able to improve *Logos*, please keep it the way it is. As for *Logos* becoming a 'popular magazine' as your critic suggests — what is wrong with that! If you provide a magazine which finds favour, surely it indicates you are fulfilling a need, a desire for truth. The three articles mentioned above certainly will not appeal to the mind of the flesh — they will only be 'popular' with one class of Christadelphian.

"An elderly sister in our meeting, constantly speaks of the enjoyment she receives from *Logos*. So keep up the good work. May Yahweh bless your efforts to provide us with a magazine in these last days. I pray that He will guide you to produce that which is pleasing to Him."

— L.D.

"Awake to righteousness and sin not" (1 Cor. 15:34).

The budding and bursting into life of the dormant tree is also a symbol of resurrection — a glorious reminder of the great hope laid up for those who are 'burners of the spirit oil.'

The lessons of the Lampstand are plain; and the wise will heed them. If we are to shine as lights in the world we need to develop the faith revealed by the gold and humbly submit to the chastening hand of Yahweh. We must be

awake and trimming our lamps, never ceasing to beat out the oil of the word. Although this demands constant effort and patient endurance, the day *will* come when toil and tribulation will end, and the wise will rejoice when they are exalted and "shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father" (Matt. 13:43).

Let us clearly see the significance of these symbols, and learn to apply them personally in action and attitude.

— A. Hayles (W.A).

The Inscriptions of the Psalms

Many of the Psalms are prefaced with titles such as "*A Psalm of David when he fled from Absalom, his son,*" or "*A song upon Alamoth,*" or "*To the chief musician, on Neginoth upon Sheminith.*"

The significance of these inscriptions and their use has been a matter of doubt for centuries. A suggested explanation which fits the requirements of the Psalms was advanced by the late J. W. Thirtle (one time Christadelphian) whose setting of the Psalms has been accepted by *The Companion Bible* and incorporated in the text.

First let us set out the problem.

When we go back to the ancient Hebrew mss. we find that there are

no breaks or spaces separating the psalms from each other such as there are in our modern Bible. The only mark or division between them is the number in the margin. The inscriptions, therefore, which have always been more or less gratuitously assumed to be the titles of the psalms following them, might just as truly be footnotes to the psalms preceding them. Yet, strangely enough, the former has been so taken for granted that the latter has remained apparently unsuspected until quite recently. J.W. Thirtle came to a solution by asking whether, instead of being superscriptions to the psalms which follow them, they might be subscriptions, either wholly or in part,

to the psalms which precede them. Is there, anywhere outside the Book of Psalms, a psalm standing by itself from which we can learn what was the Hebrew practise in this connection? There is; and it is in Habakkuk 3. In that composition we find —

1. The *Superscription* — “A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, upon Shigionoth” (v. 1).
2. The Prayer, “or Psalm,” itself — Vv. 2-19.
3. The *Subscription* — “To the Chief Musician upon Neginoth.”

We find the same three-fold arrangement in Isaiah 38:9-20, in king Hezekiah’s Psalm of Praise and Thanksgiving for his recovery from sickness, as follows —

1. The *Superscription* — “The writing of Hezekiah, king of Judah, when he had been sick and was recovered of his sickness” (v. 9).
2. The “*Song*”, or Psalm, itself — from Vv. 10-20.
3. The *Subscription* — “Therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments, all the days of our life, in the House of Yahweh.”

These two instances give the key to the inscriptions found in the Book of Psalms. As an outcome of the Babylonian Exile, detailed knowledge of the original Temple worship became obscured; and by the middle or end of the third century B.C., when the *Septuagint Translation* of the Hebrew Scriptures was made into Greek, it had become quite lost. Since there was no space-break between the psalms, there was nothing to tell the *Septuagint* translators whether the inscriptions between some of them belonged to what went before or what came after; and, because some of them were almost certainly titles

to what followed, the *Septuagint* translators erroneously assumed that all of them were, with the result that all these inscriptions have been handed down ever since as psalm “titles,” and now appear as such in the English Bible.

It is because of this that many readers of the Psalms have noticed that some of these so-called “titles” have little or nothing to do with the psalms over which they stand; while some have remarked that certain of these titles actually seem more appropriate to the psalms which precede them than to those at the head of which they appear!

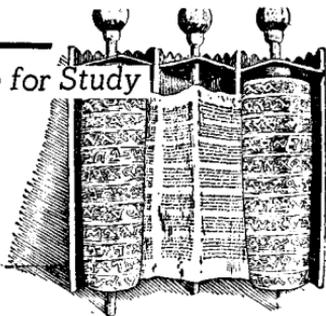
With the two instances of Habakkuk and Hezekiah before us we find that in the case of those psalms which have titles, in the English version, many of these titles must be divided. The first part of the title must be treated as the sub-*scription* of the psalm which goes before; and the remaining words, such as “*A Psalm of David*,” will remain as the super-*scription* of the psalm which follows — just as the words, “*A Prayer of Habakkuk*,” head the composition in Habakkuk 3.

Take Psalms 4, 5 and 6 as examples. In each case the first words of the title are not really a part of the title at all, but a sub-*script* to the psalm which goes before; and the simple title to each of these three psalms is: “*A Psalm of David*.”

With this key in our hands, the special words used in some of these sub-*scripts* light up with new significance.

The *Companion Bible* sets out the Titles of the Psalms in their correct order.

Theme for Study



PSALM FOUR

Thanksgiving for Yahweh's Protection

Our closing comment upon the concluding word of Psalm 3: *Selah*, suggests that the two Psalms are closely intertwined together. Psalm 3 comprises a morning prayer in view of anticipated difficulties during the day: Psalm 4 is an evening prayer of thanksgiving in view of problems safely overcome.

A Psalm Of Thanksgiving

The superscription attributes the Psalm to David. The internal evidence of it would suggest that it was composed about the same time, or in similar circumstances, as that of Psalm 3. But now the danger anticipated then has faded; the forebodings of the morning have proved vain, and David turns to Yahweh in thankfulness and praise for the manifold blessings he has received.

Expression of thanks for favours received, is a gracious act, in accordance with the divine will. Paul, to the Thessalonians, wrote: "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thess. 5:18). It is only right that we should ever recognise the goodness of Yahweh in our lives, and be warm in our expression of thanks to Him for benefits received.

This is impressed by the lesson of the ten lepers who were cured. All ten manifested faith and obedience, for when the Lord instructed them to "Go shew yourselves unto the priests" they instantly commenced to obey, though, at that stage, they had not been cured.

"It came to pass, that, *as they went*, they were cleansed" (Luke 17:14).

But though all were cured, only one was "made whole" (the same word elsewhere is rendered "saved"). He was granted that privilege, not because of his faithful obedience merely, but because his faith caused him to humble himself before Christ, and pour out his thanks to God (Vv. 16-18).

In the Psalm before us, David manifests a similar attitude. Filled with gratitude, the theme of his prayer became: "*Thou hast enlarged me in distress*" (v. 1).

Historical Background

Under what circumstances was the Psalm written? A suggested answer is provided by Paul's citation of v. 4 in Ephesians 4:26, where it is rendered, in accordance with the Septuagint translation: "Be ye angry and sin not."

Paul adds the words: "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath; neither give place to the devil."

In the Psalm, David addressed certain by the title "sons of men" or *beni ish*, a term relating to men of eminence and high status. The

context suggests that these "sons of men" had incited David to such anger as could have moved him to sin.

A careful consideration of the terms of the Psalm, and Paul's use of them, suggests that these men of high status were the sons of Zeruiah, who endeavoured to move David to put Shimei to death when he publicly cursed the king, as he went sorrowfully into exile (2 Sam. 16:9-11). If they had succeeded, they would have turned the glory of David's submissive humility to the will of Yahweh, into shame, as he reminds them in this Psalm (v. 2).

They acted the part of the devil, trying to urge him to exact personal revenge on Shimei. In fact, David describes them as such on a later occasion when, again, they tried to move him to punish Shimei. The king answered Abishai "What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah, that ye should this day be adversaries (Heb. *satan*) unto me?" (2 Sam. 19:22). In thus rebuking them, and refusing their suggestion, he "did not give place to the devil." Now, at the end of a day, when the morning's anxiety has been calmed away, and every difficulty has been successfully surmounted, he is able to "commune with his own heart upon his bed, and be still" (Ps. 4:4).

The morning after David had fled Jerusalem, he had received information that the advice of Hushai had prevailed over that of Ahithophel (2 Sam. 17:22). That news was good. Nevertheless the revolt of Absalom was still formidable, and the opposition to David strong. Therefore he had retreated across the Jordan to Mahanaim,

to be received with courtesy and kindness by notable men of the east, prominent among them being Barzillai the Gileadite. They had brought provisions and supplies for David and his company, and so refreshed them (2 Sam. 17:27-29). All this revealed to David that Yahweh had not forsaken him; and it contributed to the composition of the Psalm before us. He could now see the virtue of his humility, even in the face of the provocation of Shimei.

The Dominant Title of God in the Psalm

In this Psalm, Yahweh is described by David as the *God of my righteousness*: the One Who would justify or vindicate David.

Justification or vindication, is a declaring of one to be right. In the absolute sense, only the Lord Jesus Christ among the sons of men can be described as being completely righteous. He rendered perfect obedience unto the Father, and was able to confront his contemporaries with the question: "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" (John 8:46). The answer was, He did no sin (1 Pet. 2:22; John 16:10).

He was not only absolutely sinless, but he completely manifested the qualities of the Father, Who therefore raised him from the dead to life eternal. Peter declared that because of his moral perfection, the grave could not hold him (Acts 2:24); and Paul taught that his standing again in life was a vindication of his claim to be the Son of God (Rom. 1:2-4). Nobody could dispute that claim when they saw the risen and glorified Christ.

Justification or righteousness as

far as all others are concerned, is only possible through the absolution of sins, the acquittal of transgressions, for "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Thus forgiveness, or a covering away of sins, is required. Paul wrote:

"David describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Rom. 4:6-8; Ps. 32:1).

That is what is sometimes called *imputed* righteousness. A believer's knowledge justifies Yahweh in his heart, and brings home to him a consciousness of transgression. He acknowledges the righteousness of Yahweh, and his own sinfulness, and through the offering of Christ pleads forgiveness (Acts 2:38). Yahweh, in mercy, freely forgives such, and the believer is justified through grace (Rom. 3:21-26; 5:21; 6:17-18).

But righteousness is not only *imputed* by sins being forgiven, it is also *imparted* by the manifestation of acts of faith in the building up of a character acceptable to the Father. Yahweh works in and through us by the power of His word (Phil. 2:13; 2 Cor. 4:6-7). Hence Isaiah declares: "Thy people also shall be all righteous; they shall inherit the land for ever; the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, that I may be glorified" (Isa. 60:21).

When David addressed Yahweh as the "*God of my righteousness*," he did not have in mind merely the moral issues; he did not view God merely as the Forgiver of

sins, and the Energiser of his will power to do right, but also as the One Who would maintain his cause as just before his contemporaries. David was confident of the integrity of his heart, and the justice of his cause in spite of appearances to the contrary. Many like Shimei, knew of his sin with Bathsheba, and rejoiced at the rebellion that had driven him from the throne. They knew nothing of His "righteousness," the "integrity that was in him" (Ps. 7:8). To restore him to the throne would vindicate him before all; and more, would be a triumph of right over wrong. David prayed for that, and, accordingly, addressed Yahweh as the "*God of my righteousness*." He looked to Him as the One who would vindicate him before men.

The plural *Elohim* is used because it would be through the heavenly host that Yahweh would bring about the vindication of His servant.

In this Psalm, therefore, David appropriates to himself a title of God that is all-embracing as far as the elect are concerned. It is Messianic in its scope, for it is through the Lord Jesus Christ that the vindication of all true believers will be brought about.

Jeremiah predicted this Yahweh inspired him to declare.

"I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days, Judah shall be saved; and Israel shall dwell safely, and this is his name whereby he shall be called, Yahweh-Tsidkenu, Yahweh our righteousness" (Jer. 23:6).

This name is both Messianic and Millennial. It points to the past, to the work of Christ as sacrifice and saviour for those who

believe in him; and it points to the future, when he shall be manifested as sovereign for the vindication of the nation as Yahweh's people.

But will he be on his own in that day when "Judah shall be saved; and Israel shall dwell safely?" He will not. He will be the "chiefest among ten thousand" (Song 5:10); the head of the glorified body of the elect, who will be one in him. Therefore, in addressing him, Israel will be able to echo the words of David: "O God (Elohim) of my righteousness."

In Isaiah 51:5,8, the terms *righteous* and *salvation* are linked together:

"Hearken unto Me, My people; and give ear unto Me, O My nation: for a law shall proceed from Me, and I will make My judgment to rest for a light of the people. My righteousness is near; My salvation is gone forth, and Mine arms shall judge the people; the isles shall wait upon Me, and on Mine arm shall they trust . . . My righteousness shall be for the age, and My salvation from generation to generation."

This, of course, points to the work of Yahweh in Christ, as Sacrifice and Saviour. Because the righteousness of God has been declared in him, and we acknowledge it as such, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

This is expressed in the title: *God of my righteousness*. It is a divine title that takes hold of the Atonement in its widest sense.

The Structure Of The Psalm

The Psalm is divided into three parts by the insertion of the word *Selah*, *Consider!*

- (1) - Appeal to Yahweh and rebuke of men - Vv. 1-2.
- (2) - David's confidence in his cause - Vv. 3-4.
- (3) - The way of righteousness and joy found therein - Vv. 5-8.



An Appeal to God and Rebuke of Men - Vv. 1-2.

David seeks the vindication of Yahweh, and refuses that offered by the "sons of men."

VERSE 1

"Hear me" - There is no doubt in his heart that God will hear him. He has experienced this blessing before (Ps. 3:4), and is confident of it again (Ps. 4:3). Therefore, the prayer is a request that Yahweh would *continue* to hear him.

"When I call" - There is a need for us to call, if we want Yahweh to answer. The Lord taught that "Men ought always to pray and not to faint" (Luke 18:1; 11:1-13).

"O God of my righteousness" - See notes in the introduction to the Psalm. David's appeal is based upon his privileged forgiven state. Cf. Ps. 51:2-4; 32:1.

"Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress" - He recalls with gratitude past experiences of good. Though hemmed in by trouble, Yahweh has brought him partially out of it, and made him confident of the righteousness of his cause. In spite of earlier forebodings, he experienced that very day tokens of divine good.

"Have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer" - The Hebrew *chanan* signifies *to shew favour*, as the margin renders it. Graciousness is a character-

istic of Yahweh expressed in the proclamation of His name (Exod. 34:6). It suggests the bestowal of good, rather than the exercise of forgiveness.

VERSE 2

"O ye sons of men," — From appealing to God he turns to rebuke those who would turn "his glory into shame." He addresses certain leaders, using the phrase *bene ish*, which, in Ps. 49:2, 62:9 are rendered *high* and *high degree*, in contrast to *bene adam* rendered *low*, and *low degree* in the same Psalms. Who are these leaders who are rebuked by David? A consideration of the citation of this Psalm by Paul, as referred to in our introduction, would suggest that they were the sons of Zeruiah, and particularly Abishai. When David fled the city and was cursed by Shimei, these leaders among his followers wanted to exact vengeance on Shimei. But David refused the request on the grounds that he believed that it was according to the will of Yahweh that he should submit to the indignity heaped upon him: "It may be that Yahweh will look on mine affliction, and that Yahweh will requite me good for his cursing this day" (2 Sam. 16:9-12).

On his return from exile, David was met by a humbled Shimei who pleaded that the King extend forgiveness to him. Again, the sons of Zeruiah urged that Shimei be put to death, but again the King refused to exact vengeance. On this occasion, he called Abishai an *adversary, satan* (2 Sam. 19:22), probably causing the comment of Paul in context with his citation of this Psalm: "Neither give place to the devil" (Eph. 4:27).

"Will ye turn my glory into shame" — David's glory was to submit to the divine will, even in the case of the cursing Shimei; his shame would have been to give way to the flesh, as Abishai urged upon him to do. The symbol of his glory was his position on the throne, which the leaders in Jerusalem, headed by Absalom and Ahithophel, had turned into shame. The phrase, therefore, can take in those among friends and foes alike.

"How long will ye love vanity" — The empty vengeance desired by Abishai; the foolish, vanities of the empty-headed, long-haired, handsome Absalom (2 Sam. 14:25-26).

"Seek after leasing" — Leasing is old-English for a lie. The R.V. renders it as *falsehood*. The revolt of Absalom was a lie, for it was based upon the false principle of personal ambition; the demand for vengeance on the part of Abishai was a lie, for it was motivated by the flesh, promising satisfaction by the execution of Shimei.

"Selah" — See note Ps. 3:2, *Logos* p. 58. It could express the exclamation; Mark this! See what the end will be!

David's Confidence In His Cause — Vv. 3-4.

He expresses his confidence that the revolt will fail; and, therefore, what attitude should be adopted by his followers.

"Know that Yahweh hath set apart him that is godly for Himself" — Even though the revolt against David was strong, and he was offered bad advice by his followers, Yahweh was for him, and had manifested Himself in support of him. The verse *set apart* is *palah* in Hebrew, and signifies *has distinguished*. The verb combines the sense of marvellous dealing with that of choice and separation. It is rendered *marvellous* in Ps. 17:7; Isa. 29:14. David could never forget the marvel of his separation and elevation from shepherd boy to king, or the wonder of his position of privilege. In type he represented the true Ecclesia to whom has been given "the sure mercies of David" (Isa. 55:3), and whose privileged position as a people for the name (Acts 15:14) is a most wonderful work of separation unto Yahweh.

The word "*godly*" expresses the character of the true Ecclesia. It is from the Hebrew *chasid* and signifies *loving kindness* or *mercy*. The former aspect of the word expresses the dutiful love of all such towards Yahweh; the second aspect of it expresses the kindness that such manifest towards others. This is a divine characteristic; a cognate word *chesed* being rendered *goodness* in the description of the divine character (Exod. 34:6).

The inspired statement of David is interesting. It suggests the basis upon which Yahweh is "taking out of the Gentiles a people for His name" (Acts 15:14). He is selecting those who are

“godly,” namely, those who manifest the ability to develop divine characteristics of goodness, or Godliness, in their lives. The final selection at the judgment seat will be of those who have allowed the Word to work in them to that end.

VERSE 4

“Stand in awe, and sin not” — These words are cited by Paul in Eph. 4:26 where the LXX rendition is given: “Be ye angry, and sin not.” This does not mean, necessarily, that Paul is quoting from the LXX, but would suggest that the latter translation correctly renders the original Hebrew. The verb in the original, *ragaz*, here rendered “stand in awe” signifies *to quiver in fear or anger*, and therefore is suggestive of Paul’s rendition. The RV margin renders it as “angry.” This comprises David’s advice to Abishai, who wished to expend his anger upon Shimei by putting him to death. It suggests that even if a person feels that he has cause for anger, he should not allow his disaffection to so motivate him as to sin against Yahweh. Therefore, consider deeply before you act. Do nothing rashly. Do not permit emotion to blind you to discretion. Sleep on the matter! There is such a thing as righteous anger (see Mark 3:5; Rev. 2:2, 6; 139:21); indeed it is a divine characteristic (Ps. 7:11; Rev. 19:15), but human nature is so weak, that frequently, that which commences on a high level deteriorates through human passion into a low one. Therefore, we are advised to “cease” from anger (Ps. 37:8), to be “slow to wrath” (James 1:19; John 4:2). A wrathful man stirreth up strife (Prov. 15:18), whereas discretion will defer it (Prov. 19:11). Finally: “He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city” (Prov. 16:32).

The incident with Shimei illustrates this. Shimei’s action was evil, harsh, pitiless, and cowardly. The fierce indignation of Abishai is to be commended, and we may be disposed to join with him in his denunciation of Shimei, and demand for punishment against him. But David manifests his true greatness by refusing the request, and leaving the matter in the hands of Yahweh. He recognised that “the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God” (James 1:20), and so restrained the

understandable wrath of his loyal followers.

“Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still” — Paul, in Ephesians 4:26 supplies: “Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.” This is excellent advice. Rid your mind of wrathful thoughts at the close of the day, and give yourself to meditation upon the ways of Providence. “Commit your ways unto Yahweh, and He will direct your paths.”

“Selah” — See note v. 2. In this context: such an attitude as David advocates will result in sacrifices of righteousness being offered unto Yahweh.

The Way Of Righteousness And The Joy Found Therein — Vv. 5-8.

A faithful reaction to life’s problems, even the unjust accusations and imputations of men of flesh, will result in proper worship unto Yahweh, and the fruits thereof.

VERSE 5

“Offer the sacrifices of righteousness” — This will result from following the advice of v. 4. In David’s case, it was a contrast to the worship of the opposition. Even whilst they were directing their barbs against David, Yahweh’s anointed, Absalom and Ahithophel were offering sacrifices in Giloh (2 Sam. 15:12). The record states: “And the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom” (v. 12).

This was a challenge to David and a delusion to Absalom. David took up the challenge as indicated by his words in this Psalm; Absalom doubtless imagined that the apparent success of his revolt was the answer of Yahweh to his sacrifices. In this he was “sent a strong delusion, that he might believe a lie” (2 Thess. 2:11).

A “sacrifice of righteousness” is a form of service that is genuine, in which one’s prayers and offerings conform to one’s character. Anything else is blasphemy (Prov. 21:27; Ps. 50:16-17).

“And put your trust in Yahweh” — Do the right, and do not be concerned with the strength of the opposition.

VERSE 6

“There be many that say, Who will shew us any good?” — David realised

that there were many discontented grumblers among his subjects whose complaints discouraged others, causing their disaffection. See notes Ps. 3:2.

"Yahweh, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us" — That is, look favourably upon us, and lighten the darkness of our way (cp. Num. 6: 24-26; Ps. 80:1).

VERSE 7

"Thou hast put gladness in my heart" — As he quietly communed within his heart upon the things of Yahweh, he received a peace of mind in the midst of trouble, a quiet happiness far better than the boisterous mirth of rejoicing at the harvest vintage.

VERSE 8

"I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep" — With his mind quietened from trouble through communion with Yahweh (v. 4), he enjoyed the dual blessings of peace and rest.

"For Thou Yahweh, only makest me dwell in safety" — Yahweh only should be contrasted with the many of v. 6 who were filled with doubts. It expresses the Psalmist's extreme confidence in Yahweh, despite the numbers ranged against him. The Hebrew *badad* signifies separate or apart. It is from a root signifying to divide, to be solitary. The meaning is: "It is Thou, O Yahweh, Who makest me to dwell apart in security" (see *Hebrew Students Manual*). David had been driven from the body of the nation; he was separated from many of his friends; and from the centre of worship; He was opposed by numerous and powerful enemies. Yet he could rest in security, knowing that Yahweh was with him.

How many saints, during Gentile times, when Ecclesias of small numbers have been scattered throughout the world, have likewise rested isolated but in security. In doing so, they have fellowshipped the sufferings of David as well as Christ. Resting in Yahweh, sheltering under His protective care, they have dwelt apart in complete security.

The Subscription

We suggested in our last article (see p. 60) that the titles of the Psalms, as set forth in the A.V., should be changed

to provide for a superscription at the head of the Psalm, and a subscription at its conclusion. The reason for this we have outlined elsewhere in this issue.

According to this arrangement, the words "To the chief musician upon Nehiloth" should appear as the subscription to Psalm 4, and the words "A Psalm of David" provides the title, or super-scription, to Psalm 5.

Accepting that arrangement, what does the subscription to Psalm 4 teach?

"To the chief musician" — Psalms thus dedicated were given into the care of those who had the charge of the musical arrangements of the Temple. Prophetically, the title points forward to the Lord Jesus who will supervise the singing of saints in the age to come (cp. Rev. 5:9-10).

"Upon Nehiloth" — According to Dr. Strong, this word is derived from *halal*, to bore, and therefore has been identified with the playing of flutes because a flute has holes bored into it. *The Oxford Gesenius* states that the meaning is unknown.

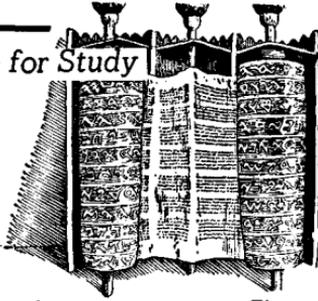
However, the Septuagint has "*concerning her that inherits.*" Other renditions have: "*Division of inheritances,*" "*allotments,*" and so forth. J. W. Thirtle in *The Titles Of The Psalms*, substitutes the word *nahaloth*, *inheritances* instead of *nehiloth*, and it seems obvious that the Septuagint translators had this word before them in their rendition of the Psalm. The application of this meaning to the Psalm is obvious; for it sets forth Yahweh as the inheritance of true Israelites (cp. vv. 3,6,7. See also Eph. 1:18). Though an exile, though separated from the tabernacle worship (see 2 Sam. 15:25), David could yet put his trust in Yahweh, and look to Him to put gladness in his heart, more than any artificial forms of stimulation (v. 6).

The Psalm is powerful, not only as exhibiting the pleading of David under pressure, but as a guideline to our own conduct when circumstances draw us into similar paths along which he had to walk.

— H.P.M.

"Let the Word dwell in you richly. . . teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:16).

Theme for Study



PSALM FIVE - A Plea for Deliverance, and for Vindication

A morning prayer (see v.3) after the gloomy shadows of the night have been driven away by the warming rays of the early sun. The morning, when the world is still, and the light spreads abroad from the east with new tokens of Yahweh's presence, is the time of prayer. All creation joins in praising the beginnings of a new day, and at that time, Yahweh's children should turn their thoughts to Him before the activity of everyday life takes possession of its hours.

Historical Background

The title states that this is *A Psalm of David*. The title has been disputed on the grounds that it speaks of the Temple as though built (v. 7), and, of course, that was the work of Solomon, not of David.

However, the term "house of Yahweh" is used of the Tabernacle (Exod. 23:19; 34:26; Deut. 23:18; Josh. 6:24; 1 Sam. 1:24; 3:15), as well as of the tent that David pitched for the ark on Mount Zion (2 Sam. 12:20). The same treatment is given to the term, *Temple*. It is the title applied to the sanctuary at Shiloh (1 Sam. 1:9; 3:3), and the expression used by David in the Psalm recorded in 2 Samuel 22:7, as well as elsewhere (see Ps. 11:4; 18:6; 29:9). In those places it seems to relate to heaven above, the abode of Yahweh, His true Temple, of which, the earthly building was but a local symbol. Isaiah recorded the words of Yahweh:

"Thus saith Yahweh: The heavens is My throne, and the earth is My footstool; where is the house that ye build unto Me? and where is the place of My rest?" (Isa. 66:1).

The word for "temple" is *heykal*. It is from a root expressing *capacity*, and suggests a large building for public assemblage. In Ps. 45:8,15; 144:12, the word is translated *palace*. In all these usages, therefore, it can apply as much to the days of David as to those of Solomon.

At what time was the Psalm composed? The internal evidence would suggest that it was written during the rebellion of Absalom. David speaks of the destruction of those "who speak leasing" (v. 6), as he does in the previous Psalm which was written about that time (Ps. 4:2). He prays that his enemies may "fall by their own counsels" (v. 10), which seems an echo of the prayer contained in 2 Samuel 15:31: "O Yahweh, I pray Thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness." The ascription of praise (v. 11), would stem from his early morning confidence as he recalled hopeful evidence of his restoration.

As we have seen in our treatment of the previous Psalms (e.g. p. 84), shortly after David left Jerusalem depressed and despon-

dent, he received news from the city that the advice of Hushai his friend, had prevailed over that of Ahithophel (2 Sam. 17:22), and this, together with other incidents of travel, must have greatly encouraged him with the realisation that his exile would be only temporary. His morning prayer, therefore, was one of hope and confidence, expressive of his determination to follow the course that Yahweh would reveal for him. The theme of the Psalm is expressed in v. 8:

“Lead me, O Yahweh in Thy righteousness because of mine enemies.”

The Dominant Title Of God In The Psalm

In this Psalm, David describes Yahweh as *A Shield* (v.12).

That also was the title that he gave Yahweh in Psalm 3 (cp. v. 3). But there the word is *Magen*; here it is *Tsinnah*. The word is derived from a root, *tsen*, signifying *thorn*, and in this regard, suggesting the protection of a thorn-bush. In contrast to *magen* which denoted a smaller shield, *tsinnah* related to a large shield which protected the whole body. Thus the expression in this Psalm: “*compass him as with a shield*” (v. 12).

Goliath was protected by such a shield. It was in the nature of a moveable fort, for a man went before him “bearing the shield” (1 Sam. 17:7). This man carried this huge shield before Goliath, who also was equipped with his smaller personal shield. When the giant, moved forth to the point of battle, he stood protected behind it. The only vulnerable part was the formidable face, and towards that David successfully aimed with his sling and his stone.

The Hebrew word *tsinnah* is sometimes rendered “buckler” as in Psalm 35:2. In that passage, both the small and the large shields are referred to. The Psalmist calls upon Yahweh to move to his defence, both in protecting the vulnerable parts of the body, as well as the large protective shield that would “compass him” about. In Psalm 91:4, the Psalmist states: “His truth shall be thy shield and buckler.” Here, again, the word “shield” is *tsinnah*, and suggests a large pointed shield, covering the whole body, and protecting it by its prickliness.

The title, therefore illustrates the protective care of Yahweh. He is represented as a Man of war (Exodus 15:3), covering His people with His all-protective care. These titles are expressive of God as moving to the defence and protection of His people.

The Structure Of The Psalm

The Psalm can be conveniently divided into four parts:

- (1) – Request – Vv. 1-3;
- (2) – Righteousness – Vv. 4-6;
- (3) – Retribution – Vv. 7-9;
- (4) – Reward – Vv. 10-12.

In *Part one*, the king on earth seeks help of the King of heaven.

In *Part two*, he pleads deliverance on the basis of Yahweh's righteousness and the wickedness of his enemies.

In *Part three*, he requests that his enemies be punished as they deserve.

In *Part four*, he prays for the ultimate deliverance of the righteous.



The King On Earth Seeks Help Of The King Of Heaven — Vv. 1-3.

The Psalmist beseeches Yahweh to consider his meditation and hearken to his words. His prayer is designed as part of his morning's worship.

VERSE 1

"Give ear to my words, O Yahweh" — He requests that Yahweh bend His ear to his whispered utterances.

"Consider my meditation" — The word *hagiyy*, signifies a murmur, and thus can relate to an unspoken prayer, or to a low voice of brooding sorrow.

VERSE 2

"Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God" — His brooding sorrow found expression in a cry for help directed to the King of heaven. David was Yahweh's vice-regent on earth. He had been dethroned by Absalom's revolt which constituted a challenge to the authority of Heaven which had given David his position.

Yahweh was not merely King, but also David's God. The word is *Elohim*, a plural word expressive of the manifestation of Deity in His angels, the Doers of the divine will (Ps. 103:20).

VERSE 3

"My voice shalt Thou hear in the morning, O Yahweh" — The statement in the morning is repeated for emphasis. The Psalmist devoted the first thought of the day to prayer (cp. Ps. 55:17; 88:13; and see comment in our introduction above).

"Will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and will look up" — The R.V. renders "direct" as *order*, that is, to arrange. The expression is used of setting in order

the pieces of wood for sacrificial fire (Gen. 22:9; Lev. 1:7), or the parts of the burnt offering that were to be arranged on the altar (Lev. 1:8). This suggests that prayer should be ordered or arranged, and should not be the vague meanderings of an undisciplined mind. Let the mind be prepared first, and then let the tongue speak. The Psalmist did that of a morning. One of the first duties of the priests in the morning, was to prepare the wood to feed the fire for the morning sacrifice, which was offered at sunrise (Lev. 6:12; Num. 28:4). In prayer, the offerer became, as it were, a priest.

The words "will look up" are rendered *will keep watch*, by the R.V., suggesting a state of alertness awaiting an answer. Paul urges that we should "watch in prayer" (Col. 4:2). The word there signifies to *keep awake*. Prayer demands the concentration of the mind to be really effective.

Yahweh's Righteousness Contrasted With Human Wickedness — Vv. 4-6.

The Psalmist expresses confidence in Yahweh's judgment because of His character as revealed in His hatred of wickedness.

VERSE 4

"Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness" — The word God, here, is *El*, not *Elohim*. The basic idea of *El* is that of power; but the Psalmist's use of it shows that *El*, when related to Yahweh, is a moral and intelligent Power, who takes pleasure in righteousness.

"Neither shall evil dwell with Thee" — The R.V. margin renders this: *The evil man shall not sojourn with Thee*. Yahweh will not entertain such as a guest, but will consume him as an enemy, as the future will reveal (cp. Isa. 33:14; Heb. 12:29). Meanwhile, we cannot have fellowship with God, whilst walking in darkness (1 John 1:6).

VERSE 5

"The foolish shall not stand in Thy sight" — There are various forms of folly referred to in this verse. Here the word is *halal*, signifying to *rave*, *be clamorous*, hence to be *boastful*, *presumptuous*, rather than to be foolish in the normal

sense of the word. Boastful, clamorous men who speak foolishly with the tongue (cp. Matt. 12:36), shall "not stand" in the presence of Yahweh manifested in His son, at the judgment seat (cp. Ps. 1:5).

"Thou hatest all workers of iniquity"—This describes the habitually wicked. Between them and God there is mutual antipathy. The Lord declared of such: "For every one that doeth evil (the word signifies *habitually*) hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved" (John 3:20).

VERSE 6

"Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing" — The R.V. renders this as lies. "Leasing" is old English for *lying*. The habitual liar will be excluded from the Kingdom of God (Rev. 21:8).

"Yahweh will abhor the bloody and deceitful man" — This describes violence and deceit. It takes in the Shimeis, Doegs, Ahithophels, Absaloms, and Joabs of David's times, as well as since. Ruthlessness and deceit will be avoided by those who desire the goodwill of God.

The Privileged Lot Of The Psalmist — Vv. 7-9.

In contrast to the wicked, the Psalmist is confident that his worship will be found acceptable by Yahweh. He seeks the guidance of God to that end.

VERSE 7

"As for me, I will come into Thy house in the multitude of Thy mercy" — The Psalmist contrasts his privileged state in being able to approach Yahweh, with that of the wicked who are not able to acceptably do so (cp. Vv. 4-5). The R.V. renders "mercy" as *loving-kindness*, the N.T. word *grace*, or *favour*. Evidences of Yahweh's lovingkindness, His blessings towards us, abound on every side, but greatest of them is access to the throne on high. Notice that whilst the Psalmist expresses his appreciation for the abundance of favours and blessings he has received from Yahweh, he is not exempt from trouble. In fact, his problems are great, and humanly insoluble. He is surrounded by enemies on all sides, and they have been so successful, that David has been banished from his throne. Yet in spite of the

darkness of depression that must have rested heavily upon him, he could see beyond to the relief that he realised would come ultimately. He put his confidence and trust in God. He expressed his conviction that under divine providence the tide would turn, and he would be able again to worship in Jerusalem. In times of difficulty, doubt or depression, let us seek the strength and relief that comes from similar communion with Yahweh.

"In Thy fear will I worship toward Thy holy temple" — The Godly fear to which he gives expression, relates to a reverential awe, a fear of offending Yahweh, a fear that is begotten of love of Him. "Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and Godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire," declared Paul (Heb. 12:28-29). Such a fear will cause us to retrace our steps, when we have done wrong, for "Godly sorrow worketh repentance (a change of mind and attitude) to salvation not to be repented of" (2 Cor. 7:10).

At the same time as David stated his conviction that he would again "come into Thy house," he also declared, "I will worship toward thy holy temple." What temple was that? Not the one in Jerusalem, for it had not then been built. The reference is to the heavenly abode of Yahweh, described elsewhere as His temple, or dwelling place, of which the earthly building was but a symbol (see Ps. 11:4; 18:6; Isa. 66:1). David was determined to lift his mind above his earthly troubles, and "set his affections on things above" (Col. 3:1).

VERSE 8

"Lead me, O Yahweh, in Thy righteousness because of mine enemies" — He looks to Yahweh as the great Shepherd of Israel (Ps. 80:1), and he expresses his confidence in His ability to help him in spite of the strength of the opposition he experienced. Beset by enemies, doubtful of his own strength, David feels the weakness of the flesh, and seeks the divine righteousness. Because Yahweh is righteous, He will keep His covenant promises, and so will restore David again. The Hebrew for "enemies" is from the root *sharer*, to be hostile. It suggests a beast of prey, lying in wait to pounce on its victim and destroy him. The R.V. margin renders *that lie in wait*.

The Lord experienced such treatment, as bitter enemies waited for him to make a false move, that they might pounce upon him; and sometimes the servants of the Lord do so also. It was David's experience, but he put his confidence in Yahweh.

"Make my way straight before my face" — Instead of "straight" the R.V. has *plain*. The word *yashar* signifies *straight*, or *even*. David did not see any hope of alleviation of the distressful conditions he experienced, at least from natural sources. For the moment he "walked in darkness," whilst desiring the light. Thus he prayed that the path ahead be revealed to him; that he might see the course that Yahweh had laid out for him to walk in, and so extract hope from the depressing circumstances that meanwhile hemmed him in. Men of God have frequently been brought to that condition, and have been constrained to pray that Yahweh might enlighten their vision of things, that they might receive some relief from the problems that have rested so heavily upon them. Consider the wonderful words of Isaiah: "Who is among you that feareth Yahweh, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of Yahweh, and stay upon his God" (Isa. 50:10). In his great trouble, David did just that! We should do nothing less.

VERSE 9

"For there is no faithfulness in their mouth" — There was nothing in their speech upon which to depend; they were entirely unreliable. David could place no confidence in their utterances, for they were designed to deceive. In another place he referred to them as speaking words which were smoother than butter, whilst war was in their hearts" (Ps. 55:21). Flesh is not to be trusted, unless illuminated and governed by God.

"Their inward part is very wickedness" — Their inward part is expressive of their thinking processes. Whatever their external deportment might be, their thoughts were "very wickedness." This is a translation of *havvouth*, a different word to that used in v. 4. Here it signifies *bent on destruction*, and the R.V. margin renders it, *a yawning gulf*. Externally these people may have assumed the pose of benevolence; but

their secret intent was bent on ruthless destruction.

"Their throat is an open sepulchre" — As the vilest stench of death issues forth from open graves, so their every utterance was tainted and defiling.

"They flatter with their tongue" — Though their intent was evil, their words were the smooth and specious language of the hypocrite. Like the tongue of James 4, from the same source there issued both blessing and cursing.

The Ultimate Destruction Of The Wicked And The Salvation Of The Righteous — Vv. 10-12.

David prays that the divine judgment reach out against such, and at the same time that it would vindicate the righteous. He claims that his enemies are really the enemies of Yahweh.

VERSE 10

"Destroy Thou them, O God" — The literal Hebrew can be rendered: *Charge them with guilt, O God*. The R.V. renders: *Hold them guilty*. David had found it impossible to bring home to his enemies a consciousness of their wickedness, and now pleads with God to move to do so.

"Let them fall by their own counsels" — See historical note above. David's prayer is an echo of that uttered against the machinations of Ahithophel: "O Yahweh, I pray Thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness" (2 Sam. 15:31). Was such a prayer unrighteous, or unnecessarily vindictive? By no means. The purpose of Yahweh required the overthrow of the counsel of Ahithophel, for otherwise His covenant with David could not have been fulfilled. Hence, such a prayer in such circumstances, is really a plea for the vindication of the divine purpose. One writer has stated: "Since these statements of the O.T. have not been understood rightly by our age, which is unduly tolerant of evil and has largely forgotten God's righteousness and gratuitously goes on the assumption that these O.T. men never did a thing to set these evildoers right and never prayed for them, it will be in place to follow the following very sober suggestion of Maclaren's: 'The vindication of such

prayers for the destruction of evil-doers is that they are not the expression of personal enmity ('they have rebelled against Thee') and that they correspond to one side of the Divine character and acts, which was prominent in the O.T. epochs of revelation, and is not superseded by the New.' Since the O.T. bears such ample testimony to the fact that godly men like David encountered a rare measure of diabolical and unrelenting hostility to Yahweh and to the representatives of His congregation in those days, and since we see a similar spirit rearing its ugly head in the time of Christ and not resting until it had brought Him to the cross, we had better not flatter ourselves in our day that wickedness is the pale and innocuous thing that men often claim it is" (Leupold).

"Cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions" – Notice the comparison between the multitude of Yahweh's lovingkindness (v. 7), and the multitude of transgressions of the wicked. David prays that they be cast out as no longer worthy, for to tolerate them would be to jeopardise the principles of righteousness. Though openly the enemies of David, they were actually the opponents of Yahweh and His truth.

"For they have transgressed against Thee" – This was the real sin of Absalom's revolt, and often the real sin of that enmity that is frequently shown towards godly men.

VERSE 11

"But let all those that put their trust in Thee rejoice" – Here a class of people is referred to who are as radically different from those described earlier as they can be. They are those who trust in Yahweh at all times, leaving it to Him to vindicate their cause. Because they do so, they are in a position to rejoice.

"Let them ever shout for joy, because Thou defendest them" – They are caused to shout for joy, not because they desire judgment on the wicked out of personal animosity, but because Yahweh's name is honoured and magnified in such judgments. "When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. 26:9). The Hebrew renders the latter part of the line as *Thou doth cover over (i.e. protect) them*. Their joy, therefore, is

not so much in the overthrow of the wicked, but in their own deliverance from such judgment.

"Let them also that love Thy name be joyful in Thee" – To love the Name of Yahweh, is to love His purpose and character, for name speaks of such (cp. Ps. 8:1). This inspired statement of the Psalmist should be earnestly considered by all who would suppress the divine Name. Malachi 3:16 states that a *Book of Remembrance* records those who "fear Yahweh, speak often one to another," and who "think upon His name." The Lord did so, and taught his disciples to pray: "Hallowed be Thy name." On the other hand Yahweh, through Jeremiah, indicted those "who think to cause My people to forget My name" (Jer. 23:27).

VERSE 12

"For Thou, Yahweh, wilt bless the righteous" – The word "bless" is different in the Hebrew to that of Psalm 1:1 (which see). It here is *barak*, and signifies to bow down. Yahweh will condescend to help the righteous, is the idea expressed by the use of this word.

"With favour wilt Thou compass him as with a shield" – The Hebrew word here is *tsinnah*, as we have noted in our introduction to this Psalm, and refers to a large shield which surrounded the body. The divine favour, or grace, surrounds and protects the righteous; the Psalmist is conscious of it, has received tokens of its presence, and on that note of confident assurance, closes this morning petition to the Father.

The Subscription

This is given in the A.V. as part of the title to Psalm 6, and reads: *To the chief Musician on Neginoth upon Sheminith*.

Reference to the significance of dedicating a Psalm to the *chief Musician* has been referred to in our notes upon Psalm 4. What of *Neginoth upon Sheminith*? The word "Neginoth" signifies *smittings*. The Psalmist had experienced such from his enemies, and has sought that they, in turn, may be smitten by divine judgment, that the divine character and purpose may be vindicated.

"Sheminith" is rendered in the margin as *Upon the eighth*. Eight is an octave, and in music is expressive of complete harmony. Despite the troublous times experienced by the Psalmist, and the large number of enemies who had suddenly risen up against him, he was at harmony with his God. Though Yahweh was in heaven, and he upon earth, there was unity and harmony between the heavenly King and His earthly representative. Eight also symbolises circumcision, the cutting off of flesh, and the perfection established by the bestowal of spirit nature. The *smittings* of life are designed to that end, and can act as discipline for the development of a character such as Yahweh will approve. Jesus Christ, though a Son, had to learn obedience through suffering, and in doing so,

provided an example for all. "If ye endure chastening," the Apostle declares, "God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (Heb. 12:7,11). Such is the purpose of the smittings we receive in life under the divine direction: they are disciplinary in their effect, and are designed to bring us to a state of complete harmony with the ways and purposes of Yahweh. Hence these expressions as part of the subscription to the Psalm before us.

— H.P.M.

The Pioneers, Prophecy and the World Scene

The Red Flame IN AFRICA



The projectors of the city and tower of Babel announced in their programme that the enterprise was intended to secure to the patrons of the scheme "a Name;" and to prevent them from being "scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." They were opposed to nationalization; they preferred a *fraternal communism*, and proceeded to build a temple of social fraternity for all mankind. But God and His purposes were in none of their thoughts. They were concocting schemes utterly subversive of them; therefore He interfered, saying, "behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do. Let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon all the face of the earth: and they left off to build the city." (Gen. 11:4-8).

The hopes of the democracy throughout Europe were inflamed; and "the earth" began to tremble until in 1848 every throne was shaken to its foundation. The events of this wonderful year are too recent to require to be chronicled in this place. It will be enough to say that the democracy broke loose, and commenced a movement, which, though it has been restrained to prevent it progressing too rapidly, cannot be suppressed until the little horn, or two-horned beast and his prophet, be destroyed to the end, and the dominion of the ten-horned beast be taken away.

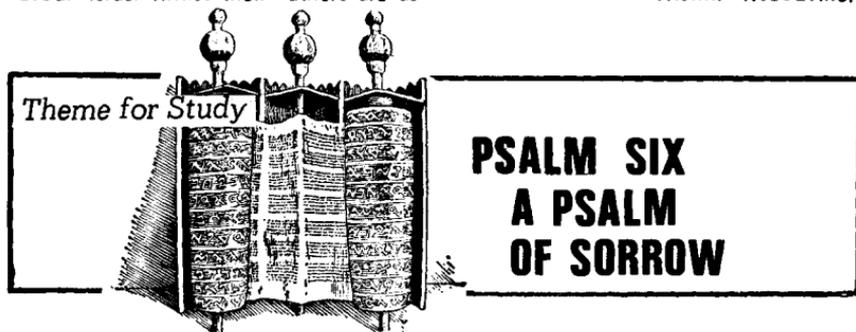
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Although he wrote of the type of "christian" that is such in name only (however sincere), he expressed typical ignorance that the Jew has for such as ourselves.

And doubtless the very tenets of "orthodox christianity" have caused such ignorance. What Jew could understand the doctrine of the trinity in the light of the command in Deut. 6:4, "Hear O Israel, Yahweh our God is one Yahweh!" And while the Jew is rightly confused with so called Christians who favour Israel whilst their fathers are as

far apart as the poles, there will be a time of reconciliation between Israel and those motivated by its true hope, and a recognition on the part of Gentiles of the truth of the covenant. For in the day when Israel shall be exalted by the words of the prophet will be fulfilled: "The Gentiles shall come unto Thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity and things wherein there is no profit." (Jer. 16:19).

— W.J.M. (Woodville).



Psalm 6 is the first of what are known as "penitential" psalms, expressing repentance and sorrow for sin. There are seven of these (Pss. 6,32,38,51,102,130,143). This one is unique in that, whilst it is a psalm of penitence, expressive of deep, personal grief, it does not mention sin. The writer seems more conscious of the cause of sin (the flesh) than of sin itself.

Historical Background

It is described as *A Psalm of David*. However, it is difficult to place its historical position in his life. Other penitential psalms of David specifically mention sin, and therefore can be related to his sin with Bathsheba. But this one does not. It is related to circumstances that had filled him with grief. He is bitterly opposed by enemies (v. 10). He is so beset on every side, as to have no confidence in himself (v. 7). He is brought to the very extremity of death (v. 5), and is in dire need of Yahweh's help.

As such, the Psalm could be related to many incidents in the life

of David, both before and after his sin. But as he does not refer to the latter, and rather expresses his concern at the strength and ability of his many enemies, seeking Yahweh's help from such, it could relate to his period of persecution under Saul, when many in Israel had the ear of Saul and played up to the king's jealousy by denouncing David who was then both young and inexperienced.

Prophetic Foreshadowing

The Psalm is Messianic in character. Because of that it is appropriate that it does not relate sin to the author, whilst being expressive of

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the greatest grief. Christ was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," whilst, at the same time, rendering complete obedience unto the Father in all things.

Notice how the Lord draws upon v. 3 in expressing himself to the Father:

"Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? but for this cause came I unto this hour" (John 2:27).

The Psalm, therefore, prophetically expresses the deep feelings and pleadings of Christ under extreme trial. Paul wrote:

"In the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save him out of death, and was heard in that he feared; though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered . . ." (Heb. 5:7-8).

It is obvious that the Psalmist fellowshiped the sufferings of Christ, and prophetically described his feelings in this Psalm.

Christ also quotes v. 8 of the Psalm in relation to future judgment:

"Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:33).

"Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity" (Luke 13:27).

These are expressions used in regard to the rejected in that day of decision.

The Psalm, therefore, takes in the two advents of the Lord Jesus Christ. It looks to his sufferings at his first ministry, and reaches forward to his glory in the future when his enemies will be subjugated to his power.

The Structure Of The Psalm

The Psalm can be conveniently

divided into three parts:

1. A plea for help in suffering—vv. 1-3;
2. The reason why help is sought—vv. 4-7;
3. The Psalmist's Confidence in God—vv. 8-10.

The Psalmist is opposed by bitter, powerful and evil enemies, who antagonise him without cause. Only Yahweh can help him against them. Meanwhile he prays that he will not be so moved by the circumstances as to give way to sin and so come under the divine wrath.

The Dominant Title Of God In The Psalms

The dominant petition of this prayer-psalm is expressed in v. 2:

"O Yahweh, heal me; for my bones are vexed."

This, too, is expressive of the manner in which Yahweh is revealed therein. He appears as Yahweh-Rapha, *Yahweh Who healeth*.

This name is first used in Exodus 15:26, where Israel is promised that they will be healed, if they "diligently hearken to the voice of Yahweh thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His sight."

Rotherham renders, "*I am Yahweh that healeth thee*," as "*Yahweh the Physician*." The Hebrew has *Yahweh Ropheka, Yahweh the Healer*.

The title is frequently used of Yahweh, and examples of His healing power are scattered throughout the Word. He healed Abimelech (Gen. 20:17), Miriam (Num. 12:13), the Psalmist (Ps. 30:2), Hezekiah (2 Kings 30:8), Jeremiah (Jer. 17:14), and others. In the case of the miracles of the Lord Jesus, it is recorded, "the power of the

Lord was present to heal" (Luke 5:17). Those miracles demonstrated his ability to heal both the physical and spiritual ailments of the people.

In the Psalm before us, David expresses his confidence in Yahweh to heal. He feels his mortal weakness, as he is opposed by enemies who threaten to bring him down to the grave. He finds no help or consolation in flesh, and therefore leans heavily upon Yahweh. Having pleaded for the healing balm to be administered, he responded: "Yahweh hath heard my supplication" (v. 9).

To *Yahweh Ropheka*, therefore, he turned in time of need, and found that he did not do so in vain.



1—A Plea For Help In Suffering — Vv. 1-3.

The bitter opposition of his enemies, has made David physically sick. His weakened state is looked upon by his opponents as evidence of him being forsaken of Yahweh, and they taunt him with this. In anguish of mind, he turns to God.

VERSE 1

"O Yahweh, rebuke me not in Thine anger" — Mankind become "children of wrath" through personal disobedience (Eph. 2:1-2). They are then subject to the rebuke of Yahweh's anger. But Christ was never in that condition, for he rendered perfect obedience unto his Father. Nevertheless, he suffered (Heb. 5:8), demonstrating once for all, that suffering is not necessarily an evidence of

Yahweh's anger, but is the result of the opposition of sinful men in fulfillment of Gen. 3:15: "Thou (the serpent) shall bruise his heel." This applies in measure to all sons of God, and not merely to Christ. Entrance into the kingdom of God is "through much tribulation" (Acts 14:22), for such humbles a person, makes him more dependent upon God. So Jeremiah prayed: "O Yahweh, correct me, but with judgment; not in Thine anger, lest Thou bring me to nothing" (Jer. 10:24). He recognised the need of divine discipline and guidance, for "I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23). David also found himself in that state, as this Psalm shows. He suffered at this time, not because he had sinned, but because of the opposition of ungodly men. He could bear that far more than he could the rebuke of God for sin, and so pleads that he may not give way to the circumstances in which he found himself, so as to bring himself under the divine anger and "hot displeasure."

VERSE 2

"Have mercy upon me, O Yahweh, for I am weak" — Two words in this line need amending; they are the words *mercy* and *weak*. The former is rendered *favor* by Rotherham. The Psalmist pleaded that Yahweh's gracious kindness might be manifested towards him in acts of favor, or grace, and not because of sins committed. The word "*weak*" is rendered *withered away* in the R.V., or *languishing* by Rotherham. The Psalmist was affected physically by the persecution he experienced and the opposition he received. His sensitive mind so reacted to the injustice of the treatment he received that he was physically sick, pained in body, feeling it in his aching bones. Only the favor of Yahweh could help him at such a time, for "vain is the help of man."

"O Yahweh heal me; for my bones are vexed" — He appeals to Yahweh in His character as Physician. The word *heal* is from the Hebrew *raphah*, the root of the word *Rophekah*, "physician," or "healer," found in Exodus 15:26. The Psalmist speaks of "his bones" being vexed, because he could feel the effects of his sufferings in every part of his body. Thus "his bones" denoted

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his physical organism, his being, the seat of health. A person's health can be encouraged by "goodly words" (Prov. 16:24); or conversely, he can be made sick through evil tidings or harsh rebuke. The expression is used figuratively of one offering his whole being in worship to Yahweh: "All my bones shall say, Yahweh, who is like unto Thee, which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him" (Ps. 35:10). In the Psalm before us, David seeks deliverance; in Psalm 35, he has received it. In the present Psalm he feels sick with anxiety; in Psalm 35, his anxiety is relieved.

VERSE 3

"My soul is also sore vexed" – The anxiety of his condition weighs heavily upon him. These words of David were appropriated by the Lord to describe his own state of mind as the burden of the final crisis gathered momentum. "Now is my soul troubled," he declared (John 12:27). The Lord was oppressed with the sinful opposition he received; and the heavy burden that rested upon him to render perfect obedience to the Father in spite of his humanity, and the severity of the opposition and pressures brought to bear upon him.

"But Thou, O Yahweh, how long?" – How long before deliverance will come? David realised that it could only come from Yahweh, and prayed that it might come "hastily" (Ps. 40:13). The Lord, also, looked to "the joy set before him" (Heb. 12), whilst, meanwhile, concentrating upon the need to bring his ministry to a successful completion. "I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I constrained till it be accomplished," he declared (Luke 12:50). Let us recall the terrible days of tension and pressure that the Lord endured until his sufferings were cut short in death. David fellowshipped these sufferings; we can do so also. Let us manifest faith and patience at such times.

2 The Reason Why Help Is Sought – Vv. 4-7.

He seeks the divine help because it is needful for salvation, and because in death there is no praising Yahweh.

VERSE 4

"Return, O Yahweh, deliver my

soul" – The word "return" is from the Hebrew *shuwb*, signifying to turn around hence to *treat differently*. It does not necessarily mean to return as though he had been abandoned of Yahweh. The Psalmist pleads Yahweh to lift the pressures to which he had been subjected.

"O save me for Thy mercies' sake" – Instead of *mercies'* the R.V. has *loving-kindness'*. "mercy" implies forgiveness for sins committed; "lovingkindness" is an aspect of Yahweh's character, and David prayed on that basis. Deliverance from the death that then threatened him, would provide further scope for him to praise Yahweh. Moreover, as loving-kindness is an attribute of the divine character, it should be developed by all those who claim to be sons of God.

VERSE 5

"For in death there is no remembrance of Thee" – Death can be most desirable to a weary and depressed person: it promises relief from pain, and rest from weariness. But what of the remembrance of Yahweh in death? There is none; for all conscious existence comes to an end. As the only true joy of David's life was in communion with Yahweh, the thought of death was repulsive to him. He could part with all other things but not this.

These words were cited by Hezekiah (another type of Christ) when he was facing death (Isa. 38:18). By his pleading he had his life extended.

"In the grave who can give thee thanks?" – The answer is, Not one; not even Christ. Immortal soulism is of the devil, not of the truth..

VERSE 6

"I am weary of my groaning" – Beset by enemies, doubtful of his own strength, he feels the weakness of flesh, and is wearied beyond measure. He is "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," and in that context typed the Lord Jesus. He has lain awake of a night pondering the cause of the unrighteous opposition he has experienced, and wearying himself out by laboring over the problem.

"All the night make I my bed to swim" – Here David employs a hyperbole to express the extremity of his grief and its devastating effect. The

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hard-hearted treatment he experienced from his enemies was so bitter as to cause him to weep excessively, figuratively making his bed swim! Though this is a hyperbole, let us remember that in the east, men manifest greater warmth of feeling than is the case in the west. The Lord (whom David typed) was also in that category. He could weep at the graveside of Lazarus, even though he knew that he would shortly come forth alive, because he entered into the feelings of the mourners about him. He deeply pondered the problems of his own disciples, and was moved at their lack of understanding. Perhaps his greatest suffering was not the physical pain he experienced, but the agony of witnessing the sins of those about him. Being extremely sensitive to sin, its gross manifestation in a nation that he loved, or in disciples for whom he was prepared to die, must have keenly hurt him. The shame and disgrace of such, would be more painful to such a man as he, than would bodily hurt.

"I water my couch with my tears" — Here, again, an extreme hyperbole is used to express the intensity of his feelings. The Hebrew is even more expressive than the A.V. The word "water" is *macah* which signifies to dissolve. The idea is: "I almost dissolve my couch with my tears."

VERSE 7

"Mine eye is consumed because of grief" — The Hebrew *ashesh* signifies to shrink, to fail. The expression suggests that his eyes were sunk in his head with very weariness. He externally revealed the mark of his deep, inward sorrow. In that, David was like the Lord whose "visage was marred more than any man" (Isa. 52:14), who, though he were only thirty, looked more like fifty (John 8:57).

"It waxeth old because of all mine enemies" — The constant, unreasonable enmity he experienced caused him constant sorrow and worry of mind. As a result, his eye lost its lustre; it was shadowed by dark rings induced by sleeplessness; it became dull with weeping.

3 The Psalmist's Confidence In Yahweh — Vv. 7-10.

Recognition of Yahweh's help causes the Psalmist to proclaim judgment upon

his enemies by bidding them depart from his presence. He receives a token of good that gave him assurance that those opposing him would themselves be subject to devastating judgment.

VERSE 8

"Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity" — These words are cited by the Lord in expounding upon the Judgment Seat of the future (see Matt. 7:23; Luke 13:27); and particularly in relation to those so-called disciples of his who have worked deceitfully. This implies that it was that type of enemy who was the cause of such excess of grief as expressed in Vv. 6-7.

"For Yahweh hath heard the voice of my weeping" — As far as David was concerned, in some way he received a token of good from Yahweh in answer to his prayer. But as it is difficult to pin-point the circumstances in which the Psalm was composed, we do not know in what way Yahweh helped him. The Psalm, however, is Messianic. In Hebrews 5:8, we are told that the weeping of the Lord was heard, and that he was saved out of death (see Greek). The resurrection of the Lord which followed, was necessary to the ultimate setting up of the Judgment Seat.

VERSE 9

"Yahweh hath heard my supplication" — His prayer is a supplication, an entreaty for help. The help has been received, a guarantee that future prayer will be heard. Does Yahweh answer prayer now? He does; and this fact guarantees the answering of future prayer. In the case of Christ, his prayers were answered with his resurrection.

"Yahweh will receive my prayer" — In the case of Christ (and the prophetic, Messianic aspect of this Psalm should not be overlooked), his resurrection was the prelude to his work as Advocate in the heavens, through whom the prayers of saints are presented and received by the Father.

VERSE 10

"Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed" — As the Lord's prayers were vindicated in his resurrection; so, in turn, his resurrection is the guarantee of his final triumph in the earth (see

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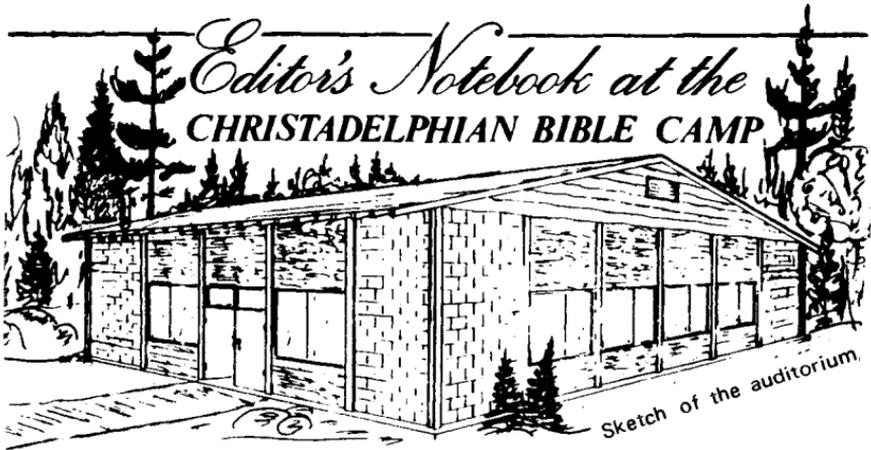
Acts 17:31). His enemies will be "ashamed and sore vexed" when they "look upon Me whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for him, as for an only son" (Zech. 12:10). David's triumph foreshadowed this coming triumph of the Lord.

"Let them return and be ashamed suddenly" — Let them quickly turn around and be converted. This is the only way they can escape the adverse judgment at his return. As the Lord quoted this Psalm in relation to judgment (v. 8; Matt. 7:33), so it is expressive of his mediatorial work. Let his enemies,

both within and without the Ecclesia, bear in mind that they must either make their peace with Yahweh through His son now, or bear the consequences at the Judgment Seat, or at Armageddon, when he returns. Wisdom lies in us doing so now.

The Psalm thus commences with a plea for personal help; and concludes with one on behalf of enemies made such by personal blindness.

H.P.M.



MANITOULIN ISLAND, ONTARIO

Our last notes in this series (see pp. 62-64) took us across the Atlantic from Birmingham to Toronto, then up the highway some 350 miles to Manitoulin Island.

Manitoulin Island is a tourist's paradise: a place of delightful fresh-water lakes, tree-clad hills and mountains, and a diversified and interesting fauna and flora.

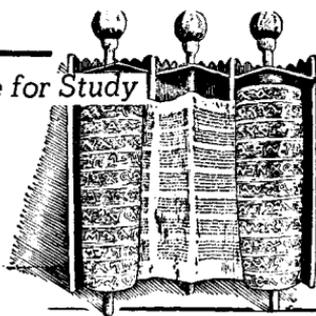
It is advertised as *the largest fresh water island in the world*, being surrounded by the great lakes of Canada. Access to it is by ferry (the shortest route in point of miles) or across a bridge (the shortest route in point of time).

The Christadelphian Bible Camp (as it is called) came into existence through the generosity of Brother L. Cooper, who donated some 20 acres of his farm for this purpose, and through the en-

thusiasm and generosity of many brethren and sisters who gave of their time and money to perfect the project.

As a result, the camp is located in beautiful surroundings on the edge of Martin Lake. It is secluded from the outside world by 1500 acres of Christadelphian owned land which borders the camp. The sandy beach on the wide and beautiful Lake, and the heavily wooded surroundings of stately trees and thick foliage, provide ideal surroundings for family camping.

An excellent auditorium, capable of holding 150 persons has been created. It is provided with sliding glass windows and other amenities, lending itself to pleasant surroundings. Modern communal washrooms have been built, and each camp-site has been cut into the forestation so as to preserve the natural



PSALM SEVEN

YAHWEH: Judge of the People

Though Psalm Six is a Psalm of Sorrow, its expressions are somewhat restrained. That cannot be said of Psalm Seven. There is vehemence of feeling in this Psalm, as the Psalmist calls upon Yahweh to vindicate Himself in judgment against his enemies, and refers to the manner in which this will be done. In its prophetic foreshadowing, this Psalm is appropriately placed; for whereas Psalm Six points to the death and resurrection of the Lord, this Psalm anticipates Yahweh's vindication of him in judgment on his enemies. The dominant thought is expressed in vv. 8,10: "Yahweh shall judge the people." "My defence is of God which saveth the upright in heart."

Historical Background

The inscription of the Psalm reads: *Shiggaion of David, which he sang unto Yahweh, concerning the words of Cush the Benjamite.*

But to what, and to whom, do these words refer?

The word *shiggaion* is apparently derived from a root *sha'ag*, to cry aloud either in trouble, danger, pain, or in the joy of deliverance. As such, it is appropriate to this Psalm in which all these aspects of the word are found. There is pain and anguish as the Psalmist sees the enemy in the ascendancy; there is joy and praise, as Yahweh finally is vindicated in judgment.

The Psalm is sung at the Feast of Purim which celebrates the anguish of the Jews at the opposition of Haman, and their final joy at their wonderful deliverance.

The subscription (which we shall discuss later) dedicates the Psalm to The chief Musician upon *Gittith*. It is suggested that this is a variant of *Gittoth*, winepresses, and there-

fore the Psalm is associated with the Feast of Tabernacles. If so, it is most appropriate, for the Feast of Tabernacles celebrated the joy of deliverance after an experience of great danger.

Who was Cush the Benjamite? We do not know. There is no reference to him elsewhere. It obviously refers to somebody well known to David, who endeavoured to destroy his influence with words, but who is unknown by person in the narrative of Scripture.

What were the circumstances that drew forth the Psalm? Its language is remarkably like the language in which David addressed Saul when he was at the cave of Engedi. Compare, for example, the words of vv. 3-4 with those of 1 Sam. 24:11. The Psalm declares:

*O Yahweh my God, if I have done this;
If there be iniquity in my hands;
If I have rewarded evil unto him that was
at peace with me;
Yea, I have delivered him that without
cause is mine enemy.*

This is similar in significance to David's words to Saul, when it had been in his power to destroy him. David declared:

"Moreover, my father, see, yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand: for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see that there is neither evil or transgression in mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee; yet thou huntest my soul to take it" (1 Sam. 24:11).

Compare Saul's confession with the words of the Psalm as quoted above:

"And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil" (v. 17).

Take another example. The Psalm reads:

*Yahweh shall judge the peoples;
Judge me, O Yahweh, according to my
righteousness, and according to mine
integrity that is in me.*

David said to Saul (1 Sam. 24:15):

"Yahweh therefore be judge, and judge between me and thee, and see, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thine hand."

The historical background of the Psalm, therefore, takes us back to the time when Saul inexorably pursued David with murder in his heart. He was determined to kill him, and he left no stone unturned in his attempt to do so.

Having experienced the treachery of the Ziphites, men of his own tribe (1 Sam. 23:19), David removed eastward to the shore of the Dead Sea, where amid the heights of Engedi, he found, as he hoped, a securer refuge. The district seemed an ideal hiding place: a place of steep limestone ridges seamed by torrent beds and divided by deep

valleys. The spring of Engedi issues from the side of a steep mountain about 600 feet above the Dead Sea, which is noted for its caverns.

It seemed almost impossible for Saul with his heavy-armed troops to follow the fugitives to this inaccessible retreat. Yet hate drove him to accomplish a task from which military experience would have caused him to shrink, and the king led three thousand picked warriors into these mountain fastnesses, and arrived safely in the neighbourhood of Engedi. Here he would have paid for his rashness with his life, if he had been dealing with an enemy not possessing the scruples of David. David with a portion of his force had taken up his abode in one of the numerous caverns. To this same cavern Saul betook himself by chance one day for privacy's sake. Entering the darkness of the cave from the bright sunshine without, he failed to see the foe sheltering in its innermost recess. Here was an opportunity for David to destroy his persecutor. With an eager whisper, some of David's followers urged upon him to take advantage of a situation that to them was God directed (1 Sam. 24:4). But David refused to act in that way towards Yahweh's anointed. Let Yahweh take vengeance; he would not. He had too high a regard for Saul's status. Instead, undetected by Saul, he quietly crept up to where the King was, and cut off a piece of his garment. Then, as Saul made his way out, David revealed his presence, and pleaded with him to see reason. And, for the moment, there was reconciliation between the two men.

In the light of this incident, read again the words of Psalm 7:

1-6, and see how they express the spirit of the occasion.

But why dedicate them expressly to Cush the Benjamite? Cush signifies *black*, and surely is indicative of the character of David's unnamed adversary at that time. Cush, like Saul, was of the tribe of Benjamin, and, therefore, was among those whose interest it was to overthrow David. There were those dedicated to that purpose at that time, and who were inciting Saul against David by their words of invective insinuation, and accusation. David made reference to these unknown adversaries when pleading with Saul. He declared:

"Wherefore hearest thou men's words saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt?" (1 Sam. 24:9).

Words were being whispered in the ears of Saul, by some black-hearted Benjamite, but David's action at that time, in saving Saul's life, gave the lie to their claims. The Psalm expresses the feelings of David at this time. He placed his confidence in Yahweh the Judge, and called upon Him to reveal the truth.

Prophetic Foreshadowing

Primarily, therefore, the Psalm expresses the thoughts, feelings, faith and anticipations of David at a time when he had been wrongly accused by some black-hearted Benjamite. His vindication would come from Yahweh, and his integrity would triumph over the false, whispered insinuations of his enemies, surreptitiously speaking evil against him.

This incident in David's life is typical of that time in the life of the Lord when his opponents were secretly speaking against him, and

attempting to undermine his influence. In his defence of himself, the Lord was constrained to ask: "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" (John 8:46). Like David, he asked that his actions be scrutinised, and if any evil be found therein, to bring it into the open. He, like David before him, left it to Yahweh to vindicate him before men.

Prophetically, therefore, it follows the previous Psalm. In that Psalm of sorrow, the Psalmist expressed his confidence in God, in spite of being brought down to the grave that lay before him. In this one, the same Psalmist offers his life for the scrutiny of God and man, seeking the vindication of Yahweh.

The Structure Of The Psalm

The Psalm divides into two parts, which, in turn, can be divided into six parts. The first section (vv. 1-10) is a personal appeal to Yahweh for help in the face of trouble; and second section (vv. 11-17) is a general observation of the judicial activity on the part of Yahweh, both in the present and in the future.

Under these two main divisions, we have a seven-fold division, thus:

1. An expression of confidence in Yahweh, and plea for help - Vv. 1-2.
2. A solemn protestation of innocence Vv. 3-5.
3. A plea for Yahweh to openly manifest His judgment - Vv. 6-8.
4. A prayer that righteousness might universally triumph - Vv. 9-10.
5. A Statement concerning Yahweh's present judgments - Vv. 11-13.
6. Yahweh's use of natural causes to effect judgment - Vv. 14-16.
7. Praise of Yahweh because of His righteousness - V. 17.

David affirms his confidence in Yahweh in spite of the troubles

which he experiences. Subjected to false charges, he protests his innocence of the wrongdoing. Contrary to what is urged against him, he claims that he has extended the greatest mercy in delivering the one who without cause assumed the pose of the enemy.

In the face of bitter antagonism, he calls upon Yahweh to manifest Himself in righteous judgment. He recognises evidence of this justice in the everyday circumstances of life, and anticipates the time when it will be manifested in all the earth to the praise and glory of Yahweh.

The Dominant Title Of God In The Psalm

In the last line of the Psalm, David says:

"I will sing praise to the name of Yahweh most high."

The name of *Yahweh Elyon* (most high) is set forth as the dominant divine name of this Psalm. This name, though not in this form, first occurs in Scripture in Gen. 14:19: "He blessed Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth." Here the name is *El Elyon*, the Most High Power; in the Psalm it is *Yahweh Elyon*, the future application of the same word: *He Who will be Most High*.

The term *Elyon* signifies *elevation, lofty, supreme*. It is from the root *'alah, to ascend*, so that in Genesis 14, God is represented as the supreme *El*, the One elevated above all others; whilst in Psalm 7 He is described as the One who will be elevated. In Genesis 14, the title *El Elyon* is applied to God because there are lesser *Elim*, such as the angels, over whom He is supreme; in Psalm 7, the name

Yahweh Elyon is given, as expressive of the future manifestation of this elevation.

Generally, the title *Elyon* is associated with dominion. In Genesis 14, the term *Possessor of heaven and earth* is attached to it, and the significance of this is shown by the context: the judgment poured out upon Chedorlaomer and his confederates through the instrumentality of Abram the Hebrew. The same thought is expressed in the Psalms when the title is combined with the name Yahweh. Thus:

*That men may know that Thou Whose name alone is Yahweh
Art Elyon (Most High) over all the earth
(Ps. 83:18).*

*For Yahweh is a great El
And a great King above all Elohim
(Ps. 95:3).*

In Psalm 91:1, *Elyon* is linked with *El Shaddai*:

*He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High,
Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty (Shaddai).*

The first title expresses Yahweh's lofty dominion and status; the second, the dispensing of His grace in sustaining his subjects, or in destroying their enemies. In Isaiah 14:12-14, Lucifer is described as aspiring to supreme political dominion, and is represented as saying: "I will be like the most High" (*Elyon*). The verb *ascend* in the same statement, is the root from whence the term *Elyon* is derived.

The Lord Jesus is described as "the son of the Highest" (Luke 1:35 — in Hebrew, *Ben-Elyon*), and is now at the right hand of Yahweh, awaiting the time when he shall return to take over the dominion of the earth in fulfilment of the prophetic name *Yahweh Elyon: He*

will be the Highest. In the meantime, saints are invited to mentally ascend to where Christ today sitteth (Col. 3:1), in preparation for the time when they shall, with Christ, take over the dominion of the earth (Rev. 5:9-10).

The first use of the title *El Elyon* reveals in type how the Most High will use His authority, power and dominion to bring all nations into conformity with His will; for the events there narrated foreshadow Armageddon. The name *Yahweh Elyon* points to when and through

whom it will be accomplished. The title: *Possessor of heaven and earth* is an expression used by David in his prayer (1 Chron. 29:11) and Psalm (Ps. 124:8), anticipating that used by the Lord in his pattern prayer: "For Thine is the Kingdom and the power, and the glory, for ever" (Matt. 6:13).

In the Psalm before us, David makes reference to the future judgment of Yahweh in the earth by which His righteousness shall be vindicated, and His name as *Yahweh Elyon* will be manifested.

In this age of so-called "Women's Liberation Movement" we reproduce verse setting out the rights a sister in Christ can claim.

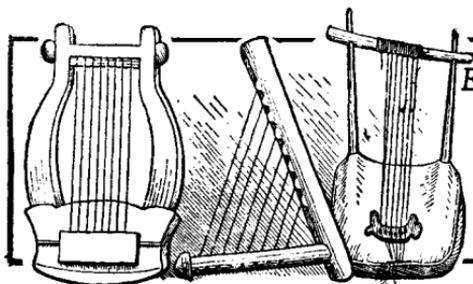
Women's Rights

*A woman's rights: what do these words convey,
What depths of old-world wisdom do they reach,
What is their real intent? Oh Sisters say!
And strive in daily life, their truth to teach.*

*The right to minister to those that need,
With quiet song the weary to beguile;
With words of peace the hungry hearts to feed,
And cheer the sad and lonely with a smile.*

*The right in others' joy, a joy to find –
The right divine to weep when others weep.
The right to be continually kind,
The right to wake and pray while others sleep.*

*The right in strength and honour to be free,
In daily work accomplished finding rest,
The right in trivial round the joy to see
The right in blessing to be fully blest.*



Exhortation To Faithfulness

The Psalms

“Be filled with the spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph. 5:19).

Brother Roberts once described the Psalms as “delightful nutriment for the new man.” Brother Thomas, in terms of equal appreciation, as “songs full to overflowing of things pertaining to Christ.” How do they appeal to us? Are we able to similarly speak of this portion of God’s Word? This depends upon whether we are conversant and in love with what is written therein.

In that regard, Christ has set us an example. He was an earnest student of the Psalms, reading and pondering upon the wonderful truths they contain. This is shown by the manner in which he employed them during his public ministry to open out the glad tidings of the kingdom. By using their words he confounded his enemies. Especially did he extract from these writings encouragement, warning and upbuilding for his disciples. When, after his resurrection, he came to summarise his mission to the two whom he met on the way to Emmaus, he declared:

“These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures” (Luke 24:44-45).

Most of the Psalms were penned by David, to whom Peter refers as a prophet (Acts 2:30). David himself laid claim to inspiration, saying: “The Spirit of Yahweh spake by me, and His word is in my tongue” (2 Sam. 23:2). Christ and the apostles allude to the same fact (Matt. 22:43; Acts 2:25; Heb. 4:7). In addition, we have the all-covering statement of Paul that “all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16).

David In The Psalms

The Psalms largely recount David’s personal experience, and reveal his innermost feelings. They exhibit him as a man of sorrow, as a mighty warrior, and as a great king. David, in these directions, was a type of Christ. He foreshadowed both the sufferings and future glory of his greater Son. They also reveal David in adversity: overcome by great sorrow, bowed down by the consciousness of terrible sin, as in Psalm 51. Even here they are typical of Christ (cp. Ps. 51:4; Rom. 3:4), though not of the man Christ Jesus, but of the multitudinous Christ, the com-

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munity that has developed out of Him, each member of which, unlike him, is conscious of actual sin committed.

The Psalms are thus commemorative and prophetic; they were based upon incidents that happened which were typical of those that lay in the future, or still do so. A few of them are entirely Messianic and prophetic; such as the second one.

David in the Psalms frequently typed our Lord's moral or spiritual attributes. He was described as "a man after God's own heart" (Acts 13:22). He loved and obeyed God. His fealty was shown till the day of his death. Neither adversity nor prosperity spoiled him. He finds an honoured place among the worthies listed in Hebrews 11. Great were his trials and hardships which beset his eventful life. These he encountered courageously and in faith. For his misdoings, punishment was inflicted. This he received humbly and submissively. David's virtues and failings are all revealed in these poetic utterances, and are recorded for our admonition and warning.

Stimulating Hymn-themes

Speaking generally of the Psalms, Brother Roberts wrote:

"The providence of God so overruled the pens of the writers, that these Jewish songs, written to celebrate national victories, or in times of danger, or having their origin in the struggles, the distresses, the deliverances of individuals, yet form the best manual of devotion, and the fittest language for the communing of the soul with God."

For devotional purposes — for ideas and words by which to supplicate and praise our heavenly Father—no better manual could be followed, whether in public or private, than

the book of Psalms. Great should be our effort to attune our minds to the stand supplied in these "spiritual songs." To achieve this we need to ponder them intently, reading them with concentration. By so studying them, the "new man" will be nourished, to grow more and more Christ-like.

How the great and holy Name of the Creator is exalted in the Psalms, whilst man is urged to lift his eyes and render to Him the adoration and praise which are His due. How cogent, too, are the reasons given why this should be done. Let us try to catch the spirit of these divine writings. It will lift us right away from earth to heaven, from puny man, and his vain and fleeting activities, to the Source of all wisdom, goodness and might, and likewise to those unseen and everlasting joys which God has in reserve for those who now put their trust in Him.

*"Great is Yahweh, and of great power;
His understanding is infinite"*

(Ps. 147:5).

*"Thou, Yahweh, art good, and ready to
forgive;
And plenteous in mercy unto all that call
upon His name"*

(Ps. 56:5).

*"Oh that men would praise Yahweh for
His goodness,
And for His wonderful works to the
children of men!"*

(Ps. 107:8).

Encouragement And Guidance

What encouragement, too, is contained in the earnest outpourings of David! How they foster, in those who are in affliction, from any cause, patience and hope, relieving the despair that would otherwise be the case. How they urge us to cast all our cares upon God.

*"Many are the afflictions of the righteous;
But Yahweh delivereth him out of them
all"*

(Ps. 34:19).

*"The angel of Yahweh encampeth round
about them that fear Him,
And delivereth them"*

(Ps. 34:7).

*"Put not your trust in princes,
Nor in the son of man, in whom there is
no help"*

(Ps. 146:3).

It is an excellent practise to read a Psalm before engaging in prayer to the Father. It channels our minds into Godly thoughts, and brings us closer to the Divine mind. Filled with thoughts such as David penned under inspiration in moments of triumph or of tragedy, we are the better prepared to reach forth unto God.

What an unerring guide are the Psalms concerning the constituents and qualities of true wisdom — the necessity for seeking it, and the unspeakably great reward attached to its possession.

*"Blessed is the man that feareth Yahweh,
That delighteth greatly in His command-
ments"*

(Ps. 112:1).

*"Oh, great is the goodness, which Thou
hast laid up to them that fear Thee;
Which Thou hast wrought for them that
trust Thee before the sons of men!"*

(Ps. 31:19).

How terribly realistic, too, are the pictures which this book presents of the fate of the wicked. The blaspheming critic may speak of these presentations as "barbaric" but the Psalms realistically predict the fate of those who lift their puny strength in defiance of God. The natural man knows neither the love nor the anger of God.

*"Upon the wicked He shall rain snares,
Fire and brimstone, and a horrible temp-
est: this shall be the portion of their
cup"*

(Ps. 11:6).

The Psalms guide our emotions and feelings as other Scriptures do our faith and action. The Israelites used them in the Temple, the Jews use them in the Synagogue, and we who are embued with the hope of Israel, use them in our songs of praise. Thus the keys that David struck have reverberated ever since. They have found harmony in the heart of the pilgrim, the sufferer, the joyful, the triumphant, the depressed; they have helped in moments of sadness and of joy, in sorrow and in happiness, in disaster and in triumph, in sin and in righteousness. The Psalms provide the right note for moods of thankfulness, sorrow, despair, hope, rage, love, mercy, doubt, vengeance, faith. In the vicissitudes of David's life, we have a companion who can utter the words we feel in all the trials that come our way, exalting us with the glory that awaits us in the Age to come. For the Psalms are also prophetic; they take us into the future, and cause us to thrill at the great drama yet to unfold in the earth, until the glory of God is revealed therein as the waters cover the deep. All these varying experiences and hopes are fittingly expressed in these glorious songs of Zion.

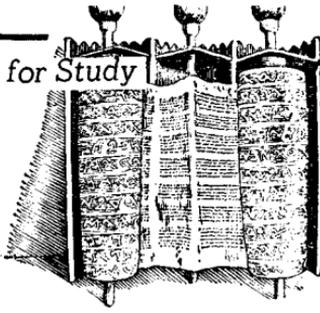
For above all else, the Psalms reveal the ravishing and heart-rejoicing glories of Messiah's reign. This was all David's hope, and all his desire (2 Sam. 23:5). Let us also so comport our lives by the spirit of this book that it may be our happy lot to share in the coming joys so that we shall be able to say:

*"This is the day which Yahweh hath
made;
We will rejoice and be glad in it"*

(Ps. 118:24).

— A.J.

Theme for Study



PSALM SEVEN

YAHWEH: Judge of the People

Our last issue (pp. 173-177) introduced this Psalm by discussing its historical background, prophetic foreshadowing, general structure and the dominant title of God contained therein. We continue, this month, with a verse by verse exposition of it.



1. An Expression Of Confidence In Yahweh, And Plea For Help – Vv. 1-2.

David affirms his complete trust in Yahweh, and prays for deliverance from a bitter enemy (Saul) who has been stirred to violent action at the instigation of Cush the Benjamite.

VERSE 1

“O Yahweh my God, in Thee do I put my trust” – Rotherham renders, *have I sought refuge*. Faced by the ruthless determination of Saul to destroy him, and seemingly without defence against the forces opposing him (1 Sam. 24:1-2), David crept under the shadow of the Divine booth, or tabernacle (see subscription). “In Thee do I put my trust” combines the virtues of faith, hope and love.

“Save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me” – In Hebrew, “persecute” is *radaph*, *pursue*. It is the same word as David used in his question to Saul: “After whom is the king of Israel come out? after whom doest thou pursue?” David was fleeing from a bitter enemy when he composed the

Psalm before us, and was in danger of his life.

VERSE 2

“Lest he tear my soul like a lion” – Though David’s enemies are many, there is one conspicuous above all others who excites his fear. It is not Cush who fights against him with lying words and insinuations, but Saul, who was urged on by others to destroy him. Notice the statements of 1 Samuel 24:1,9,13:

“It was told Saul saying, Behold, David is in the wilderness of En-gedi” (v. 1).

“David said to Saul, Wherefore hearest thou men’s words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt?” (v. 9).

“Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked; but mine hand shall not be upon thee” (v. 13).

The tongue is a member which man can use for good or for ill. James warns against its unwise use, and the history of the Truth reveals the frightful amount of evil that stems from this little member when its wagging is not restrained. Many a good reputation has been dragged down into the dirt by the unwise use of the tongue. It is the coward’s weapon, which attacks and undermines in secret, very often camouflaged as rendering a service to the truth. It was the wrong use of the tongue by the serpent in the beginning that introduced the thought of sin to Eve; after which the serpent lost the use of speech. Elsewhere, David lamented the unwise use of the tongue to destroy the righteous. He wrote:

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*Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked;
From the insurrection of the workers of iniquity;
Who whet their tongue like a sword,
And bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words;
That they may shoot in secret at the perfect;
Suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not.*

(Ps. 64)

Again, against Doeg:

*Thou lovest all devouring words,
O thou deceitful tongue*

(Ps. 52:4)

Let us beware lest we use "that little member" designed to proclaim the truth to others, in order to destroy that which Yahweh would have us build up. That is what Cush did in inciting Saul against David.

In this Psalm, David types the Lord Jesus, who likewise had to put up with the lying tongue of the adversary who would incite the authorities to destroy him (cp. Heb. 12:3).

"Rending it in pieces, while there is none to deliver" – He describes the ruthless ferocity of Saul. He is like a lion who would tear his prey in pieces whilst others would fear to intervene.

2. A Solemn Protestation Of Innocence—Vv. 3-5.

Subjected to false charges, David protests his innocence of the wrongdoing. He commits himself unto the judgment of Yahweh, inviting Him to permit the direst calamities if He should adjudge him guilty.

VERSE 3

"O Yahweh my God, if I have done this" – David is innocent of the charges brought against him. Consider his appeal to Saul when he offered him the piece of his garment that he had cut off:

"Know thou and see that there is neither evil nor transgression in mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee; yet thou huntest my soul to take it" (1 Sam. 24:11).

In this, David again typed Christ, for to those who revealed the same ruthless determination to destroy him, the Lord patiently enquired: "Many

good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?" (John 10:32). Again: "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" (John 8:46).

VERSE 4

"I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy" – David delivered Saul when he was in his power, and when his companions were urging that he should destroy him. They even claimed that they had the support of Yahweh in so doing (1 Sam. 24:4). And what of the Lord whom David typed? He told his disciples: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you." "But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause" (John 15:18,25).

VERSE 5

"Let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it" – Here again, as in v. 1, the word "persecute" is *pursue*. David invites Yahweh to examine his heart, and if it prove to be false, let the enemy triumph. His words are almost an echo of Moses' song of deliverance, in describing the intent of the enemy (Exod. 15:9).

"Lay mine honour in the dust" – Notice the gradation of thought in these lines: capture my soul, destroy my life, ruin my reputation. The innocence that David claims in this Psalm is a great contrast to his acknowledgment of guilt in Psalm 51. Here he types Christ himself; there he types the multitudinous Christ.

"Selah" – A thought-link, bidding the reader to consider what has been said in the light of what follows. Basically it signifies, *Pause and consider*. See note Ps. 3:2.

3. A Plea For Yahweh To Openly Manifest His Judgment – Vv. 6-8.

In view of his innocence, he calls upon Yahweh to reveal His anger against persistent evil, by openly vindicating the righteous.

VERSE 6

"Arise, O Yahweh, in Thine anger" – The anger of Yahweh is to be feared; but in the face of persistent wickedness it is necessary. Holiness and justice will

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be revealed in righteous anger in their judicial treatment of sin and wrong.

"Lift up Thyself" – Manifest Thyself in activity.

"Awake for me to the judgment that Thou hast commanded" – If the words in italics are removed: *to* and *that*; the appeal is, not that Yahweh should awake, but that He should "awake for me the judgment." As far as David was concerned, the judgment referred to was his vindication as king upon the throne in Jerusalem. This had been promised and commanded, and David prayed that it should be established, that his current precarious wanderings should end. For Christ, vindication was manifested in his resurrection (John 12:31-32; Rom. 1:4).

VERSE 7

"So shall the congregation of the people compass Thee about" – Three words need consideration in this line: *congregation*, *people* and *compass*. The first is the word *edah*, an assembly of witnesses from *ed*, a witness. The apostles were sent out as witnesses to the resurrection of Christ (Acts 1:8), and the function of Ecclesias that come into existence through their testimony, is to witness in their turn (Eph. 3:10). The word "people" is *amim*, *peoples*, and where this word is used in the plural, as here, it invariably incorporates all nations, and not merely the people of Israel. The congregation referred to, therefore, is not exclusively Israelitish, but one incorporating those redeemed out of every kindred and tongue, and people and nation" (Rev. 5:9). Christ told the apostles that he had "other sheep which are not of this fold" (John 10:16), and he declared that if he "be lifted up" on the cross, he "will draw all (both Jew and Gentile) unto him" (John 12:32). The third word, *compass* suggests the form of worship engaged in by this community of witnesses. True Israelites compassed the altar (and therefore Yahweh) in praise and worship as an expression of innocence or forgiven sins (Ps. 26:6). The congregation, therefore, is represented as acknowledging Yahweh's righteousness, particularly as manifested in judgment.

"For their sakes therefore return Thou on high" – Ascend the throne of judgment to pour out righteous judgment. Instead of "for their sakes,"

some render (*Amplified Bible*), "over it return Thou on high." This would suggest that temporarily Yahweh had remained silent to the appeals of His people, but now the prayer is that He should "return" in the sense of openly manifesting His judgment in their favour.

VERSE 8

"Yahweh shall judge the people" – Again, the word *people* is in the plural, and therefore relates to the nations at large. It is Yahweh's grand purpose to "judge the nations" (Acts 17:31), that righteousness may prevail in the earth.

"Judge me, O Yahweh, according to my righteousness" – Entrenched in the knowledge of his innocence, David called upon the Judge of the nations to adjudicate in his case, that he might be vindicated.

4. A Prayer That Righteousness Might Universally Triumph – Vv. 9-10.

David sees that as wickedness temporarily triumphed in his case, so it did in all the world. As he sought his personal vindication, so he prayed that the time might soon come when the divine purpose would be universally manifested.

VERSE 9

"Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end" – It is the divine purpose that this shall ultimately prove to be the case, and that the meek shall inherit the earth (Ps. 37:11,29,34-40). For that time David earnestly prayed.

"For the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins" – To the Hebrew, the heart was the seat of intellect, and the reins (kidneys) the seat of longing and desire. Yahweh knows the hidden wickedness of the heart (Heb. 4:13); He tries both intellect and affection. It is quite significant that the kidneys were offered for sacrifice (Lev. 3:4). Our affection, longing and desire should be towards Yahweh. As the kidneys help to separate and expel poisons from the body, so when Yahweh dominates our feelings and desires, it will do so also.

VERSE 10

"My defence is of God" – The Hebrew is: "My buckler is upon God." God is the Shield-bearer in the battle of

life, and as such, He saves the upright in heart. Perhaps the mind of David reverted to his contest with Goliath. The giant had a shield-bearer before him as part of his defence, but David advanced "in the name of Yahweh of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel" (1 Sam. 17:45). His defence was in God, and because He trusted in Him, he was "delivered from the hurtful sword." So shall all those be who emulate his example.

5. The Certainty Of Divine Judgment – Vv. 11-13.

The tone of the Psalm changes at this point. It grows more confident. No longer merely pleading or petitioning, it confidently asserts and predicts what Yahweh will do. His character is boldly advanced. He is described as a "just Judge" and a "mighty God," Who is constantly angry with the wicked, and because of His character, must ultimately manifest Himself in judgment against such.

VERSE 11

"God judgeth the righteous" – He vindicates the righteous in His judgment.

"God is angry with the wicked every day" – In the first line, "God" is *Elohim* and relates to the angelic manifestation of Yahweh, from Whose overshadowing care comes the vindication of the righteous (Ps. 34:7; Heb. 1:14). In the second line, the word is *El*, expressive of His divine power, which is competent to reduce the wicked to impotence. God is angry with the wicked every day. In other words, He is constant and unvarying in His opposition to sin (James 1:17), and not subject to sudden excitements and temporary passions as are men. He is unchanging as His nature. But to man it does not always seem thus. The Psalmist could complain of those who "persecuted him" as though Yahweh was indifferent to their attitude. He could, in another Psalm (Ps. 73), speak of the foolish as though Yahweh allowed them to completely enjoy the fruits of their wickedness (Ps. 73:7). However, he found that is but an illusion. In fact, Yahweh takes cognisance of all that is going on, and is constant in His opposition to the wicked. Let us not be deceived by appearances that

seem to imply the contrary. Paul warned: "Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience" (Eph. 5:6).

VERSE 12

"If he turn not, He will whet His sword" – If the wicked turn not from his wickedness, he will be punished. Any intermediate delay in judgment is due to the "longsuffering" of God, providing an opportunity for repentance (2 Pet. 3:15). The sword of Yahweh, by which His judgments are frequently administered, can comprise the wicked as they turn on each other (cp. Ps. 17:13; Jer. 47:6).

"He hath bent His bow, and made it ready" – The danger of the wicked is imminent for Yahweh is already prepared. The comparison of sword with bow contrasts enemies who are close at hand with those who are far off. Distance will not provide immunity from judgment, for the bow will be despatched against such;

VERSE 13

"He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death" – He has prepared deadly weapons for the wicked, indicating the mortal nature of the combat. There is no hope for such.

"He ordained his arrows against the persecutors" – The word "persecutors" is from the Hebrew *dalag* signifying to flame. The literal Hebrew has: *His arrows into flaming ones he will make* (see also Rotherham). The reference, therefore, is to fiery arrows, those used in sieges to burn down defences, and the idea of the vine is that no defence that the wicked might attempt to erect will protect them, for God will penetrate all. In contrast, the shield of faith provides adequate defence against the fiery darts of the wicked (Eph. 6:16).

6: Divine Judgment Through Natural Causes – Vv. 14-16.

The Psalmist describes the perverse conduct of the wicked in conceiving and bringing to birth his evil intentions, but then shows that this brings its own punishment.

VERSE 14

"Behold he travaileth with iniquity" – The verse sets forth the various stages of birth: conception, travail, birth. However, the second is placed first. Because the travailing provides the external evidence of *conception*. We see the world in trouble. What is the cause of it? The answer is, it has "conceived mischief." The verse graphically describes how that the wicked labour with great pain to bring to birth their schemes, but the efforts of such will finally prove abortive.

VERSE 15

"He made a pit, and digged it" – Lit. he *digged it deep*. The figure is taken from the pitfalls dug by hunters in snaring their prey. Saul, in hunting David, laid the foundation for his own disgrace: he fell into the pit of his own making. Haman is another classic example of the same fate. He was hanged on the gallows he erected for Mordecai. Judas connived at the execution of the Lord, but in doing so brought about his own suicide. The world is in the same state today, and is busily manufacturing the weapons of its own ultimate destruction (Ezek. 38:21).

VERSE 16

"His mischief shall return upon his own head" – This expresses a general principle which history and experience illustrate is only too true. Thus Christ warned: "Judge not that ye be not judged, for . . ." (Matt. 7:1).

7. Final Praise – V. 17

In view of Yahweh's righteous judgments, and His ultimate vindication of those who seek Him in truth, the Psalmist completes his petitions with an unstinted word of praise.

VERSE 17

"I will praise Yahweh according to His righteousness" – The R.V. renders: *I will give thanks unto Yahweh*. Thus he would acknowledge Yahweh's goodness, manifested in His righteous judgments on the wicked, and vindication of the righteous.

"And will sing praise to the name of Yahweh most high" – In all the vicissitudes of his life, David was ever conscious

of the overshadowing care of *Yahweh Elyon*, the Lofty One, Possessor of heaven and earth, Whose high elevation enables Him to consider at once the end from the beginning – things hidden from human eyes. Therefore he declared his intention to cause praises to ascend to the Name of *Yahweh Elyon* expressive of this glorious and satisfying truth. See notes on pp. 176-177 (last issue) concerning this Name of Deity.

The Subscription

The subscription to Psalm 7 is given at the commencement of Psalm 8 in the A.V.: *To the chief musician upon Gittith*.

The title of *chief musician* was given to those who had charge of the music in the Tabernacle and Temple, but prophetically, it points forward to the Lord Jesus Christ, who will fulfil the requirements of such Psalms, and so, in effect, will cause them to be sung in the age to come.

As to *Gittith* it is suggested that this is a variant of *Gittoth* rendered *winepresses* (Neh. 13:15), and therefore has relation to the *Feast of Tabernacles* which was celebrated after the ingathering of the harvest (Lev. 23:39). Indeed, the *Septuagint* version gives the subscription as *Belonging to the winepress*.

The *Feast of Tabernacles* was also called the *Feast of Booths* or *Succoth*, because the children of Israel dwelt in booths during the period of its celebration (Lev. 23:40-42). This was to celebrate the great rejoicing of their deliverance from Egypt, when they also dwelt in booths (Lev. 23:42-43), for the record states that "the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth" (Exod. 12:37) where they encamped in the open.

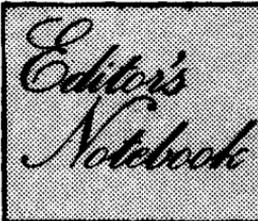
LOGOS

The Exodus was a period of extreme trial and grave danger that terminated in a wonderful deliverance when Yahweh's judgment was poured out upon the enemy, and His protective care was manifested towards His people. The Harvest festival of *Tabernacles* celebrated the divine care and the consequent rejoicing of the people every year. Evidence of the Divine goodness was manifest in the yearly harvest then gathered in. This *Tabernacles* was a time of *rejoicing* (Lev. 23:40), pointing forward to the Millennium (Rev. 7:9-14).

The Psalm before us is expressive of deliverance and rejoicing, both personally and nationally. Every son and daughter of Yahweh can rejoice in His protective care if they follow the pattern set by David and similar men and women of faith. They will experience trial, tribulation and grave difficulties, but out of them all they will be delivered to rejoice before Yahweh,

and to sing praises to His Name of *Yahweh Elyon*. Such experiences are enjoyed now, but the fullness of them awaits the future. The Psalm is thus appropriate to both the Inscription (see pp. 173-174) and the Subscription. The words of Cush the Benjamite were distressing, as they stirred up the multitude against David; but he put his confidence in Yahweh, and emerged from the dark night of depression and evil into the glorious sunlight of the Divine presence. His personal experience foreshadowed the Millennium when the darkness of Gentile times will be completely destroyed by the glorious rays of the Sun of righteousness, who will arise with "healing in his beams." Do not let us become unduly depressed by adverse circumstances, but let us, instead, look to the brighter horizon ahead, and so let us rejoice in Yahweh even now, in anticipation of greater rejoicing in the future.

—HPM



AMONG BIBLE SCHOOLS IN AMERICA

(Cont. from p. 157)

Our last notes took us to Lompoc in California, where, in conjunction with Brother M. Stewart, we conducted a short campaign with the local ecclesias. Expository talks were given in Lompoc, and public addresses with the San Luis Obispo Ecclesia to the north of Lompoc.

The San Luis Obispo Ecclesia is an amazing little Ecclesia of between twenty and thirty members. It has sprung into existence as the result of the activity of brethren Stewart (senior and junior), in

the proclamation of the Truth. A year before we visited it, there was no Ecclesia in existence; but Yahweh had blessed the sowing of the seed, and now, a very warm group has come into existence to proclaim the Message to others.

And it was our great pleasure to cooperate in the preaching of the Word.

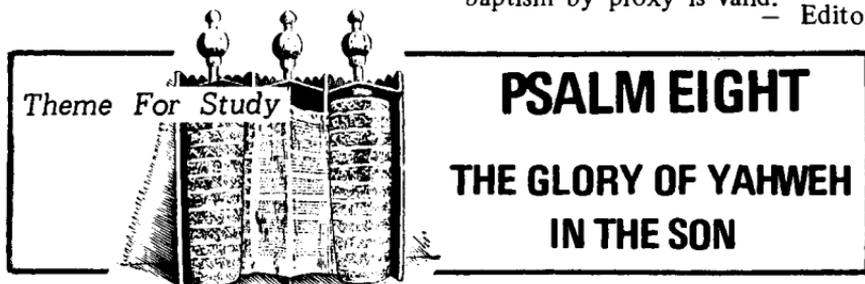
We were pleased at the response. Not only did the local members attend the public address in strength, but members from other ecclesias gave it their support. To give it added interest, a nice sprinkling of interested friends was also present —

Paul goes on to write:

"And why stand we in jeopardy every hour? I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily (a form of baptism — cp. Rom. 6:3). If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die" (1 Cor. 15:30-32).

Obviously Paul is drawing attention to his extreme sufferings on the behalf of others, and pointing out that in the absence of a resurrection they were in vain. It is thus an explanation of the statement made in the previous verse, upon which Mormons claim that baptism by proxy is valid.

— Editor



The teaching of this Psalm is basic to the whole purpose of Yahweh. In its allusions it reaches back to the dawn of creation; and in its prophetic anticipations it looks forward to the establishment of the Kingdom of God. It is a Messianic Psalm, quoted by Paul as predictive of the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, and particularly of his conquest of sin. There is meditative contemplation in it, as David considers the glory of the Messiah's reign on earth. The dominant thought of the Psalm is expressed in Vv. 1,9: "O Yahweh our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth."

Historical Background

The inscription informs us that this is *A Psalm of David*, so we are directed to his life as providing a background to its teaching.

But to what part of David's life? This information is provided us in the subscription (in the A.V. found as part of the heading of Psalm 9) which states that it was dedicated *To the chief musician upon Muth-labben*.

The words *muth-labben* signify *the death of the son*. But, according to the Jewish Targum, *labben* should be *labbeyn* signifying the *one between*. This is the title given to Goliath in 1 Samuel 17:4,51. He is

described as "a champion," in Hebrew *ish-habbenayim* signifying *the man between the two (camps)*. Even the English word "champion" is suggestive of this, for it is from *campio*, thus *camp battle*.

The story of David and Goliath is so well known that it hardly needs repetition here. Goliath was the giant who came out between the two camps, those of the Philistines and of the Israelites, with his challenge of single combat. He was met by the stripling David who advanced across the plain as representative for Israel and for Yahweh, and achieved a great victory in the name of God. This Psalm commemorates the remarkable victory. But inas-

much as it is also Messianic in its prophetic foreshadowing, it reveals that the incident that took place in the Valley of Elah was typical in its import. The battle between David and Goliath foreshadowed Christ's victory over sin. The Lord fought the devil, even sin in the flesh, and in conquering it, "delivered them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2:15). The application to fear-stricken Israel prior to the victory of David is obvious.

Every detail of the notable battle between David and Goliath should be thoughtfully considered in view of the typical significance of the incident. How meaningful are the words of the "stripling" to the giant:

"This day will Yahweh deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee . . . that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly (Heb. *qahal*, equivalent to *ecclesia*) shall know that Yahweh saveth not with sword and spear; for the battle is Yahweh's, and He will give you into our hands" (1 Sam. 17:46-47).

These words are equally descriptive of the Lord's conquest of sin, and his future victory over the giant Gog, the political representative of sin of the latter days.

Having smitten the Philistine in the forehead, David severed his head with Goliath's own sword. The head was taken to Jerusalem (v. 54), and presumably there buried. Golgotha, just north of Jerusalem, signifies *The place of a skull*, and may well have derived its name from this incident. David's action was appropriate and symbolic. The thought of sin is first conceived in the mind before it is acted upon; the lusts of the flesh are only active through the mind of the flesh.

We conclude, therefore, that the Psalm is both historic and prophetic, bridging the dramatic introduction of David to Israel with that of Messiah to his people.

It should be considered in conjunction with Psalm 144, for this Psalm, according to the Septuagint translation is headed *Against Goliath*. Notice the identical expressions used (cp. Ps. 8:4 with Ps. 144:3); consider the reference to foreigners (Ps. 144:7); the complete reliance upon Yahweh (Vv. 1-2); the assurance that He will deliver David His servant "from the hurtful sword" — the main weapon of Goliath, and the very weapon with which David cut off his head (verse 10).

A close consideration of the two Psalms would suggest that Psalm 144 comprises David's prayer as he went forth to meet the giant; and Psalm 8 his hymn of thanksgiving after the victory.

The Inscription

It is described as *A Psalm of David*. The word in the Hebrew is *mizmour*. This is a different word to the title of *The Book of Psalms* where the word is *Tehillim* or *Praises*. *Mizmour* is from a root *zamar*, *striking*, and hence suggests the plucking of the strings of a musical instrument. The term indicates that it is a poem set to music, expressive of harmony of both voice and sound: here, a hymn of thanksgiving.

As David's fingers plucked at the strings of his harp, or whatever instrument he played, the sentiments of his mind plucked at his heart. He was emotionally moved, as we all should be at the goodness of God, and expressed himself audibly in "psalms and hymns and spiritual

songs, singing and making melody in his heart to Yahweh" (Eph. 5:19).

He typed Christ. His name, David, *the Beloved*, was a title given to the Lord by his Father. "My Son, the Beloved," He called him on the occasion of his baptism (Matt. 3:17 — see *Diaglott*). And David, fresh from the victory over Goliath, recognised the typical significance of all that had taken place on that memorable, never-to-be-forgotten day, as this Psalm reveals.

In Hebrews 2:6-8, Paul cites it, and shows that it prophetically pointed forward to the purpose of Yahweh in His Son.

An Epitome Of The Divine Purpose

The Psalm is more than a bridge between David and Christ; it is a bridge between natural creation and spiritual creation.

It, alludes to the former by stating: "Thou (Yahweh) madest him (man) to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet" (v. 6).

This obviously is a reference to the declaration of God at the creation of man: "Have dominion over . . . every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Gen. 1:28).

But though designed for this dominion, man never attained unto it.

Why?

Because sin intervened.

Fallen man is not in a proper condition to exercise that dominion. Sin had to be conquered, and only one provided of Yahweh would be competent to do that. And now David, fresh from the battle with Goliath, and recognising its typical significance, comprehends that sin

will be conquered, and the promised dominion obtained, only by battling against it.

And he realised that a special man would be provided for that (cp. 2 Sam. 23:6-7). So he sung: "Thou hast put all things under his feet" (Ps. 8:6).

That process is not yet completed, for Paul in citing this passage, adds:

"But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour" (Heb. 2:9).

He saw the Lord Jesus in glory as the beginning of the complete conquest by which "all things" will be brought into subjection to him.

The Application Of The Decree In The New Testament

No Scripture of the Old Testament has influenced the New Testament more than the decree of Genesis 1:28. It is found alluded to or directly quoted, throughout the Gospels, the Epistles, and the Revelation. It is used in such a way as to reveal it to be the foundation of the Divine purpose in Christ.

Christ quoted it as the basis of his personal confidence in the outcome of his contest with the Goliath of his day. To the Apostles he declared:

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

Why could he speak with such assurance of the outcome of the challenge of the cross? Because of the decree of Genesis 1:28. Harken to him quote it as he addresses the Father in prayer, immediately after speaking to the Apostles:

"Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee; as Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given him" (John 17:1-2).

Power is *exousia* in Greek, and signifies jurisdiction or dominion. "All flesh" is a Hebraism which includes the brute creation (see Gen. 6:10; 7:15,16,21; 8:17; 9:11; 9:15,16,17, etc.). Whilst dominion is exercised over all such, "eternal life" is reserved for the Bride of Christ, "as many as thou, Father, hast given me." They will be given him as Eve was presented to Adam.

When the Lord arose from the dead and was glorified, he again referred to the Creation decree. He told his Disciples:

"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18).

Death Conquered — 1 Corinthians 15:27

In 1 Corinthians 15:27, Paul quotes Psalm 8:6 (which is derived from Genesis 1:28 as we have seen), to show that the dominion promised included the conquest of death, thus:

"He must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For (then follows the citation — see margin) 'He hath put all things under his feet.' But when he saith, 'all things are put under him,' it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under him."

Christ's Conquest Of The Gentile Heavenlies — Ephesians 1:9, 22

The Creation Decree forms the basic theme of Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians. He quotes it to show that Christ has been promised power over the Gentile heavenlies, and to that end has elevated his disciples into the "heavenlies" of his making,

which are destined to replace the existing political powers in the Age to Come.

Psalm 8:6 which is based on Genesis 1:28 is quoted by Paul in Ephesians 1:9, 22 thus:

"Having made known unto us the secret of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, He might gather together in one 'all things' (quoting Psalm 8:6) in Christ, both which are in the heavenlies (see mg.), and which are on the earth; even in him: in whom also we have obtained an inheritance" (Eph. 1:9-11).

"He hath 'put all things under his feet' (citing Ps. 8:6), and gave him to be the head over all things to the Ecclesia" (v. 22).

The Epistle refers to two mutually antagonistic "heavenlies" or political powers: those in Christ (see Eph. 1:3, 2:6 — mg), and those in the world (Eph. 6:12). There is a state of war between these two opposing systems, as Paul wrote:

"We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies" (Eph. 6:12—margin).

For the moment, the warfare is one of doctrine (see Eph. 3:9), and for that purpose, the soldier in Christ must be properly equipped (Eph. 6:13-18). But at the return of Christ, the attack will be more direct, and will result in the Gentile heavenlies being supplanted by those in Christ Jesus. All this Paul saw as an extension of the Creation Decree: "Have thou dominion."

The Power To Conquer Is From Yahweh — Philippians 3:21

Philippians 3:20-21 comprises a key passage of the Epistle. It discourses upon heavenly citizenship, the return of Christ, the change of

nature to be granted the righteous and the subduing of "all things" unto the Lord Jesus.

The statement, "Subdue all things unto himself" refers back to Psalm 8:6; Gen. 1:28.

Why should Paul cite the Creation Decree as evidence of these matters? In what way does it illustrate that "our vile body" or "the body of our humiliation" must be changed?

Because the state of our bodies was conditioned by the Fall, and the accomplishment of the Decree was delayed by the manifestation of sin. Adam's disobedience of the Edenic Law revealed him as unfit in that state, to exercise the promised domination. Paul declared:

"Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God (image and likeness) thought it not robbery to be equal with God (unlike Eve - see Gen. 3:5-6) . . . but became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, . . . that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth (the lower creation typical of mortal nations in the Age to Come). . . ." (Phil. 2:5-11).

Concerning the antitypical Eve, the Bride of Christ, he wrote:

"For our conversation (citizenship - R.V.) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body; that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to 'subdue all things' (Ps. 8:6; Gen. 1:28) unto himself" (Phil. 3:20-21).

This statement shows that the source of power is from Yahweh, who issued the Decree to the first Adam, "Have thou dominion . . ."

**The Means Of Victory:
The Provision Of A Firstborn**
— Col. 1:15-23

Reference to the Creation Decree is basic also to the theme of the Epistle to the Colossians. In Chapter 1:15-23, Christ is described as "the image of the invisible God" recalling the description of the original creation of Adam in "the image and likeness of God," and illustrating the comments of Elpis Israel:

" 'The law of nature,' which is an indwelling and inseparable constituent of our present economy, has exceedingly deformed the image, and effaced the likeness of God, which man originally presented. It required, therefore, the appearance of a New Man, in whom the image and likeness should re-appear, as in the beginning. This was 'the man Christ Jesus,' whom Paul styles 'the last Adam.' He is 'the Image of the Invisible God' (Col. 1:15); 'the effulgent mirror of the glory, and the exact likeness of His person' (Heb. 1:3)." (p.40).

Paul furthermore states that he is "the firstborn of every creature" (Col. 1:15), or of "all creation" as the Greek has it (see *Diaglott*). How was it possible for the Lord, who had no corporeal existence until 4,000 years after creation, to be called the "Firstborn of all creation?" Because the status of firstborn was a legal title, and not one necessarily governed by accident of birth. A younger son could be elevated to legal firstborn over his older brother, if the latter proved incompetent or unworthy of the honour (cp. Deut. 21:15-17; 1 Chron. 5:1; 26;10; Exod. 9:22-29). The first Adam proved unworthy of this position and was ultimately supplanted in it by the second Adam, concerning whom Yahweh had declared: "Also I will make him My firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth" (Ps. 89:27).

Consider the following quotation from Colossians in the light of the Creation Decree:

"It pleased the Father that in him

should all fulness (image and likeness of God) dwell, and, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile 'all things' (Ps. 8:6) unto himself; by him, I say whether they be things in earth (mortals) or in heaven (immortal rulers of the Age to Come) (Col. 1:19-20).

In his reference to "all things," Paul was quoting generally from Psalm 8:6 and Genesis 1:28, explaining the process by which dominion will be exercised over all.

The Full Extent Of The Dominion (1 Pet. 3:22)

In this passage, Peter cites the words of Christ (Matt. 28:18) which are drawn from Psalm 8:6, to illustrate the full extent of dominion today exercised by the Lord, which power he is using to bring others to glory. Peter wrote:

"The like figure, even baptism, doth also now save us . . . by the resurrection of Jesus Christ who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities, and powers being made subject (Gen. 1:28) unto him" (1 Pet. 5:21-22).

The Praise To Be Ascribed To The Second Adam (Rev. 5:12)

We have found that Psalm 8 is an extension of the Creation Decree of Genesis 1:28, and in the light of its background (the victory of David over Goliath), reveals that the dominion will be attained only through warfare both personal and political.

The dominion will be established at a time when the name of Yahweh will be glorified in the earth (Psalm 8:1), and the Son of Man has been "crowned with glory and honour" (v. 5).

On the eve of the crucifixion, the Lord declared to the Father, "I have glorified Thee on the earth:

I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4). However, as Paul reminds us, the prophetic requirements of Psalm 8 have not yet been fully met (Heb. 2:8-9). That time is yet to come at the second advent of the Lord, when glory and honour will be ascribed to the Son of Man by all upon earth as outlined in Rev. 5:9-14. There seems an echo of the words of Psalm 8 and of Genesis 1:28 in the ascription of "power and glory" as expressed in Rev. 5:12-13.

"I heard the voice of many angels . . . saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

In this symbolic picture of future glory, the Elohim join with the lower creation in rejoicing at the dominion afforded the Son of Man, and ascribing unto him the praise due to his holy name.

The citations of Psalm 8 and Genesis 1:28 found in the New Testament sum up the statement of the risen Lord to the two whom he met on the way to Emmaus: "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory" (Luke 24:26). He opened their understanding to the requirements of Scripture to that end, drawing particularly upon Moses and the Psalms (Luke 24:27,44). This would involve an exposition of both Genesis 1:28 and Psalm 8.

Summary

Our references to the citations

LOGOS

and allusions of Genesis 1:28 and Psalm 8 in the New Testament are not intended to be exhaustive, and a search will reveal other links. We have referred to the obvious ones. Each has been used in a special relationship as illustrating a particular facet of the manner in which the triumph of the Son will be established, and the scope of the dominion he shall exercise in con-

junction with his Bride, the second Eve.

The ones we have cited perhaps can be placed in orderly fashion as expressing the following: In Ephesus—the challenge; In Philippians—the victory; In Colossians—the elevation; In Peter's Epistle—the power; In the Revelation—the glory; In 1 Corinthians—the final result: death destroyed. — HPM

Logos Tour Of Bible Lands

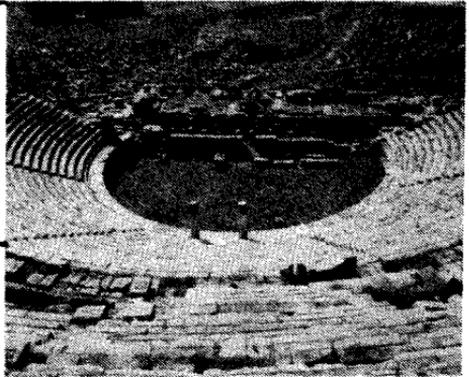
WE VISIT . . . MILETUS

We interrupted our notes of these tours, to briefly report on an Ecclesial world tour that we recently undertook. At the request of various readers, we now return to them.

Our last notes (see last volume) took us to the ruins of Ephesus. We were conducting a group of forty-four Christadelphians from Australia, South Africa, America, Britain and New Zealand. We limit such groups to forty-four members, because that is the largest number that an Israeli coach will accommodate if Sinai is included in the itinerary.

And to visit Sinai is a never-to-be-forgotten highlight of the tour. Though I generally have an adverse reaction from heights, I risk it all for the glorious view from Mt. Sinai at sunrise, and the wonderful privilege of standing upon that significant and historic spot, meditating quietly in an attempt to recapture the past

But we were moving on to Miletus in Asia Minor, not ascending Sinai; and as we did so we spoke to the group on the significance of the route. We were travelling upon a road along which, possibly, the elders of Ephesus had traversed, as they made their way from that city for a meeting with Paul at Miletus.

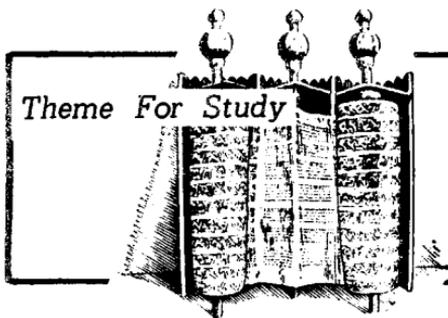


Well preserved Roman Theatre at Miletus

The distance is a little over thirty miles. Finally, the coach pulled up at what appeared, a scene of desolation. Fields of rank weeds were before us; in the distance we could see some ancient ruins; to the right of us we could make out the outline of a Roman theatre. There was absolutely no sign of life, for the modern village is a little distance from where we pulled up.

This was part of Miletus, one time a most important Greek harbor on the western coast of Asia Minor; a city with a population exceeding 100,000 people when Paul visited it, as he made his way to Jerusalem for the last time.

Paul arrived at Miletus by ship. It sailed past the island of Lade which protected the main harbor. Probably Paul's ship docked at the Lion's Port, the commercial centre of Miletus on the north side of the town. The entrance was flanked by two huge stone lions, which are still standing there today. He would have seen a handsome harbor-city, with marble-paved quayside, elegant temples dedicated to pagan gods, huge



PSALM EIGHT

THE GLORY OF YAHWEH IN THE SON

(continued from page 253)

Our previous article showed that this Psalm is frequently quoted in the New Testament, forming the basis of many of the Epistles of Paul, as well as some of the more important statements of the Lord Jesus. It is therefore deserving of close attention, which is the reason for our rather lengthy treatment of it.

The Inscription

The Psalm is headed: *A Psalm of David*. The Psalm, however, is prophetic of the future glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, the antitypical *Beloved*, as we have found from its historical background.

The Hebrew word rendered "Psalm" in the Inscription is different to that which forms the title of the book as a whole. There the term is *Tehillim, Praises*; here it is *Mizmowr*, which Strong gives as a *poem set to notes*. It is derived from *zamar, striking*, and in this relationship, refers to the plucking, or striking, of a percussion instrument, as an accompaniment to the words. The term thus relates to a poem set to music, and is suggestive of harmony between the instrument played, and the words sung. More: as the reader gives himself to the ideas and thoughts expressed they pluck at the strings of his heart, bringing his mind into harmony with the purpose of Yahweh. By that means, he manifests the exhortation of Paul:

"Speaking to himself in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in his heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19).

The Dominant Divine Name

This is expressed in the first verse, and repeated in the last, as *Yahweh Adoneynu* rendered "Yahweh our Lord."

The title *Adonai* is a plural word, signifying *Lords* or *Rulers*. Its first occurrence in the Bible is in Genesis 15:2,8 which describes the covenant God made with Abram after the deliverance of Lot from the northern invader.

Abram was told: "I am thy Shield, and thy exceeding great reward." In unquestioning devotion and submission to God at this declaration, Abram bowed in heart and mind before Him, addressing Him by the title *Adonai*.

What does the title suggest? The singular form, *Adon*, is used in connection with two classes of men: the master of slaves, and the husband of a wife. The term, therefore, is expressive of a personal relationship: a relationship of authority on the one hand, and of allegiance and love on the other. Owner, ruler, governor, husband are the ideas expressed.

Abram already had been impressed with the authority, and

governorship of Yahweh. With the aid of God, he had overthrown the powerful forces of Chedorlaomer, and in this had tangible evidence of the rulership of God; he recognised Him as "possessor of heaven and earth" (Gen. 14:19).

But why use the *plural* form of the word? Because Abram realised that the agency by which God rules the world is through a multiplicity of angelic beings: the Elohim, who, in this capacity, act as rulers and governors over humanity Heb. 1:14; 2:5).

Thus Abram bowed before God as a slave before his Master; but he recognised that that Master had others under Him to whom He had delegated His authority. Therefore he addressed Him as *Adonai*: rulers, governors, masters.

The slave was, in Old Testament times, the absolute possession of his lord. He had no personal rights, but completely submerged his will in that of his master. But his master also had responsibilities towards him. His needs and his wants were his master's care, and were treated as such. A slave was regarded as a member of a household, on a lesser level than children certainly, but with privileges denied hired servants. His relationship to his master was not only one of allegiance, but frequently also of love.

This is exhibited by the use of the word *Adon*. Sarah addressed Abraham by that title (Gen. 18:12), but she did not do so in an attitude of craven subservience; but of devoted submission, the outcome of true love. So Yahweh claims the obedience and loyalty of those who truly love Him (Isa. 54:5); and the Ecclesia acknowledges Jesus

Christ as Lord, because espoused to him in spiritual marriage.

This submission to authority in love and respect is completely contrary to the spirit of our age, which is characterised by independence and selfwill. Few are ready to pray, sincerely, concerning all the interests and aspects of life: "Thy will, not mine, be done."

Abraham used the title at a time of victory; Joshua used it in the bitterness of defeat, when Israel had turned its backs on the enemy at Ai (Joshua 7:7). He recognised that Yahweh was responsible for the defeat, and used the title in humble submission to His governorship over the nations.

"O Lord (*Adonai*), what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies!" (Joshua 7:8). As Lord, the supreme Commander, though directing His requirements through the Elohim, Yahweh gave commandments for the purging of the camp of Israel, and for resumption of the battle against their enemies.

The title of *Adon* which belongs to Yahweh, is also that of His Son. To the disciples, Christ declared: "Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well; for so I am." He invites those called to the Gospel, to so rule their lives, that they may be elevated to rulership with him in the age to come. The multitudinous Christ, therefore, will comprise the *Adonai* of the Kingdom. The glorified saints will assume the position today held by the angels, and will rule on behalf of Yahweh.

Therefore, as an introduction to his brief exposition of the very Psalm before us, Paul made mention of that fact, and so illustrated the

significance of the divine Name revealed therein. He declared:

"For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying . . . (then follows the citation from Psalm 8. See Heb. 2:5-8).

The divine purpose of a world in subjection to Christ and the saints, is expressed in the use of this prophetic name: *Yahweh Adonai, He who shall be rulers*. Significantly, it is found at the beginning and the end of this prophetic Psalm.

Analysis

If we divide the Psalm up into four parts of two verses each, and bear in mind its prophetic significance, we have:

- (1) Praise for Yahweh's Victory over Sin (vv. 1-2);
- (2) Praise for the Majesty of His Future Government (vv. 3-4);
- (3) Praise for the Glory of the King (vv. 5-6);
- (4) Praise for His Worldwide Dominion (vv. 7-8).

The Psalm is rounded off by a refrain from the first verse.



- (1) Praise For Yahweh's Victory Over Sin (vv. 1-2)

The Psalmist anticipates the time when the name of Yahweh will be great in the earth because of His conquest of sin.

VERSE 1

"O Yahweh our Lord" – This is the dominant name of Deity expressed in the Psalm. See notes above.

"How excellent is Thy name in all the earth" – A person is said to have a good name because of the character he bears. The time is coming when Yahweh's character will be magnified throughout the earth (Num. 14:21), and His name will be honoured everywhere (Jer. 16:21; Ps. 83:18). At present, it is profaned, even by Israel, but He will move to "sanctify His great name" before men, by fulfilling His declared purpose (Ezek. 36:20-25). He will save and redeem Israel, and bring all nations into subjection to His rule.

Yahweh's name was vindicated in the days of Goliath, by the manner in which he saved Israel through the instrumentality of David, the shepherd boy. See David's comment in 1 Sam. 17:46.

"Who hast set Thy glory above the heavens" – This is not a question but a statement of fact. Yahweh's glory will overshadow the political heavens of the Age to come. The statement is given in the present tense because "God calleth those things that be not (though He has determined shall be done) as though they were" (Rom. 4:17). When Yahweh's name will be honoured throughout the earth, His glory will be manifested above the political heavens.

VERSE 2

"Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength" – The gospel has ever been proclaimed by those who have "faith as little children." Christ's prayer, on behalf of such, was evidently based upon this Psalm: "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes" (Matt. 11:25). He cited the very words of the Psalm to the chief priests in the temple when they criticised the Lord for permitting children to cry, "Hosanna to the son of David" (Matt. 21:15-16). But instead of "Thou hast ordained strength," the reference in Matthew has, "Thou hast perfected praise." Rotherham renders: "Hast Thou laid a foundation of strength" (see A.V. margin). The "foundation of strength" is the

"praise" that has emanated from the lips of "the babes" to whom Christ made reference in his prayer, and continues to do so from such to this very day. The rendition in Matthew, therefore, expresses the idea incorporated in the Hebrew, and is consistent with the Septuagint version.

Notice how beautifully the idea is revealed in the type. It was the "stripling" David, the shepherd boy despised because of his youth (1 Sam. 17:28,33, 55-56), who "laid a foundation of strength," or "perfected praise," by his fearless and confident faith in the face of the Goliath's threats. See also 1 Cor. 1:27.

"Because of Thine enemies" – The Philistines in the days of David, sin's flesh in the days of Christ (Heb. 2:14), and the Gogian confederacy in the future.

"That Thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger" – "Still" is *shabath*, and signifies to neutralise, render inactive, cause to cease. In killing Goliath, David "stilled" the enemy and avenger of Israel, and in doing so, delivered the people from "the fear of death" (Heb. 2:14). Christ, likewise, has gained the victory over sin (the enemy) and death (the avenger).

(2) Praise For The Majesty Of His Future Government – vv. 3-4

David's victory over Goliath laid the foundation for his ultimate rule; Christ's victory over sin and death did likewise. The glory of his government is now contrasted with the weakness of fallen humanity.

VERSE 3

"When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers" – The heavens declare the glory of God, as the Psalmist elsewhere states (Ps. 19:1). But Paul cites that Psalm as having relation to the preaching of the Gospel by the Apostles (Rom. 10:18), and therefore interprets the "heavens" as the political order of the Age to come. The present "heavens lies in Christ" (Eph. 1:3; 2:6; Col. 1:16), comprise the basis of the future government under him (Heb. 1:10; Rev. 5:9-10), of which the kingdom under David and Solomon was a type.

"The moon and the stars which

Thou hast ordained" – Sun, moon, and stars have their counterpart in the Kingdom of God (see Mal. 4:1-2; Ps. 89:36-37; Dan. 12:3). The glory of the physical creation typified the spiritual creation yet to be manifested. See Psalm 19:4-6).

VERSE 4

"What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?" – Paul cites vv. 4-6 in Hebrews 2:6-8, and interprets it as having application to the work of Yahweh in His Son. The word "man" is *'enosh* in Hebrew, and signifies weak, mortal man: man in need of redemption. Consider the type. Why was Yahweh mindful of Saul and his associates at that time? They had proved faithless to His requirements. But in delivering them from the Philistines, God showed that His mercy and purpose are greater than man's weakness. So with the redemption in Christ, both personal and national. In spite of the blasphemous, indifferent world of today, Yahweh will move to establish His kingdom upon the earth, to the vindication of His holy name and purpose.

"And the son of man, that Thou visitest him?" – Here the word "man" is *adam*, and relates to human nature. The term *son of man*, so frequently used in Scripture, and appropriated by the Lord to himself, is the title of Christ as judge (John 5:26-27). Yahweh visited mankind, in a son of Adam, and did so that He might redeem "whomsoever" will accept His offer of salvation. See Paul's comment (Heb. 2:9-18).

(3) Praise For The Glory Of The King – vv. 5-6

Paul appropriates the words of these verses to the Lord Jesus in his capacity of bringing "many sons unto glory" (Heb. 2:9-10). As David delivered Israel from the "fear of death," and after a delay was "crowned with glory and honour," so the type has been, and will be, fulfilled in Christ.

VERSE 5

"Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels" – The word "angels" is *elohim* in Hebrew, elsewhere rendered God, but obviously referring to the angels (Gen. 1:26; 3:22). The validity of this rendition is proved by Paul's use of it in Hebrews 2:7. Adam was made

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in the image and likeness of the Elohim (relating to shape and mental capacity) though inferior to them in physical being; Christ was made similarly, but also inherited the consequences of Adam's transgression.

"Thou hast crowned him with glory and honour" – This relates to the second Adam. See Paul's comment in Heb. 2:10: "We see Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honour."

VERSE 6

"Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands" – It was the intention of God from the beginning that man should exercise dominion (Gen. 1:28). Man was formed first, then afterwards out of man, there was built up a woman. Thus, just prior to the seventh day, the first marriage took place, and the married couple was invited to be fruitful, to replenish the earth, and exercise dominion.

Sin, however, intervened to prevent the latter taking place. In Christ, sin has been conquered, and the future dominion of the world to him, assured. So Paul comments: "But now we see not yet all things put under him" (Heb. 2:8). The type is faithfully presented by the experiences of David, as we have noted above.

"Thou hast put all things under his feet" – See the use of this phrase in the epistles of Paul as outlined in our article last month. The "all things" of this statement are yet to be brought under Christ (Heb. 2:8).

(4) Praise For His Worldwide Dominion – vv. 7-8

The promised dominion extends to the lower creation (see Gen. 1:28), typical of the mortal creation over which Christ's future government will extend.

VERSE 7

"All sheep and oxen" – These useful, domesticated animals point to Israel after the flesh. David, as a shepherd,

kept the flock, protecting it from the attacks of wild beasts. The Lord Jesus will do the same, and deliver his people from the "lion and bear" at the beginning of the future Age.

"Yea, and the beasts of the field" – The dominion extends to the present wild, untameable beasts of the field, such as the lion and the bear, which David destroyed in battle, and to which he likened Goliath (1 Sam. 17:34-37). The nations are likened to such wild animals (Dan. 7), but Christ will subdue them, and ultimately tame them.

VERSE 8

"The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea" – Another symbol for the nations.

"And whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas" – The largest creatures of creation (Gen. 1:21), normally beyond the ability of man to control, will be brought under the dominion of Christ. These, too, are representative of mortal nations.

VERSE 9

"O Yahweh our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth" – This ascription of praise, a refrain of v. 1, is called forth as the Psalmist contemplates the purpose of Yahweh in its fulness and glory.

The Subscription

In the A.V. this is recorded at the beginning of Psalm 9: *To the chief Musician upon Muth-labben.* For the reference to the "chief musician" see comments on p. 218. The balance of the subscription we considered in our article last month.

This Psalm epitomises the purpose of God in Christ, and has been so largely drawn upon by the New Testament writers, as to warrant the closest attention and deepest meditation.

— HPM

Elpis Israel is designed to show men how they may attain to eternal life in this theocracy, and obtain a crown which shall never fade away. To accomplish this, the reader must, in justice to himself and the truth, study it with the Bible at his right hand, for he will find but few pages in which frequent reference is not made to its authority, and without which nothing can or ought to be determined.

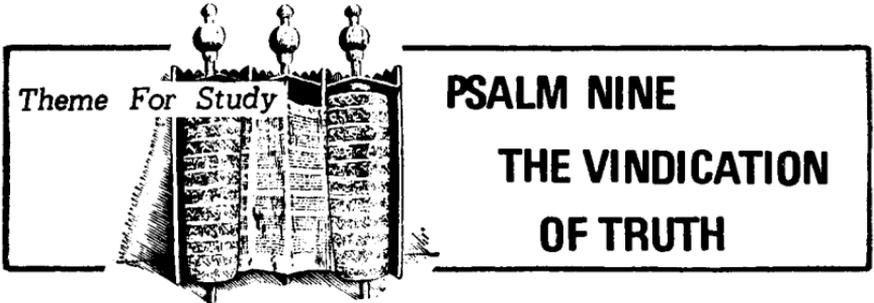
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In October, 1973, a crucial war for Israel and the world was fought in the Middle East. It has drastically affected the way of life everywhere. The world will never be the same again.

Personally, I believe that it constituted a warning from heaven to us, proclaiming: "Behold I come as a thief . . ." (Rev. 16:15).

This is our day of opportunity to prepare for his coming, to make ready for the time when we shall be taken from our present environment for a meeting with Christ at the Judgment Seat. Let us commence on this now, for tomorrow may be too late.

—E.R.M. (Punchbowl Ecclesia).



This Psalm commences a new sub-section in Book One of the Psalms. Prophetically it anticipates the days, character and end of "the man of the earth," including "the time of trouble" which will involve all nations (Dan. 12:1). Therefore, though this section of the Psalms is based upon the past, it reaches forth to describe the times in which we live.

A New Sub-section

In the second article in this series on the Psalms (see vol. 40, pp. 342-346), we showed that *The Book of Psalms* is divisible into five books, answering to the books of the Pentateuch; and that each of these, in turn, is divisible into sub-sections. Book One, comprising Psalms 1 to 41, can be divided into three parts:

1. **Man in relation to the Son of Man** — Psalms 1-8.
2. **The man of the earth** — Psalms 9-15.
3. **The Man Christ Jesus** — Psalms 16-41.

The first sub-section, provides a description of the truly happy man (Ps. 1), and concludes by revealing the means whereby such will be manifested in the earth (Ps. 8).

The second sub-section contrasts the destiny of the man of the earth with that of the true citizen of Zion (Ps. 15). It reveals that the temporary power and prosperity of the wicked are illusory, and will give place to the elevation and glory of the righteous. The Psalms in this sub-section, therefore, provide a progression of thought, revealing that Yahweh is not unmindful of the trials and strivings of His servants, but that His over-shadowing presence is always with them, and that ultimately they will reap the fruits of their sowing in the Kingdom He will establish.

The Psalms before us in this sub-section are as follows:

Psalm 9: The Vindication of Truth — *The*

certainty of vengeance upon the enemy. Dominant verse: "Thou hast maintained my right and my cause" (v. 4).

Psalm 10: The Character and Ultimate Destruction Of The Man Of The Earth – In Spite of Yahweh's seeming indifference. *Dominant Verse: "Yahweh, Thou hast heard the desire of the humble; Thou wilt prepare their heart; Thou wilt cause Thine ear to hear; to judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress" (vv. 17-18).*

Psalm 11: Yahweh: A Refuge For The Righteous – in the face of oppression. *Dominant verse: "In Yahweh put I my trust" (v. 1).*

Psalm 12: Yahweh: A Saviour From Man's Treachery – So openly manifested in the earth. *Dominant verse: "For the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith Yahweh" (v. 5).*

Psalm 13: Yearning For Help From Yahweh – The need for patience. *Dominant verse: "How long wilt Thou forget me, O Yahweh? for ever? How long wilt Thou hide Thy face from me?" (v. 1).*

Psalm 14: Redemption From Mankind's Universal Corruption – The prevailing wickedness illustrates the need. *Dominant verse: "There is none that doeth good, no, not one" (v. 3).*

Psalm 15: A True Citizen Of Zion – Providing a contrast to the world of wickedness. *Dominant verse: "He that doeth these things shall never be moved" (v. 5).*

Historical Background Of Psalm 9

We have entitled this Psalm: *The Vindication of Truth*. The inscription informs us that it is *A Psalm of David*, (for which see our comments on page 248); so, as with Psalm 8, we are directed to David's life as providing a background to its teaching.

The Psalm comprises the outpouring of praise:

1. For a mighty deliverance already received – vv. 1-12;
2. For the assurance of continued and future help – vv. 13-20.

From v. 11, which refers to Yahweh dwelling in Zion, we may conclude that it was composed after the Ark had been established in

Zion (cp. Ps. 132:13-14; 2 Sam. 6).

This was followed by a time of peace (2 Sam. 7:1), during which the covenant of promise was given to David. However, the peace was soon disrupted by war, as powerful enemies attempted to destroy David's power (2 Sam. 8:1-7; 12-15; 10:1-19), only to be repelled by a series of campaigns.

These victories could well form the basis of the praise which is expressed in the words of v. 5.

"Thou hast rebuked the heathen, Thou hast destroyed the wicked; Thou hast put out their name for ever and ever."

These words suggest that David saw his victories as typical of the future triumph of the glorious seed that had been promised him.

But he also was conscious of seeds of trouble that were stirring within the nation:

"Have mercy upon me, O Yahweh; Consider my trouble which I suffer of them that hate me, Thou that liftest me up from the gates of death."

The narrative shows how he tried to correct these rumblings of discontent, by showing kindness to such as Mephibosheth through Ziba (2 Sam. 10). His efforts in that direction proved abortive, for internal antagonism towards him still rankled among the followers of Saul, who awaited an opportunity to exact their revenge on the King. This flared into open rebellion when Absalom temporarily drove his father from the throne. Men like Shimei (2 Sam. 16:5) used the opportunity to bring about David's fall.

This Psalm suggests that David could sense that antagonism long before it flared into open rebellion under his son. It was there before

the incident with Bathsheba, which incident, David's enemies hypocritically used to satisfy their own desire for revenge against the king.

A Messianic Psalm

The Psalm is also prophetic, pointing forward to the coming of the Lord. The statement of verse 8: *He shall judge the world in righteousness* is repeated in Acts 17:31, where Paul applies it to the future establishment of Christ's authority in the earth. At that time:

*"Yahweh also will be a refuge for the oppressed,
A refuge in times of trouble,
And they that know Thy name will put
their trust in Thee;
For Thou, Yahweh, hast not forsaken
them that seek Thee"*
(vv. 9-10).

And the everlasting Gospel shall go forth to the world (Rev. 14:6);
*"Sing praises to Yahweh which dwelleth
in Zion;
Declare among the people His doings"*
(v. 11).

This Messianic prophecy, and the attitude of believers towards Christ as Redeemer, is set forth progressively in those Psalms that lead up to the present one. Thus:

- Psalm 6:** An acknowledgement of personal weakness.
Psalm 7: Confidence in Yahweh in spite of powerful opposition.
Psalm 8: Victory on the field of battle, anticipating the triumph of Heb. 2:14.
Psalm 9: Conquest of national enemies whose disruptive boasts are thus quieted — foreshadowing the subjugation of the nations.

One Psalm leads to the next, culminating in final victory, Our consciousness of personal weakness (Ps. 6); leads us to place confidence in Yahweh (Ps. 7); and through Christ's conquest of sin and death (Ps. 8); anticipate the ultimate

establishment of the Kingdom of God (Ps. 9).

An Acrostic Psalm

With Psalm 9, we are introduced to an acrostic Psalm. An acrostic Psalm is one in which the lines, or verses, follow the order of the alphabet. The most widely known example of this is Psalm 119, which is divided into twenty-two stanzas answering to the twenty-two letters in the Hebrew alphabet. Each line of the stanza begins with words that have the particular Hebrew letter at their head.

This is designed to create harmony of thought, and to provide an aid to memory. But in addition to complete acrostics, as Psalm 119, or the Lamentations; there are broken, or confused, acrostics, as in the Psalm before us.

In the Septuagint and other translations, the Ninth and Tenth Psalms are joined as one, although in the A.V. and other versions, they are separated as two distinct Psalms. Certainly they are linked in thought, Moreover, they are joined by the concluding word of Psalm 9: *Selah*. The word *Selah* expresses a thought link, inviting the reader to consider what has been stated in the light of what follows. It signifies *to pause*, the idea being in meditation. This is understandable in the midst of a Psalm, but what about when the word is found at the end of a Psalm as here. Surely it indicates that the Psalm before us should be considered in the light of the one that follows. Thus both are joined by the exclamation, *Selah*, and the acrostic that commences in Psalm 9, flows through Psalm 10 also.

But the acrostic is not harmonious. In Psalm 9, the first three

letters of the Hebrew alphabet appear down to v. 5, and then the fourth letter, *Daleth* is missing, and the fifth letter, *He* appears only at the head of two lines (v. 6), and not four as previous. In v. 19, the eleventh letter, *kaph* is represented by *qoph*. Psalm 10 begins with the twelfth letter *lamed*, but the alphabetical arrangement is then dropped, and six letters are passed over. At v. 12, however, the alphabetical structure of Psalm 9 reappears, and vv. 12,14,15,17 begin with the last four letters of the alphabet in order.

Is the broken acrostic deliberate, or is it due to a mistake in transcription? Many believe that it is due to a fault in the text, but it could be deliberate, designed by Inspiration to indicate that the harmony that should exist in God's creation has been disrupted by the blasphemy and oppression of the man of the earth. That, indeed, is

the theme of the two Psalms.

The Dominant Divine Name

The Psalmist set out to praise the name of *Yahweh Elyon* (v. 2). This Name (see comments on Ps. 7:17), is appropriate to Yahweh as "Possessor of heaven and earth" (Gen. 14:19); and appropriately, it was first proclaimed when Abram defeated the confederacy from the north, so foreshadowing the future victory of Armageddon.

Such a Name as that is fitting for a Psalm that proclaims that "He shall judge the world in righteousness" (v. 8), and therefore is expressive of the Divine purpose in judgment and rule. It therefore, predicts the overthrow of the man of the earth, that the prevailing disharmony, suggested by the broken acrostic, might be repaired.

— H.P.M.

(To be continued)

The Golden Rule

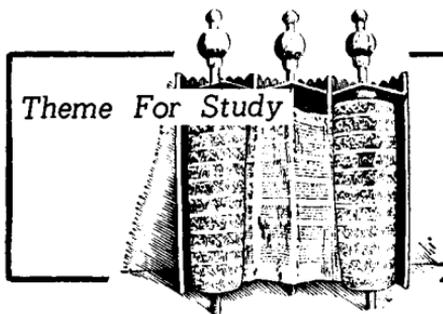
*Thus said Jesus: "Go and do
As thou wouldst be done unto,"
Here thy perfect duty see,
That which God requires of thee.*

*Wouldst thou, when thy faults are known,
Wish that pardon should be shown?
Be forgiving, then, and so
As thou wouldst be done unto.*

*Shouldst thou helpless be, and poor,
Wouldst thou not for aid implore?
Think of others, then, and be
What thou wouldst they should to thee.*

*For compassion if thou call,
Be compassionate to all;
If thou wouldst affection find,
Be affectionate and kind.*

*If thou wouldst obtain the love
Of the gracious God above,
Then, to all His children be
What thou wouldst they should to thee.*



PSALM NINE

THE VINDICATION OF TRUTH

Our last article introduced this Psalm. It appears to be both a Psalm of Praise and a Psalm of Petition. Both elements are blended together, so that it can be divided up into Thanksgiving (vv. 1-4); Triumph (vv. 5-12); Trouble (vv. 13-14); Transgression (vv. 15-18); Triumph (vv. 19-20). The Psalmist expresses his confidence in Yahweh for victories already won, and on the basis of such evidence of help, prays for further manifestation of divine goodness. The Psalm is an acrostic Psalm, but the acrostic is not completely harmonious, and we have made a suggestion regarding the reason for this in our previous article. Above all else, it is a Messianic Psalm, the triumphs of David foreshadowing those future triumphs of his more glorious Son.

1. Praise To Yahweh For Personal Victories Won – Vv. 1-4

David expresses his confidence in Yahweh on the basis of blessings already received.

VERSE 1

“I will praise Thee, O Yahweh, with my whole heart” – To the Hebrew, the heart was the seat of inward, intellectual emotion. Unlike that formalised worship, which rejoiced in externals that hid a heart of wickedness, and was condemned by Yahweh (Isa. 29:13), David’s mind and inward being were in tune with the words of his lips.

“I will shew forth all Thy marvellous works” – He vows to speak frequently and publicly concerning Yahweh’s ability and power. His “marvellous works” are manifested in the glory of creation which foreshadows His purpose in the earth (cp. Ps. 8:3, 6-9), as well as in His care and help of Israel in need (cp. Exod. 3:20). By contemplating Yahweh’s power as manifested in these directions, David acknowledged the Almighty’s

ability to grant further petitions. Thus, meditating upon His greatness, he is caused to express himself in terms of gladness and rejoicing:

*“I will be glad and rejoice in Thee;
“I will sing praise to Thy name, O
Thou most High,” (v. 2).*

For the signification of the name *Elyon* (most High), see the Introduction in our last article.

VERSE 3

“When mine enemies are turned back” – David contemplates successes already achieved; but frankly acknowledges that they are not the result of his own ability, but the result of divine help. Thus:

“They shall fall and perish at Thy presence” – Notice the three successive stages of overthrow experienced by David’s enemies: they are *turned back*, they *fall or stumble*, they *perish*. They do this “at the presence of Yahweh.” The Hebrew *paniyim* signifies “faces.” It is a plural word, and in relation to Yahweh, relate to the Elohim, the angels,

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who manifest the different "faces" of Yahweh – those of anger, grace, mercy and so forth. The faces of the Cherubim are the faces of Yahweh, and they can be turned towards flesh in either mercy or judgment.

VERSE 4

"For Thou hast maintained my right and my cause" – David could speak thus, for Yahweh had overthrown his enemies, and brought him to the pinnacle of power, upon His throne in Jerusalem. In this, David typed the future victories of the Lord Jesus.

"Thou satest in the throne judging right" – David describes Yahweh as taking His place on the throne of Judgment to adjudicate over the nations. In Daniel 7:9-11, the prophet pictured the Ancient of Days as doing this, and subduing the nations. The work of judgment will be accomplished by the Lord Jesus, as the manifestation of the Ancient of Days (cp. Dan. 7:22; John 5:25). In Psalm 7:7, David pleaded with Yahweh to occupy this throne of judgment; in this Psalm he expresses his satisfaction at the consequences of this. David saw his personal triumph as a vindication of Yahweh's truth and power; but more, "being a prophet," he saw it as typical of the future triumph of his glorious Son (Acts 2:30-31). The time is coming when Yahweh's throne of judgment will be set up on earth, and the nations will be judged according to those things recorded (Hab. 3:6; Matt. 25:32). Revelation 4 depicts that throne set up on earth.

2. The Complete End of Fleshly Power Contrasted with the Eternal Sovereignty Of Yahweh – Vv. 5-8

David's personal experiences foreshadow the future glory of Yahweh's Beloved (Matt. 3:17).

VERSE 5

"Thou hast rebuked the heathen, Thou hast destroyed the wicked" – What Yahweh did in advancing David to power, was typical of what shall be accomplished by the "greater than David" at his return. The Psalm points to the conquest of the nations by the Lord. The word "heathen" is better rendered as "nations." The term "the wicked" is *rasha*, or the

wicked one, a reference to a particular figure. A similar term is used in regard to the papal "man of sin" of Zech. 5:8; 2 Thess. 2:8. Having rebuked the nations at Armageddon, Christ will move against the Papal power, and destroy its influence (Rev. 17:1; 18:1-2).

"Thou hast put out their name for ever and ever" – The reference is to those nations that give their allegiance to "the wicked one," or the Papacy when Christ manifests himself in power (cp. Isa. 60:12). Daniel shows that the "fourth beast," or the Catholic-Communist Confederacy of the last days under the authority of Gogue and the Pope, will be entirely overthrown (Dan. 7:11), though the nations will remain during the millenium. They will, however, lose their independence (Dan. 7:12), to be finally swallowed up at the end of the thousand years' reign of Christ (Rev. 19:20-21), when there will be "no more sea" (Rev. 20:1), or nations apart from the redeemed. Hence the expression in this line: Thou hast put out their name for ever and ever. Two words are used: *olam* and *ad*, which Brother Thomas renders: *the hidden period* (the millenium) and *beyond* (i.e. beyond the thousand years when 1 Cor. 15:24-28 shall be fulfilled).

VERSE 6

"O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end" – According to the rendition of the A.V., the Psalmist, at this point, addresses his enemies. But this seems a little incongruous in view of the context, and the margin alters it to an address to Yahweh: "The destructions of the enemy are come to a perpetual end; and their cities hast Thou destroyed." This rendition is supported by the Hebrew, although "destructions" (Heb. *chorboth*) is better rendered as *desolations*, a word very appropriate to the prophetic foreshadowing of the Psalm. The "cities of the nations" are the centres of power established by the flesh, and which are doomed to be overthrown by the antitypical David (see Rev. 16:19). Pre-eminent among them will be Babylon the Great, and it will become a complete *desolation*, such as is described in Rev. 18:2. Its "ruins" or "desolations" will be perpetual. In this, the destiny of mystical Babylon will be like its historical counterpart: it will never be rebuilt (Isaiah 13:20-22).

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"Their memorial is perished with them" – What memorial? The Tower of Babel which the nations are busily erecting today. In ancient times man set about establishing such an organisation, that he might make for himself "a name," and that he might avoid being scattered. Today, in the Common Market (a Papal organisation), and the Soviet Union (a Communist organisation) nations are converging together "to make themselves a name" lest they be scattered. All such systems of political and religious power and influence will come to an end when Yahweh's name is glorified throughout the earth (Ps. 8:1).

VERSE 7

"But Yahweh shall endure for ever" – The word "ever" is *olam* or *the hidden period* in Hebrew; an expression used to define the millenium. This would suggest that Yahweh is terminable; that He shall endure only during the millenium. The R.V. changes the verse to conform to the context: "But Yahweh sitteth as king for ever." This alteration conforms to the following lines:

"He hath prepared His throne for judgment" – The throne of judgment will precede the throne of rule, for "the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable" (James 3:17). Christ will be first King of Righteousness, then King of Peace (Heb. 7:2).

VERSE 8

"He shall judge the world in righteousness" – These words are cited by Paul in Acts 17:31 and applied to Christ's future advent.

"He shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness" – "People" is in the plural here, rendered "peoples" in the R.V. Whenever the plural form of the word is used in Scripture, the reference is to the Gentiles. He shall *minister* judgment to the Gentiles; he shall *serve* and *help* them by so doing. Apart from his intervention the ungodly would destroy humanity upon the earth (see Rev. 11:18), but he shall lead the world from out of the morass of evil into which it has blundered, to establish conditions of equity and peace (Isa. 2:2-4). The word "uprightness" is *meyshar*, equity. Everything will be done with perfect justice blended with mercy and consideration to the weakness of humanity.

3. A Cover For The People – Vv. 9-10.

In the day that Yahweh, through His Son, will judge the world in righteousness, He will also be revealed as the Redeemer of His people. David could proclaim this on the basis of his own experience.

"Yahweh also will be a refuge for the oppressed" – The word "refuge" is *misgab*, and signifies a high place, such as a tower or inaccessible cliff, safe from attack. The R.V. renders it *high tower*. There the oppressed (the Hebrew *dak* signifies *crushed*, for which see Rev. 18:24) will find refuge.

"A refuge in times of trouble" – What a glorious privilege it is to be able to commune with Yahweh in times of trouble, to cast one's burdens upon Him knowing that He views our problems with sympathetic understanding, and in His own time, will vindicate those who place their trust in him.

VERSE 10

"They that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee" – To "know the name" in such a context is to have such intimate relations with Yahweh as to produce fruit to His glory. The same expression is used for the most intimate relationship between husband and wife, leading to fruit to the glory of the Father (Gen. 4:1). The Word comprises the "seed" of God which implanted in a person will beget him unto a new life (1 Pet. 1:23).

"For Thou Yahweh hast not forsaken them that seek Thee" – This statement is made in view of trouble that often afflicts the righteous, and may cause some to believe that such are abandoned of Yahweh. Consider the experiences of David. Often, when fleeing from Saul, it must have seemed as though he had been abandoned of God, but once he had attained to the Kingdom, the past could only be considered in its true perspective, and the purpose of trial properly appreciated. In the future age, it will be comprehended that Yahweh is "a Father of the fatherless, and a Judge of widows." It will be seen how that He has established "the solitary in families," and delivered them which were "bound with chains" (Ps. 68:5-7). Even past troubles will be seen as divine blessings. Ezekiel declares that when the divine judgment is fully manifested "Ye shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done, saith Yahweh" (Ezek. 14:23).
(To be concluded next issue) – HPM

warfare is essential to success:

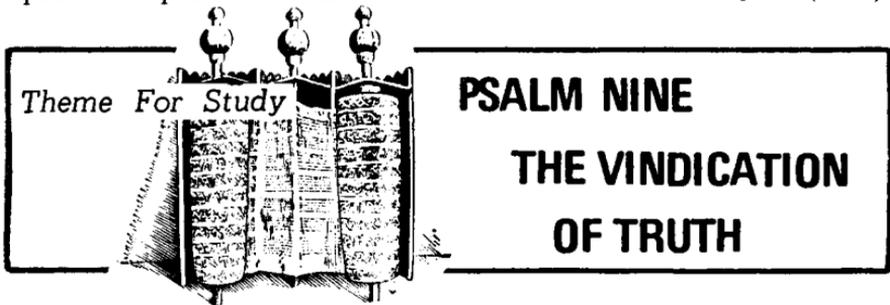
“Let your endurance have mature work, that ye may be mature and complete in nothing coming short” (James 1:4 – Roth.).

Let us clearly recognise, that worldly pressures will increase as the end draws near. If we are to successfully resist them we must constantly recognise that “the flesh profits nothing,” or, in other words, we will not gain the victory in our own strength. We must look to a Higher than we; and to the channel of His energising power, the Word. Meanwhile, as signs multiply around us testifying to the imminent return of the Lord, let us realise that the only thing of real, enduring consequence will be the character which the Spirit-word can develop in us. Upon this depends our ultimate destiny – a matter of life or death. Therefore, let us constantly meditate upon the importance of the Truth

in our lives, whilst striving after sound doctrine, and the clear-sighted application of it. If the anxieties of life, and thoughts of worldly advancement interfere with our service to the Truth, let us lay them aside. Christ has demonstrated that the way to true life, glory and riches, is by sacrifice of flesh. “Not my will but Thine be done,” was the keynote of his service to his Father. And we, in turn, are called upon to “endure hardness” as “good soldiers of Jesus Christ,” with the keynote of “pleasing him” who hath chosen us (2 Tim. 2:3-4).

To do this we must constantly tap the source of energy provided by God (His Word), developing its fruit in our lives. That word will create in us faith (conviction), hope, and love, so equipping us “to run with patience the race that is set before us.”

– A. Hayles (W.A.)



We conclude our consideration of this Psalm in this issue. The Psalm terminates in an appeal unto God such as we can surely endorse in view of current conditions; an appeal, however, which is quite obscured by the rendition of the A.V. This beautiful little Psalm can be summarised thus:

- (1) An expression of praise arising from the whole “heart” at the manifestation of Yahweh’s work in a perfected creation (Vv. 1-4).
- (2) Yahweh’s severity shown in the suppression of the disruptive forces of wickedness (Vv. 5-8).
- (3) His goodness revealed in the vindication of the righteous (Vv. 9-10).
- (4) Praise expressed for personal privileges enjoyed (Vv. 11-14).
- (5) The ultimate discomfiture of the wicked, and vindication of divine righteousness, culminating in the final appeal (Vv. 15-20).

4. A Call To Praise – Vv. 11-12

In view of the manifestation of divine goodness expressed in the previous verses, there is a call for praise unto Yahweh.

VERSE 11

“Sing praises to Yahweh Who dwelleth in Zion” – The verb *yashab*, rendered “dwelleth,” signifies to settle down as a permanent occupant. The same word is rendered “endure” in v. 7, which the R.V. translates as *sitteth as king*. The Psalm thus speaks of the royal dignity of Yahweh, revealed in the past through David in Zion, and yet to be manifested in the future through the Lord Jesus. Another Psalm records:

*For Yahweh hath chosen Zion;
He hath desired it for His habitation.
This is My rest for ever (the age);
Here will I dwell; for I have desired it.
(Ps. 132: 13-14).*

“Declare among the people His doings” – The Hebrew *amim* is plural, “peoples,” and, in that form, is used invariably to denote Gentile nations. David compelled the surrounding nations to submit to his rule, and, to the rule of Yahweh. Christ will do likewise. A previous verse (v. 8) predicts that he shall “minister judgment unto the nations (Heb. *peoples*) in uprightness,” following which, they will be compelled to submit to his rule and worship (Zech. 14:16). In the words of Isaiah: “The law shall go forth from Zion, and the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2-4).

VERSE 12

“When He maketh inquisition of blood, He remembereth them” – To make “inquisition” is to conduct an enquiry. Nations will be judged upon their past behaviour towards God, His word, and His people. Of Babylon the Great, it is revealed that at the time of her judgment, her guilt in shedding the blood of the faithful will be revealed for all to see (Rev. 18:24-26). Daniel declares that “the books” will be “opened,” and the fourth beast will be judged and destroyed because of the revelation of past iniquity that will be revealed thereby. This is in contrast to other nations which will be disciplined but not destroyed (Dan. 7: 11-12). Those nations that refuse to submit to Christ, and to seek divine forgiveness in the face of past conduct “will be destroyed” (Isa. 60:12).

“He forgetteth not the cry of the humble” – The R.V. renders “humble” as *meeek*. The Hebrew *anavim*, is from a root signifying to bend or bow down, either through personal humility, or by having to submit to humiliating circumstances. The *afflicted*, as the word can be rendered (and for which see Acts 14:22), will be raised up in that day of the vindication of truth.

5. A Prayer For Help – Vv. 13-14

In view of the help already received from Yahweh in his elevation to power, and in view of strong resistance to his rule which still lurked behind the scenes, David sought the help of God in prayer (See the Historical Background to the Psalm, p. 315). Some, however, suggest that this section of the Psalm should be transferred from a prayer for help to one of thanksgiving. They read the verbs as perfects instead of imperatives. This change results in the lines being rendered as:

*“Yahweh has been gracious (merciful);
He hath seen my affliction from them
that hate me.”
And so on. We have treated the verbs
as imperatives.*

VERSE 13

“Have mercy upon me, O Yahweh” – Better: “Be *gracious* unto me.” David is not pleading for the forgiveness of sins, but for the loving-kindness and tender care of Yahweh in face of powerful enemies who could rise against him.

“Consider my trouble which I suffer of them that hate me” – Though David had been acknowledged as king, he was cognisant of some resistance to his rule, a latent resistance that could erupt into open hostility at any moment. It did so during the revolt of Absalom.

“Thou that liftest me up from the gates of death” – David’s deliverance from Saul could be likened as such, and was typical of the Lord’s deliverance from the power of the grave. Cp. Rev. 1:18.

VERSE 14

“That I may shew forth all Thy praise” – David’s elevation to power vindicated the faith and trust he had shown in God from the beginning. This

was the case also with the Lord Jesus. He was "declared to be the Son of God with power . . . by the resurrection of the dead" (Rom. 1:3).

"In the gates of the daughter of Zion" – The gates of an ancient city comprised its most prominent, public and important positions. It was there that the rulers and judges assembled to adjudicate upon the affairs of state, or the problems of citizens (cp. 2 Sam. 15:2). There shall be nothing defiling permitted through the gates of "New Jerusalem" in the age to come (Rev. 21:25-27).

"I will rejoice in Thy salvation" – When David brought the Ark to Mt. Zion and made it the centre of Divine worship, the gates of the city that gave access thereto comprised "gates of salvation and praise," through which worshippers passed to rejoice before Yahweh. To a greater extent this will be the case in the Age to come, as the symbology of *Revelation* suggests. Isaiah, referring to the Zion of the future, declares: "Thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring into thee the wealth of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish" (Isa. 60:11). Again: "Thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise" (v. 18). In type, this state of things was established when David brought the Ark to Zion, and when subsequently, the Temple was built thereon.

6. Complete Destruction Of The Nations – Vv. 15-16

In seven campaigns (2 Sam. 8, 10, 11), David subdued the nations about him, foreshadowing the "seven thunders" of the Rainbow Angel (Christ and the saints) in execution of the judgments written (Rev. 10:3-4).

VERSE 15

"The heathen are sunk into the pit that they made" – The Hebrew *goyim*, translated "heathen," signifies Gentiles. David declares that the very pit that they dig to destroy Israel will become the means of their own destruction. This was the case with the nations that opposed David, and will be so of those that set themselves up to destroy Israel in the

future. Gog's invasion of the land will result in his own overthrow (cp. Ps. 7:18). Meanwhile, weapons forged against Israel have an habit of reacting against those who use them. Even the oil attack of the Arabs; will rebound in due time (cp. Isa. 54:17).

"In the net which they hide is their own foot taken" – The figures of this verse are taken from the pitfalls used by hunters. Saul, in hunting David, laid the foundation of his own disgrace; Haman was hanged on his own gallows; Judas was destroyed by his own hand. So it will be with nations that oppose God's people now and in the future.

VERSE 16

"Yahweh is known by the judgment which He executeth" – Gentiles ignore Yahweh, claiming that He does not exist, or is dead. But the time is coming when through Christ, He will "judge the world in righteousness" (Acts 17:31). Then mankind will be compelled to acknowledge His reality and power.

"The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands" – The judgment of Yahweh will be manifested in perfect justice.

"Higgaion" – The word signifies *Meditation*. In Ps. 92:3 it is rendered a *solemn sound*, suggesting deep and serious thought; in this case, meditation upon the statement just made. If the wicked is to be snared in the work of his own hand, how important it is to remain separate from such, lest we be involved in the judgment such shall receive. See the warning to "come out of" Babylon, "that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18:4). Similar danger faced Lot on the eve of the destruction of Sodom, a danger that destroyed his wife. So the Lord graphically exhorted: "Remember Lot's wife" (Luke 17:32).

"Selah" – Selah signifies *pause and consider*. It is a thought-link inviting the reader to pause and consider what has been stated in the light of what follows. See note on Ps. 3:2.

7. The Certainty Of Judgment And Deliverance – Vv. 17-18.

Whereas the wicked will be destroyed, the righteous will be delivered for eternity.

VERSE 17

"The wicked shall be turned into hell" – The Hebrew *shuw* signifies to "turn back," or "return." The R.V. renders it: *turned back*. In Gen. 3:19 it is rendered *returned*. The wicked referred to, therefore, comprise those responsible, who will be brought from the grave for judgment, only to be returned to the hell from whence they will be brought. Hell, or *sheol*, comprises the grave. This is established beyond all doubt by the fact that it is often rendered *grave* as in Hos. 13:14, cited in 1 Cor. 15:55.

"And all the nations that forget God" – Pride can cause this (Ps. 10:4), for destruction awaits all such (Ps. 50:22). The nations are held accountable for their attitude towards God, His Word, and His people, for He "left not Himself without witness" (Acts 14:17). Those that fail "to retain God in their knowledge" He abandons to their reprobate mind, to do those things "which are not convenient" (Rom. 1:28). But the time is coming when He will vigorously and belligerently move against those nations that refuse to submit to Christ (Isa. 60:12). Following the judgment of responsible individuals at Sinai, the nations also will be punished through the judgment of Armageddon. Christ is represented as presiding over a great assize for that purpose (Matt. 25:31-46). Some nations will receive greater punishment than others.

VERSE 18

"For the needy shall not always be forgotten" – The oppressed, and those who hunger and thirst after righteousness today, then will rejoice and be made happy (See Matt. 5:3-12).

"The poor shall not perish for ever" – Compare with Matt. 5:3. The "poor in spirit" are to inherit the kingdom. The word "ever" is *ad* and signifies *eternity*, even beyond the millenium.

8. A Prayer For The Consummation – Vv. 19-20

As he contemplates the glorious future, David fervently prays for its consummation; and thus expresses the desire of all those who "love the Lord's appearing" (2 Tim. 4:8).

VERSE 19

"Arise, O Yahweh; let not man prevail" – In a concluding prayer, the Psalmist strongly urges Yahweh to bring about the consummation of His purpose, so that man shall no longer prevail. The word for "man" is *enosh*, for which see verse 20.

"Let the heathen be judged in Thy sight" – To attain the coming Millenium comprised "all David's desire" (2 Sam. 23:5). He longed for the time when Yahweh "shall judge the world in righteousness" (Ps. 9:8; Acts 17:31).

VERSE 20

"Put them in fear, O Yahweh" – The Hebrew *morah*, here rendered "fear," is not the normal word for that term. Strong derives it from the root *yare*, to fear; but others see its root as *yara*, to teach. The Hebrew has the same consonants as *mowrah*, teacher; and as Hebrew originally was without vowel points, many prefer to render by the word *teacher*. The Septuagint has: "Appoint, O Lord, a *lawgiver* over them." Coverdale has: "Set a *schoolmaster* over them." Clarke translates: "Place a *teacher* among them." The schoolmaster, or teacher, will comprise the Lord Jesus Christ, administering the law of God (Gal. 3:24; Isa. 2:2-4). David's prayer, therefore, was for the coming of Messiah for whom he looked (Acts 2:30-31).

"That the nations may know themselves to be but men" – The word for "men" is *enosh*. The same word occurs in Ps. 8:4: "What is man," and in Ps. 9:19: "Let not man prevail." *Enosh* is man in a certain relationship, and it is this state that David prayed the teacher would bring home to the nations. The word is derived from the root *anash*, to be frail or feeble. It is translated "desperately wicked," "incurable," "sick," "woeful." Thus *enosh* always refers to man in a bad sense, as either physically weak, or, morally depraved. The first occurrence of the word is found in Gen. 6:4: "men of renown" or of "name," or repute; but, as the context shows, the men described had a name for outstanding wickedness. Other references include "men of strength" (Isa. 5:22), or morally weak men exercising fleshly power; "angry fellows" (Jud. 18:25), or morally corrupt men moved with anger. The

word, therefore, denotes spiritual or physical weakness. David prayed that the Teacher would bring home to the nations their depraved and weak condition, that they might seek the redemption from sin and mortality that Yahweh will offer under Christ. We can certainly re-echo the prayer in these days of political corruption, and national depravity, when the conditions extant in the days of Noah are developing throughout the earth. How significant that the first occurrence of this word should be found in the record of the Flood. Christ declared that conditions at his second coming

would be similar; and David prayed that the Teacher might come who would reveal their true state to mankind.

“Selah” – This “thought-link” at the conclusion of the Psalm, links it with the following one. Notice how the prayer continues on, enquiring why Yahweh delays to manifest Himself. The Greek text of the *LXX* joins both Psalms together. Meanwhile, we can certainly join in David’s prayer with a fervent: “Even so come Lord Jesus.”

– HPM.

CONSISTENCY

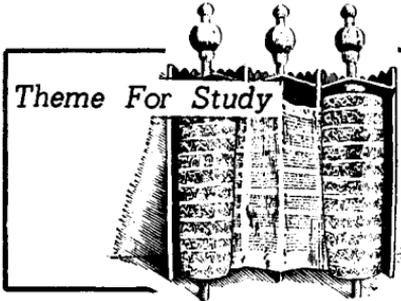
Paul was often the subject of malicious, evil rumour. The charge of inconsistency was urged against him more than once. The proponents of circumcision claimed to all and sundry that he was inconsistent in circumcising Timothy. On one occasion, because his word was held in doubt, he bluntly retorted: “Am I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?”

Experiences such as these can be the lot of any brother or sister. Many times, in the providence of God, we are caused to do things that others misinterpret as inconsistent because they are in ignorance of the true circumstances; and before any inquiry is made into motives, the “offence” is spoken of to all and sundry. Under such conditions, the accused can only find comfort in the Lord’s words: “Rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven.” We know that when he shall appear we will experience righteous judgment, and not that according to man. Our judge is able to discern “the thoughts and intents of the heart,” but also, having once been “compassed with infirmity” his judgment will blend mercy with justice. He, alone, has the authority in that day “to make us blameless” (1 Cor. 1:8).

Our pioneers had similar experiences to those of the Apostles, yet they, too, determined “not to know anything” amongst the brethren “save Jesus Christ and him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2). Several times Brother Roberts was charged with inconsistency, and this caused him finally to write an epistle which he entitled *A Letter To My Enemies* in which he wrote: “I saw that I could not prevent the making of enemies without becoming a time server, and a pleaser of men.”

We are exhorted to be consistent before God, for to Him only are we really accountable. If, on the other hand, our actions are dictated merely by a desire to keep this or that brother or sister happy, our walk in the truth would quickly become inconsistent. Let us seek to please God, not men. Brother Thomas wrote: “Do what is right. Be valiant for the truth. Teach it without compromise, and all lovers of the truth will approve you; for all others, you need not care a rush!”

–W.J.M. (Woodville).



Theme For Study

Psalm Ten

THE CHARACTER AND DESTINY OF THE MAN OF THE EARTH

This Psalm has many points of resemblance with the one that precedes it (see our exposition last volume, and particularly our introduction to Psalm 9), but whereas the previous Psalm refers to enemies who are external to the Kingdom; this Psalm refers to enemies within. It applies to one enemy in particular who is described as "the man of the earth" (v. 18).

Historical Background

In our introduction to Psalm 9, and with our treatment of the concluding word, *Selah*, we suggested that the two Psalms are closely related, and that the thought of Psalm 9 flows on into Psalm 10 (see comments *Logos* vol. 41, pp. 316, 361).

Psalm 9 is an acrostic Psalm, the acrostic flowing on into Psalm 10. But it is a confused or broken acrostic, because sin has interrupted the harmony that should exist between Yahweh and His creation.

Accepting all this, we would treat Psalm 10 as a continuation of Psalm 9 (they are linked together as one in the Septuagint translation), composed by David, and related to the same circumstances as we suggested for the previous Psalm (see *Logos* vol. 41, p. 315).

Prophetical Foreshadowing

In Romans 3:14, Paul cites Psalm 10:7 to show that faithlessness among believers will cause them to manifest bitter hostility towards the faithful. The Psalm describes the opposition that David experi-

enced from such, and particularly from one whom he describes as "the man of the earth" (v. 18). This individual foreshadowed the "man of sin" whom the Apostle predicted would develop from out of the seeds of error that were in evidence among the Ecclesias even in his day (2 Thess. 2:7).

The very character of this "man of the earth," as set forth in vv. 6-11 of this Psalm, is suggestive of the wickedness of Babylon the Great of the Apocalypse.

Therefore, prophetically, the Psalm anticipates the rise of error within the Ecclesias leading to the establishment of the Papacy, or Babylon the Great of the Apocalypse.

Dominant Verse

The climatic verse of the Psalm is surely v. 18:

Yahweh, Thou hast heard the desire of the humble;

Thou wilt prepare their heart;

Thou wilt cause Thine ear to hear;

To judge the fatherless and the oppressed,

That the man of the earth may no more oppress.

Such a prayer, such a petition, such a conclusion surely foreshadows the similar prayer, petition and conclusion found in the Apocalypse. There the saints cry unto heaven: "How long, O Despot, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that *dwell on the earth*" (Rev. 6:10); and elsewhere they are found in opposition to "the God of the earth" (Rev. 11:4), who ultimately is overthrown when glory is given to "the God of heaven" (Rev. 11:13).

The Dominant Divine Title

We have seen that each Psalm seems to concentrate upon a specific aspect of Yahweh illustrating a particular name or title of Deity.

This Psalm is no exception. The dominant title for this Psalm is given in v. 16. *Yahweh Melekh*, Yahweh King. Yahweh's status and glory as such is referred to in various other passages of Scripture; each of which should be studied in order to thoroughly comprehend the significance of the title.

See where this leads us.

Psalm 29:10 shows that as King, He was enthroned at the time of the Flood, which must therefore be viewed as the result of a royal decree against those who would undermine His authority and status.

Psalm 93:1 predicts the majesty and glory of Yahweh as King when His rule is established in the earth.

Psalms 145:13, 146:10, state the duration and extent of His future earthly reign.

Isaiah 33:22 expresses the confidence of His subjects in His ability as King to save them.

Jeremiah 10:10 proclaims His power and sets forth the effect of

His wrath and indignation in the earth.

Lamentations 5:19 shows that the temporary overthrow of the visible manifestation of His power on earth in the destruction of Jerusalem, does not affect His governance nor status.

1 Timothy 1:17 expresses the truth that as the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, Yahweh is worthy of our praise and worship.

Such are some of the scripture references to Yahweh as King. What does the title demand of us? Surely our acceptance of His position as His subjects, and our loyal submission to His decrees. Moreover, we should see in the unfolding plan of fulfilling prophecy evidence of His absolute sovereignty in the earth. Even the pagan Nebuchadnezzar came to recognise that truth, and was led to acknowledge Yahweh as King (Dan. 4:34; 6:26).

The plan of the Apocalypse, therefore, is in reality evidence of Yahweh's ability to "rule in the kingdom of men" (Dan. 4:17), guiding the destiny of nations according to His wisdom and purpose.

In view of this, it is significant that both the dominant verse of the Psalm before us (v. 18), as well as the dominant Divine title found therein, should direct attention to the Apocalypse for its antitypical fulfilment.

We have seen that "the man of the earth" points to "the God of the earth" of the Apocalypse; what of the title *Yahweh Melekh*? The statement of the Psalm in relation to this title (Ps. 10:16) is quoted generally in Rev. 11:15:

"The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and

His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever."

The Divine authority as king will then be vested in Christ. Yahweh as "King of kings, and Lord of lords" reigns over the angelic host of heaven, and the Lord Jesus Christ will do likewise over the redeemed at his return. He is described as "King of kings and Lord of lords" for those with him in that day will be the "called, chosen and faithful" from among men (Rev. 17:14).

This, indeed, comprises the meaning of Zechariah 14:9: "Yahweh shall be king over all the earth; in that day shall there be one Yahweh and His name one."

In that day, there will be "a great multitude, which no man can number, out of all nations" (Rev. 7:9), upon whom will be "named the name of God" (Rev. 3:12). They will reign as kings with Christ the King, and will form the multitudinous Yahweh in the earth. Though such a large number, they will act in **unison**, as one. Comprising in the aggregate "the Name of Yahweh" (see Isa. 30:27; Acts 15:14), it will be recognised that "His name is one." At that time Jerusalem, the Metropolis of their reign, will be given the title of *The Throne of Yahweh* (Jer. 3:17).

The Psalm is divided into six sections:

(1)—**COMPLAINT**: Yahweh's seeming indifference — Vv. 1-2.

(2)—**CHARACTER**: The reckless character of the wicked — Vv. 3-6.

(3)—**CONDUCT**: The ruthless conduct of the wicked — Vv. 7-11.

(4)—**CRY**: A Prayer for Divine intervention — Vv. 12-15.

(5)—**CONFIDENCE**: The ultimate vindication of the righteous — Vv. 16-18.

The Psalm commences with a complaint, but it closes in confidence. It begins by questioning why Yahweh does not intervene; it ends on a note of praise for His vindication of His saints. At first it seems to the Psalmist as though God was indifferent to the oppressions of the wicked, and that He allowed them to run riot in their evil ways; and it is on that note that he speaks to God.

He describes the wicked as full of self-confidence; as noted for pride, irreverence, disbelief, and materialism. Their mouths are full of cursing, deceit and fraud," whilst mischief and vanity lurk under their tongues.

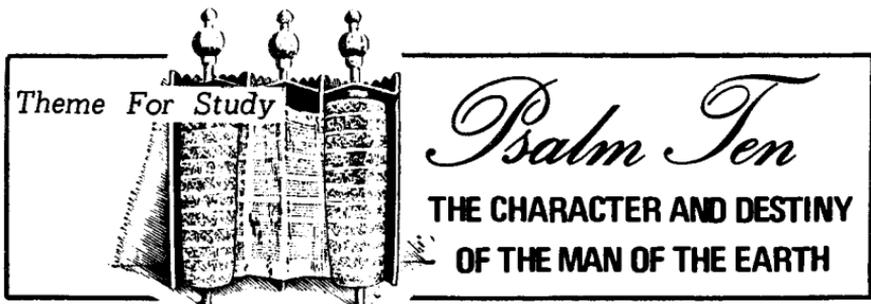
The oppressive conduct of the wicked then is brought under review: their persistent hunting of the righteous in order to destroy them; their complete indifference to God, Whom, they claim, "will never see it." Their attitude reveals that they do not believe in the reality of God, even though they might mouth His name.

In the face of such attacks, the righteous can only cry to Yahweh for help, and lean heavily upon Him. In recognition of their own inability to deal with the situation, they can but call upon Yahweh to rise in judgment and vindicate them in the face of bitter and unscrupulous attack.

Finally, the Psalm concludes on a note of supreme confidence. The Psalmist recalls the status of Yahweh as King and gives expression to his conviction that as such He will exercise His rule to vindicate the helpful and overthrow the wicked, to the glory of His holy name.

(To be continued).

— HPM.



The Psalm is a prophetic Psalm, closely connected with the previous one. Based upon the personal experiences of David, it outlines the character and destiny of the "man of the earth" (v. 18), the "God of the earth" of Revelation 11:4.

It is divided into three parts:

1. His oppression of the poor and innocent – vv. 1-11.
2. Prayer for divine help – vv. 12-15.
3. The ultimate deliverance of the righteous and destruction of the wicked – vv. 16-18.



1. The Oppression Of The Poor And Innocent By The Wicked – Vv. 1-11.

This section of the Psalm is subdivided into three parts: (a) – Yahweh's seeming indifference – vv. 1-2; (b) – The reckless character of the wicked – vv. 3-6; (c) – The ruthless conduct of such – vv. 7-11. This section provides a prelude to the prayer that follows.

a. The Seeming Indifference Of Yahweh – Vv. 1-2.

Despite the bitter anguish of the Psalmist in suffering persecution at the hand of the wicked, Yahweh seems to be strangely indifferent. Lawlessness has reached such a pitch that gross wickedness is not only committed, but the wicked are boastful of their actions, and, in the absence of restraint, are bold in their continuance of it. The prosperity (v. 5), security (v. 6), insolence (vv. 4,

11), deceit (v. 7), and violence (vv. 8-10) of the man of the earth are vividly portrayed, and yet it appears as though Yahweh is prepared to wink at such evil.

VERSE 1

"Why standest Thou afar off, O Yahweh?" – It appeared to the Psalmist as though Yahweh was indifferent to conditions endured by the righteous. See an echo of these words in the prayer of Rev. 6:10.

"Why hidest Thou Thyself in times of trouble?" – The verb is *alam* to veil, conceal, or cover. It appeared to the Psalmist as though Yahweh's eyes were closed to his state (cp. Isa. 1:15), and His ears were deaf to his appeal (Lam. 3:56).

VERSE 2

"The wicked in his pride, doth persecute the poor" – The verb *dalaq* signifies to flame. In Gen. 31:36 it is rendered hotly pursue; but it also can signify to sear, as by a flame. This was the experience of David when hotly pursued and oppressed by Saul, and by the army of Absalom. In both cases, he poured out his heart unto Yahweh in prayer as "the wicked" threatened to overwhelm him. The word "wicked" is *rasha* and signifies those who are morally

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depraved, the completely lawless, who refuse to submit to the discipline of Yahweh. On the other hand, the word "poor" is *any*, and signifies the *depressed, downcast, oppressed*. They are the meek who have been promised that they will "inherit the earth" (Ps. 37:11), but they are not necessarily poor in wealth.

"Let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined" – Better with the R.V. mg.: "They are taken in the devices." The reference is to the poor. The Psalmist complains that the wicked push on in their ungodly pride, and the poor, who lack resources or friends, become the victims of their ungodly deeds.

b. The Reckless Character Of The Wicked – Vv. 3-6.

The "wicked" comprise religious hypocrits. Whilst oppressing the poor, they mouth praises to Yahweh. David's experience of this anticipated the persecution of the Ecclesia by the Church as predicted in the Apocalypse.

VERSE 3

"For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire" – Impervious to the requirements of Yahweh, he seeks his own satisfaction. David has one particular adversary in mind who foreshadows "the man of sin" (2 Thess. 2), the "God of the earth" (Rev. 11:4) and the "false prophet" (Rev. 16) of the N.T.

"And blesseth the covetous, whom Yahweh abhorreth" – Note the alternative rendition of the margin. The line can be rendered: *For the wicked, in spite of the desire of his soul, joins in singing hallelujahs (Leupold)*. This attitude is indicative of the hypocrisy of the religious but lawless one David has in mind. Each time he succeeds in his oppression of the poor, he blesses, or thanks God! In doing so, he reveals complete indifference to Yahweh's real requirements. Though blessings of Yahweh are on his lips, in fact, his deeds are a negation of the divine will. Such an individual is abhorred of Yahweh. See Zech. 11:5.

VERSE 4

"The wicked through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God" – The R.V. renders: "Saith He will not require it." He acts on the assumption

that he will not be called in question for such acts: he does not recognise that they contravene the will of Yahweh.

"God is not in all his thoughts" – There is no real thought of God in his mind. He mouths the name of Yahweh, but his actions reflect the vacuum of his mind concerning God. It is easy to speak of God's ways and will; it is difficult to apply and do.

VERSE 5

"His ways are always grievous" – The R.V. renders: "His ways are firm at all times." He seems to prosper in his schemes.

"His judgments are far above out of his sight" – He cannot perceive that Yahweh will ultimately act against him; nor see the judgments impending. How like Christendom today, and particularly Babylon the Great who declares: "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow" (Rev. 18:7-8).

"As for all his enemies, he puffeth at them" – God is out of his sight and mind, and as for mere human enemies, he despises them.

VERSE 6

"He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved" – He is so sure of himself, that he imagines his successes will continue indefinitely.

"For I shall never be in adversity" – Again these words foreshadow those of Babylon the Great (Rev. 18:7-8).

c. The Ruthless Conduct Of The Wicked – Vv. 7-11.

Puffed up in pride and self-confidence; indifferent to the will of God, and impervious to the suffering of man, the wicked gives himself over completely to his own will.

VERSE 7

"His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud" – His language is violent, he is full of guile and extortion. Paul cites this verse as typical of human corruption, linking it with that of Psalm 5:10. See Rom. 3:14, and cf. our Introduction.

"Under his tongue is mischief and vanity" – Mischief and trouble (see mg.)

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are described as being "under his tongue," being stored up ready for use at all times.

VERSE 8

"He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages" — Like a highwayman, he bides his time in ambush, awaiting his prey. He camouflages his true intentions. To use the symbology of the Apocalypse in relation to the "man of the earth," he has "horns like a lamb, but he speaks as a dragon" (Rev. 13:11).

"In the secret places doth he murder the innocent" — This has been the practise of Babylon the Great. Whilst mouthing praises to God, it has oppressed the poor. See Rev. 18:24.

"His eyes are privily set against the poor" — The Hebrew word for "poor" in this place is different to that of v. 2. It is *chelekeh* signifying *dark, wretched*. The R.V. renders *helpless*. The victims of Rome have been the helpless.

VERSE 9

"He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den" — The allusion indicates the fierce rapaciousness of Rome. The symbol is reproduced in the N.T. See 2 Tim. 4:17; 1 Pet. 5:8; Rev. 13:2.

"He lieth in wait to catch the poor" — Here, again, the word is *aniy*. See v. 2.

"He doth catch the poor, when he draweth him into his net" — The figure is changed, and the wicked is now described as a hunter, stalking his victim.

VERSE 10

"He croucheth, and humbleth himself" — The R.V. mg. applies this to the "poor" thus: "And being crushed he (i.e. the poor) boweth down." He becomes the victim of the lion or the hunter.

"That the poor may fall by his strong ones" — Here the word for poor again is *chelekeh* (v. 8). The R.V. renders it as *the helpless*. The reference to "his strong ones" suggests the minions of the lawless, figuratively the claws of the lion. The "man of the earth" has powerful support in contrast to the comparative helplessness of his victims, and therefore is able to crush them easily. This reveals the need of the "helpless" to seek the help of Yahweh.

VERSE 11

"He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten" — The word for "God" is *El*, and signifies divine might or strength. The use of such a title in this place is significant, and suggests that "the man of the earth" actually despises the hidden strength of Yahweh. See Rev. 18:7.

"He hideth His face; He will never see it" — The successes that have attended his course, lead him to the conclusion that he can continue to do so with impunity.

2. A Prayer For Divine Intervention — Vv. 12-15.

In the face of such success and power, what can the faithful do? Seek a Strength above themselves; turn to God in prayer. They do so in the assurance that Yahweh has promised: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." In spite of all appearances to the contrary, this is the fact of the matter.

VERSE 12

"Arise, O Yahweh; O God, lift up thine hand; forget not the humble" — The prayer calls upon *El* to lift up His hand to strike down the wicked, and so relieve the *aniy*, here translated *humble*. The word, as we have seen (v. 4), signifies *afflicted, or meek*. For the divine assurance to such, see Ps. 9:12; 34:2; 69:32; Matt. 5:5.

VERSE 13

"Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God" — The wicked treat God with contempt, by the indifference they manifest towards Him. They take liberties with God because they experience delay in judgment. Cp. Ecc. 8:11.

"He hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it" — In heart the wicked claim that Yahweh will not carry out what He has stated He will do; and therefore, by their very attitude, proclaim God to be a liar.

VERSE 14

"Thou hast seen it; for Thou beholdest mischief and spite" — The prayer reminds Yahweh of what He already knows, but emphatically contradicts the viewpoint of the wicked, as expressed in v. 11.

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It proclaims the confidence of the Psalmist, that Yahweh will act against the wicked in due time.

"The poor committeth himself unto Thee" – Again the word is *chelekeh*, the helpless. Recognising their own inability to deal with the situation, they commit themselves unto God. The word signifies to give up or abandon. They give themselves up to Yahweh, but He will never abandon them, despite appearances to the contrary (cp. Ps. 9:10).

"Thou art the helper of the fatherless" – See the past (Exod. 22:22), present (Mal. 3:5), and future (Ps. 68:5), applications of this fact.

VERSE 15

"Break Thou the arm of the wicked" – The request is for God to so act against the wicked that his power to work his wickedness will be destroyed. Christ will accomplish this as far as "the man of the earth" is concerned, at his coming.

"And the evil man; seek out his wickedness till Thou find none" – The R.V. renders this line: *And as for the evil man, seek out his wickedness till Thou find none*. The evil man boasted that God would never see his wickedness (v.11), but this prayer requests that Yahweh should both seek out such wickedness and punish it until there is none remaining.

3. The Ultimate Vindication Of The Righteous – Vv. 16-18.

The prayers of saints will be fulfilled in the establishing of the Kingdom of God on earth. This will comprise the assurance that Yahweh has "heard the desire of the humble."

VERSE 16

"Yahweh is King for ever and ever" – See page 25 for comment on the divine title of *Yahweh Melekh*. The extent of His reign is "for ever and ever." This phrase is *olam and ad* rendered by Brother Thomas as the *hidden period* (the millennium) and *beyond*. "Of his kingdom," declared the angel Gabriel, "there shall be no end" (Luke 1:33), but this continuity will be manifested in two stages: the epoch of one thousand years reign of Christ (Rev. 20:4), during which all enemies are gradually subjected to him

(1 Cor. 15:25-27); and its conclusion when "he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God" (1 Cor. 15:24). This latter epoch constitutes the great "beyond," or *Ad*.

"The heathen are perished out of His land" – The word "heathen" is *goyim*. It is derived from a root signifying the mass of humanity, from which, of course, Israel is separated. Thus it is used generally for the Gentiles without regard to their pagan beliefs. The land will be purged of the polluting presence of Gentile conquerors (Ezek. 39:7), and though representatives of the nations will converge there for worship (Zech. 14:16), they will not be permitted to do so for conquest (Ps. 46:9).

VERSE 17

"Yahweh, Thou hast heard the desire of the humble" – The word "humble" can be rendered *meek*. The desire of the meek is for the fulfilment of the Divine purpose and promise (Matt. 5:5). This will be satisfied in the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

"Thou wilt prepare their heart, Thou will cause Thine ear to hear" – The margin gives "prepare" as *establish*. This shall be done when the Kingdom is established, and the prayers of saints thus find their fulfilment. Consider how the prayers of Rev. 6:10 will then be fulfilled: "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth." This is a reference to the "man of the earth" of the next verse.

VERSE 18

"To judge the fatherless and the oppressed" – The "fatherless" are those who have come "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Rev. 5:9), and given themselves to Christ (see Matt. 19:20). They will be judged and vindicated in the day of Christ's coming (Ps. 68:5).

"That the man of the earth may no more oppress" – The margin supplies the word *terrify*. The Hebrew is *arats* and signifies to *awe, dread, harass, or terrorise*. The "man of the earth" finds reference in "the god of the earth" of Rev. 11:4. This is the lawless one of 2 Thess. 2:8: "whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and

shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." This "man of the earth" has terrorised the saints in the past so that at the epoch of the judgment of Babylon the Great, it will be found that "in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth" (Rev. 18:24). The destruction of this system will bring to an end the power of its "false prophet" to terrify. He is described as being "of the earth" on the principle set forth by the Lord to those

who opposed him: "Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world" (John 8:23). Those "from beneath" are "of the earth earthy" (John 3:31) and thus "earthly, sensual, devilish" (James 3:15). In the days of David, Saul and Absalom manifested these characteristics, and therefore foreshadowed the man of the earth of the Apocalypse, to be destroyed at the coming of the Lord.

— HPM.

An Alphabet Of Bible Characters

QUARTUS — A BROTHER

"Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a Brother" — Romans 16:23

Beyond knowing that Quartus was a christian in Corinth who sent greetings to the Ecclesia in Rome, God has not revealed further information about our character this month. Yet, as I read this fragment in Romans 16, my first reaction was — what a splendid epitaph for any individual! Those words *A Brother*, not only place Brother Quartus in the same family circle into which we have been called, they emphasise the gulf between the brotherly relationship common to all flesh, and that relationship between those who have been born again, not by blood, but of God.

That would seem to be the message God is conveying from the lips of our Brother now asleep in Corinth.

Like Abel, Quartus still speaks, and the keynote of his words are about the much misunderstood subject of fleshly relationships. How

often have we heard the claim that "God is our Father, and all men are brethren." The second statement is true, but the first is a tragic testimony of ignorance of the Word.

The Gospel Call To Family Life

Our first parents were special subjects of a creation by God, and from them descended all families and races of mankind. They all inherited the death sentence. Father and Mother, Brother and Sister — all were borne along the sad river of death that flows continuously.

With the exception of Christ, the Divine verdict still holds: "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him, that he should still live for ever, and not see corruption" (Ps. 49:7-9). It is no accident that Genesis opens with the tragedy of Cain and Abel. Surely God is

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To Summarise

In the days of Israel's glory, when the nation comprised the Kingdom of God, the cubit of the people equalled the Royal Cubit of the nations, whilst the Royal Cubit of Israel was larger again. This was based upon the size of barley grain, the sheaf of which was waved immediately following Passover. The Hebrew scholar Maimonides suggests that the larger cubits were based upon an extra barley grain in the basic measure of the fingerbreadth, thus comprising seven grains instead of the usual six.

Working on this basis, we can arrive at a Royal Cubit of Israel, that is almost exactly the twenty-four inches suggested by Brother Sulley in his calculations. Therefore, to calculate the size of the Royal Cubit of Israel, we take the following three steps:

Step One: Ascertain the number of barley grains in a normal cubit.

6 Barley grains = 1 fingerbreadth;
4 Fingerbreadths = 1 handbreadth (palm)
6 Handbreadths = 1 Cubit
Hence 1 cubit = 144 Barley grains –
(6 X 4 X 6).

Step Two: Ascertain the size of one barley grain.

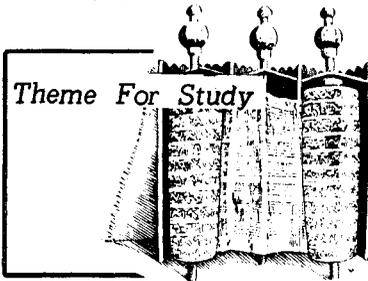
1 normal cubit = 17.7 inches;
1 normal cubit = 144 barley grains;
1 barley grain = 17.7 –
144 = 0.122 inches

Step Three: Ascertain the size of the great (Royal) cubit of Israel.

1 great cubit = 196 barley grains
(based on 6 grains per finger and 7 handbreadths per cubit thus $7 \times 4 \times 7 = 196$);
1 great cubit = 196×0.122 inches =
23.912 inches.

From this we conclude, that Brother Sulley's calculations, based upon a "great cubit" of 24 inches, are accurate, and therefore show the true size and grandeur of the Temple of the future age. In our next article we shall supply further evidence, and the spiritual lessons to be derived therefrom.

– S. Snow (Vic.).



Psalm 11

YAHWEH: A REFUGE FOR THE RIGHTEOUS

When faith is harnessed to courage it can conquer fear. That is the theme of this Psalm. The Psalmist is surrounded by faint-hearted friends whose fear-governed counsel is well calculated to undermine his confidence. Obsessed by the strength of the opposition, they urge upon him to flee; but from his vantage-point of faith, he responds with expressions of confidence in Yahweh. Like Elishah at Dotham, he sees the invisible, and proclaims his confidence in ultimate victory. Seeking the refuge of Yahweh, he finds in it faith's answer to fear.

Historical Background

The inscription claims David as the author. He is in deadly peril; there is no human way to extricate him from the attacks of powerful enemies seeking his destruction. Faint-hearted friends counsel flight; but he indignantly rejects the suggestion on the grounds that he has sought the refuge of Yahweh, and is confident of His protection.

He recognises the right of Yahweh to try the righteous, and expresses his conviction that as God loveth righteousness, it will ultimately prevail.

To what point in David's life do such circumstances apply? Probably when he was in the court of Saul shortly after his victory over Goliath. Saul's jealousy was aroused against him, so that he determined to murder him. David, sensing the situation, saw the need to walk circumspectly before him. The record states that he "behaved himself wisely in all his ways, and Yahweh was with him" (1 Sam. 18:14). The statement is significant. It teaches that we cannot ignore circumstances, even though our trust is in God. We must do what we can, whilst leaning upon Him, and seeking the refuge He provides.

The context reveals that David was in considerable danger at the time. But the time was not ripe for flight, and David remained, sensing the divine guidance, and overshadowing care, in his life. He manifested vigilance in outlook, and faith, courage and wisdom in action (see Vv. 15,16,30). Yahweh was with him, and proved a refuge, delivering him from the attacks of Saul pending the time for flight.

Prophetical Foreshadowing

These circumstances in the life of the Beloved, foreshadowed similar conditions in the experiences of the Lord. There were those who sought to sway him from the path laid down for him by his Father. His own family, on several occasions, tried to divert him from his course of action. Even the disciples, unconsciously, acted the part of faint-hearted friends. They urged upon him once to flee from danger when it was necessary for him to brave the foe (John 11:7-10, 16). On another occasion, when he explained to them what treatment awaited him in Jerusalem, Peter declared:

"Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee" (Matt. 16:22).

In most cases, it is judicious and proper to avoid trouble; in other circumstances it should be boldly faced in faith. When the latter applies, let those of faith seek the refuge of Yahweh: they will not do so in vain. Peter's counsel, if followed, would have destroyed the very foundations upon which the ministry of the Lord rested. The Lord faced up to his problems in faith.

Divine Title

The Psalm declares: "The righteous Yahweh loveth righteousness" (v. 7). This statement emphasises the character of Yahweh: a feature that is exhibited in the sacrifice of the Lord. The nature of his death and resurrection underlined the "righteousness of God" as Paul taught when setting forth the principles of the atonement (Rom. 3:25-26). But, more: the manner in which Yahweh treats us is always righteous even though we may experience trouble and distress.

Subscription

The inscription proclaims the Psalm to be *of David*, or the Beloved. The subscription (shown in the A.V. at the head of Psalm 12) dedicates it to the *chief musician upon Sheminith*.

We have discussed the reference to "the chief musician" previously. Primarily, he was one set over all the musical arrangements of the Temple, and therefore responsible for the harmony that resulted therefrom. But, as a title, it also points to the Lord Jesus, as one who will "sing" the Psalms dedicated to him as such.

The Jews gave the title a Messianic application, and in doing so they were undoubtedly right.

The reference to *Sheminith* is significant. The word signifies the *eighth*, and therefore points to the perfection suggested by this number. Israelites were circumcised on the eighth day, from whence the number came to represent a true Israelite. Again, in music, eight is the number of an octave, providing true harmony, for notes on a musical instrument struck an octave apart invariably harmonise.

There is harmony between Yahweh and true Israelites: those who really grace the covenant they have espoused. This Psalm speaks of the harmony that existed between the Beloved and Yahweh.

Psalm five has the same subscription, and we refer to our comments when expounding that Psalm (see *Logos* vol. 41, p. 116, 117).

Construction

The Psalm before us follows naturally upon the previous one. That one, prophetically, set forth the character and ultimate destruction

of the man of the earth. This one shows that in the meantime, the righteous will be oppressed by such. Nevertheless, they should not give way to fear, but ever see before them the overshadowing presence of Yahweh, and always seek the refuge that He provides.

The "man of the earth," foreshadowed the papacy. It has been known for its persecution of the righteous, but to such the encouraging words of the Apocalypse have been given:

"He that leadeth into captivity (as the Papacy was doing) shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints" (Rev. 13:10).

This expresses the theme of Psalm 11, with the dominant line contained in v. 1:

In Yahweh put I my trust.

It is divided into two sections:

1. The suggestions of faint-hearted friends - vv. 1-3;
2. The response of faith - vv. 4-7.



1. The Suggestions Of Faint-Hearted Friends - Vv. 1-3.

Lacking faith in Yahweh they counsel flight, but their recommendation is indignantly rejected by David.

VERSE 1

"In Yahweh put I my trust" - This can be rendered in the past tense: "In Yahweh have I taken refuge." The statement is in response to the advice of some who urged flight upon David. He answers that he is not unmindful of his

danger, but had taken appropriate steps by placing his case in the hands of Yahweh. To retreat from that stand now, would be evidence of lack of faith.

"How say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain" – This was the advice given to David in circumstances of danger. Sometimes flight is necessary, and to be commended (see Matt. 10:23); on other occasions it is evidence of lack of faith. Circumstances dictate what action should be taken. Later, David had to flee, but for the moment, in the court of the king, he had to brave the growing hostility of Saul.

VERSE 2

"For lo, the wicked bend their bow" – This verse continues the faith-destroying observations of David's faint-hearted friends. Instead of strengthening him in his resolve, and encouraging him in his faith, they point to the growing opposition of the wicked, who had been discussing plans for his destruction.

"They make ready their arrow upon the string" – Similar language is used figuratively for slander – Ps. 64:3-4; Jer. 9:3. There were those in the court of Saul who cunningly worked upon the feelings of the king in his jealous hatred of David, by imputing wrong motives to the latter, and claiming that he was out to destroy the king (1 Sam. 24:9).

"That they may privily shoot at the upright in heart" – This is a reference to the underhanded methods adopted by David's scoundreling enemies to encompass his destruction.

VERSE 3

"If the foundations be destroyed" – This is still the language of David's faint-hearted friends. They referred to the foundations of righteousness upon which a true society should be built (cp. Ps. 85:5; Ezek. 30:4), and claimed that these were so destroyed in Israel at the time, that no basis remained for the vindication of righteousness. Therefore, they urged, David should flee, lest he be destroyed.

"What can the righteous do?" – In answer to this question, cowardly advisers counselled flight; the courageous David suggested that the righteous should strengthen their faith in Yahweh!

2. The Response Of Faith – Vv. 4-7.

David's friends claimed that the foundations of society were destroyed, and that no basis remained for the vindication of faith; David responded by setting forth the true foundations of faith, and proclaiming his confidence in ultimate vindication. Faint-hearted faithlessness judged the situation by external appearances; faith penetrated to the invisible realities. See Col. 3:1; 2 Cor. 4:18; Heb. 11:27.

VERSE 4

"Yahweh is in his holy temple" – The reference is to His dwelling place in heaven (Isa. 66:1). Lifted up high above all human considerations, Yahweh is in a position to see all.

"Yahweh's throne is in heaven" – As an omnipotent King, He is competent to correct the situation; for He has sufficient power to enforce His will (Ps. 89:18; 95:31).

"His eyes behold, His eyelids try the children of men" – Yahweh is not only omnipotent, He is also omniscient. See the confidence of the Psalmist – (Ps. 9:4; 10:14; 14:2; 102:19-21. Recognising the reality of God, he consciously lived in his presence. The expression *His eyelids try* is significant. When a person ponders a matter, to the exclusion of all else, his eyelids narrow. This, particularly, is the case in times of anger, when concentration is centred upon the object of it, and all other considerations are shut out from the mind. The verb *try* is *bachan* in Hebrew, and signifies *to test* especially in regard to metals. The use of this word in such a context is significant. It teaches that the incidence of trouble and trial should not be taken as indicative of Yahweh's indifference towards His saints but the very reverse. In fact, He chastens those whom He loves (Heb. 12:5-11), so that even His son "learned obedience" through suffering. The Psalmist's answer to the faithless counsel of his friends, is that as Yahweh is both omniscient and omnipotent, He knew of his condition and had the power to correct it. The reason why relief was not immediately given was because he was being put to the test, and he was determined to react accordingly.

VERSE 5

"Yahweh trieth the righteous" – The word is again *bachan*. The meta-

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phor is taken from the refining of gold which comes out all the purer for being subjected to fire. The design of trial is to improve the object of it. The Psalmist kept that in mind, and found a strength to rise above his problems; he recognised the need of such if his character were to be fitted for the Kingdom, and therefore submitted to discipline in faith. Paul did likewise because he had the faith to discern the purpose of tribulation and trial (see Rom. 5:1-3). Let us learn the lesson and we will be strengthened to overcome in all circumstances.

“But the wicked and him that loveth violence His soul hateth” – Because Yahweh hates the wicked, He does not go to the trouble of trying them with the object of purifying them (see Ps. 73:1-17; Rev. 3:16-19). The prosperity of the wicked is no evidence of Yahweh’s blessing, but rather of His indifference towards them. Let us rejoice that He is sufficiently interested in our welfare to take the trouble to discipline us! That is the teaching of the Psalm.

VERSE 6

“Upon the wicked He shall rain snares” – The Hebrew is *pachim* and signifies *slings*. It implies some undefined evil that catches and holds evil-doers, and so brings them low. The lot of the wicked, therefore, is perilous in the extreme. The Lord described them as being caught in a “falling trap,” in “a snare” (Luke 21:35).

“Fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest shall be the portion of their cup” – They shall be suddenly and unexpectedly overthrown as was Sodom by “fire and brimstone.” In fact, the destruction

of Sodom is set forth as “an example” of the overthrow of the wicked (Jude 7). In David’s own experience, he was saved by divine intervention (Ps. 18:3-15), whilst Saul and all with him were overthrown. Thus “the portion of his cup” (see Ps. 23:5) is contrasted with that of the wicked (Ps. 75:8), as the Psalm before us observes.

VERSE 7

“For the righteous Yahweh loveth righteousness” – The character of Yahweh should be reflected in those of His children. As He loveth righteousness, so those who seek His refuge can confidently anticipate that all will be done in righteousness ultimately, for it shall form the basis of His care and judgment.

“His countenance doth behold the upright” – If we take the A.V., the line suggests that His face lights up upon the righteous with joy and pleasure. See Num. 6:25; Ps. 4:6; 16:11; 44:3. The Hebrew, however, is: *The upright will behold His face*. This takes hold of the promise of the Lord: “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God” (Matt. 5:8). They will see Him manifested in His son, the Lord Jesus, soon to be revealed as Judge and Saviour in the earth.

“To the chief Muscian upon Shem-inith” – These words, given as portion of the Inscription to Psalm 12 in the A.V., actually form the subscription to the Psalm before us.

It suggests the harmony, the peace, that exists between Yahweh and the righteous, even though the latter are subjected to trouble as David was on this occasion.

H.P.M.

GOD MANIFESTATION

When the supremacy of the Father is recognised as “the Head of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:3), and the excellency of Christ is admitted in his having proceeded forth and come from God (John 16:28), and become “the head of man” (1 Cor. 11:3), having all power in heaven and earth, and to whom every knee must bow, and every tongue confess (Matt. 28:18; Phil. 2:10), enough is conceded to let us work together in proclaiming the remission of sins in his name, and to unite in looking for the blessed hope of his appearing unto salvation. If these concessions are allied with the declaration that Christ is a “mere man,” we admit they are spoiled. On the other hand, let us take care that we employ, on the other side of the question, no equally unscriptural and misleading definition.

R.R.

Theme For Study



Psalm 12

YAHWEH: A REFUGE FROM HUMAN TREACHERY

In Psalm 11, David is found refusing the faint-hearted counsel of friends of little faith who were urging upon him to withdraw from the attacks of his enemies. In this Psalm he turns to Yahweh in prayer, bearing up before Him the attacks of his enemies, whilst seeking Divine strength, and expressing His confidence in the Divine goodness.

The Psalm before us is described as *A Psalm of David*, that is a Psalm of the *Beloved*. The word "psalm" is *Mizmowr* from *Zamar*, a *striking*, hence a poem set to music on a percussion instrument, the notes being obtained through plucking the strings, or parts, of the musical instrument.

It is well calculated to pluck at the strings of the heart (Eph. 5:19), to bring us more closely into communion with David, with Christ and with God.

Historical Background

It was written at a time when David had been thoroughly disillusioned by the treacherous attitude of some upon whom he may have rested. Not only were there those in the court of Saul who were poisoning the mind of the king against him (cp. 1 Sam. 26:19), but others upon whom David had every right to expect help, had proved completely unreliable under trial.

At personal risk, he had delivered the men of Keilah from an attack of the Philistines, but they repaid him by offering to deliver him up to Saul (1 Sam. 23:1-5, 11-12); the

Ziphites, men of David's own tribe, deliberately went out of their way to betray him to the King (1 Sam. 23:19). No wonder that David uttered the complaint to God, in Whom he had complete trust:

*Help Yahweh; for the godly man ceaseth;
For the faithful fail from among the
children of man.*

David's experiences of treachery and betrayal have been the lot of other men and women of faith throughout the ages, illustrating the individual need to "rest upon Yahweh" on all occasions, and in all circumstances. Even of the Lord Jesus, concerning whom it is said that "he went about doing good, and healing," it is also recorded: "They hated him without a cause."

Such experiences are a test of faith. What is a person of faith to do in the face of unfair criticism, gross betrayal of confidence, or unscrupulous attack?

David provides the example: commune with Yahweh, pour out your heart unto Him, lean heavily upon His strength.

Prophetic Foreshadowing

The circumstances that David found himself in certainly fore-

shadowed those of the Lord. Christ, like David, endured the "contradiction of sinners against himself" (Heb. 12:3). He was maligned, unfairly criticised, falsely accused, and ridiculed. He endured backbiting and unscrupulous attack. And so successful were his enemies, that they almost succeeded in swaying his disciples. The statement declares: "they forsook him and fled." But, as the Lord previously had told them, his confidence in the future would not be shaken by their impending defection, he would not be left alone even though they fled from him, for the Father would be with him (John 16:33).

Like David, the Lord derived strength from his close communion with his Father, and this enabled him to successfully complete his mission, providing us with an example and an incentive.

The circumstances of David that gave rise to this Psalm, therefore, typify those of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Beloved of Yahweh, as he moved among men.

The situation was extremely difficult. Loyal members of the covenant people were hard to find. Basic virtues such as faith were no longer powerfully in evidence. Indeed, the state of things was so bad as to extract from the Psalmist the passionate cry: "Save Yahweh!" He, alone, was adequate to help in such a situation.

Dominant Verse

The dominant verse of the Psalm is expressed in the response of Yahweh to the prayer of His servant (v. 5):

*"For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy,
Now will I arise," saith Yahweh.*

As a contrast to the pride of

those who set out to prevail with their lips, there is recalled the constant exhortation of Scripture that Yahweh will never leave those who put their trust in Him. Though, for a time, wickedness may seem to prevail, and tongues will wag against the righteous, their ultimate vindication at the hands of the Judge of the heavens, is never a matter of doubt. Similar expressions are found elsewhere in Scripture (cp. Isa. 3:14-15; Amos 8:4-7), and are recorded that the oppressed in every age, may draw upon and be encouraged by them.

Dominant Divine Title

What particular aspect of the divine character is revealed by this Psalm? Reference is made only to Yahweh, and not to any other specific name or title. But the Psalm, as a whole, does reveal God in a special relationship, and one to which Jeremiah the prophet has appended a title. In a chapter that outlines the judgment that shall be poured out upon Babylon, and the deliverance that shall be granted the people of Israel, the prophet declares: "For Yahweh El of Recompenses shall surely requite" (Jer. 51:56). According to the Companion Bible the Hebrew is better expressed as "*El of Recompenses, Yahweh shall surely requite.*"

The word "Recompenses" is *Gemuloth* in Hebrew, a plural word in the feminine gender. It comes from a root *gamal*, signifying *to benefit, to help, or to punish*. It means generally to treat with a person, either good or ill.

The Psalm is expressive of this dual character of Yahweh, who treats with good or ill the members of His multitudinous bride (Isa. 54:5), in order that she might be

purified and perfected (cp. Eph. 5:25-26). Therefore, there is both comfort and warning in the Psalm. There is comfort for those who endure the mocking taunts of others in that if a man "for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully" as did Christ, his ultimate vindication is not in doubt (1 Pet. 2:19-25). On the other hand, if a man attempts to over-ride the righteous by false use of the tongue, he will suffer the result of his folly. To that end *El of Recompenses* carefully considers the reaction of the members of his flock to the circumstances into which He brings them.

The Psalm is divided into two main sections:

1. A Plea for Help – Vv. 1-4;
2. A Proclamation of Confidence in Yahweh's Ability to Save – Vv. 5-8.

These two sections are, themselves, divisible into two sub-sections. The first section can be subdivided:

- (a) A description of prevailing faithlessness, hypocrisy and treachery – Vv. 1-2;
- (b) A statement that all insolent braggards who seek to prevail by mere talk shall be cut off – Vv. 3-4;

The second section can be subdivided:

- (a) The answer of Yahweh and its value in the eyes of the Psalmist – Vv. 5-6;
- (b) His Confidence in Yahweh's Protection – Vv. 7-8.



1. A Prayer for Help – Vv. 1-4.

In Psalm 11, David's faint-hearted

friends enquired, "If the foundations be destroyed (by the wicked), what can the righteous do?" The answer is to strengthen themselves in Yahweh. That is the intent of this present prayer-Psalm of David.

(a) Amid Faithlessness, Hypocrisy and Treachery – Vv. 1-2.

First the Psalmist gives expression to his need in view of prevailing hypocrisy.

VERSE 1

"Help Yahweh; for the godly man ceaseth" – This is better rendered as *Save!* (see mg.). The Psalmist seeks Yahweh's salvation in his difficult situation, because there is no other means of help. The picture drawn is one of darkness and despondency. Loyal members of the covenant people are hard to find. In the midst of prevailing faithlessness, and from the depths of depression, David reaches up to his God, and finds help, strength and comfort. Very often the moment of deepest sorrow and dismay, and even that of great weakness, as it may appear in the view of our contemporaries, can be the moment of greatest strength if we seek God's help in prayer.

David's complaint was that the *godly man ceaseth*. Such men were conspicuous by their absence in the midst of Israel at the time. The word is *chasid*, and signifies "the practise of dutiful love towards God or fellowman." There were plenty who mouthed the name of Yahweh; who identified themselves with the covenants of promise and the chosen people; but comparatively few who practised what they professed. It is that minority whom Yahweh hath "set aside for Himself" (Ps. 4:3), and whom He favours (Ps. 32:6). But as David fled from Saul, and experienced the treachery of those to whom he had extended the arm of help, it seemed as if those who practised the principles they professed were in such a minority as to sink unnoticed among the thousands of Israel.

"For the faithful fail from among the children of men" – The R.V. mg. renders this: *faithfulness faileth*. The profession of it is in evidence; but not its practise.

VERSE 2

"They speak vanity every one with his neighbour" – To speak vanity is to speak speciously, with no substance in

what is uttered. The idiom of the language would suggest the word *falsehood* instead of *vanity*.

"With flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak" – The flattering lips express the thoughts of a double heart: one that thinks one thing and utters another. Such vacillation is useless in time of war, for it creates uncertainty, and influences followers to break rank (see 1 Chron. 12:33,38 and compare with 1 Thess. 5:14 mg; 2 Thess. 3:6).

(b) All Insolent Braggards Who Seek To Prevail By Their Talk Shall Be Cut Off – Vv. 3-4.

It is impossible for a just God to tolerate such hypocrisy and double talking.

VERSE 3

"Yahweh shall cut off all flattering lips" – The Hebrew is *lips of smoothness*, hypocritical lips which camouflage the state of the speaker's heart; lips such as are described in Psalm 55:21:

"The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart; His words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords."

The Lord warned: "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matt. 12:36). Hypocritical talk can be categorised as "idle words."

"And the tongue that speaketh proud things" – Boastful, arrogant tongues, such as were speaking against David at the time, and attacked Christ in the day of his ministry.

VERSE 4

"Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail" – They boast with the tongue that they will do mighty things, but their warfare is limited to their talk. See 1 Kings 20:11; James 3:5-13.

"Our lips are our own" – Having been given the power of speech, they use it entirely in their own service. But we have a responsibility to use the faculties that God has given us to His glory (1 Pet. 4:11). Note Paul's exhortation: "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield . . . your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Rom. 6:13). This demands the discipline of all the members of our body, and their dedication to the service of Christ.

"Who is lord over us?" – We are accountable to nobody but ourselves; we are at liberty to serve self to the exclusion of all else. That is the thought of those who rule by the tongue only.

2. A Proclamation of Confidence in Yahweh's Ability to Save – Vv. 5-8.

Having described the boastful arrogance of those who aim to succeed by the power of the tongue, the Psalmist now represents Yahweh as replying. What he says is a summary of God's intentions, rather than a record of actual words spoken by Him at this time. David expresses his utmost confidence in the vindication of Yahweh's words. This section of the Psalm can be divided into two sub-sections.

(a) The Answer of Yahweh and Its Value in the Eyes of the Psalmist – Vv. 5-6.

Though, for a time, the boastful may prevail in their talk, they will ultimately be put down by Yahweh, Whose words will prove to be true and powerful.

VERSE 5

"For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy" – The "poor" are not necessarily those who lack wealth, but those who are oppressed. The word is *any* and signifies the *depressed*, either in mind or circumstances. Yahweh moved on behalf of such in Egypt in the days of Moses, and "made Himself an everlasting Name" by so doing (Isa. 63:12). He did so again in the case of David, again in the case of the Lord, and will yet manifest Himself similarly in the future (Matt. 5:3).

"Now will I arise, saith Yahweh" – See Ps. 82:8; 94:16; Isa. 33:10. This is the desire of saints of every age.

"I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him" – This is an important line in the Psalm which is apparently obscured by the A.V. Rotherham, in a footnote, quotes Gesenius in support of altering it to: "I will set in safety he that panteth for it." Leupold renders: "I will set in safety he who so eagerly pants for it." Pants for what? The manifestation of Yahweh's power against the wicked. The idea is expressed by Paul thus: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me

only, but unto all them also *that love his appearing*" (2 Tim. 4:8). Both the Psalmist and the Apostle thus refer to the ardent desire of the righteous for the manifestation of Yahweh in the earth in judgment, that His name may be vindicated.

VERSE 6

"The words of Yahweh are pure words" – Complete confidence can be placed in them, in contrast to the specious, hypocritical words of those speaking with "a double heart" (Ct. Jer. 6:28-30).

"As silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times" – Silver is the metal of redemption, and the words of Yahweh are likened to silver because they set forth the way of salvation. Silver was purified in a smelter in the ground, subjected to intense heat. To speak of it being purified seven times is to refer to the very purest of the precious metal. The Psalmist therefore means that the most searching test to which the word of Yahweh can be subjected will reveal that it is true and pure. Not so the lies and flattering vanities of those who "speak proud things."

(b) His Confidence in Yahweh's Protection – Vv. 7-8.

David expresses every confidence in the purpose of Yahweh, even though, for the time being, the righteous are in a small minority.

VERSE 7

"Thou shalt keep them, O Yahweh" – The idea is not so much to preserve (that

comes in the next line, but to keep them under His vigilance. Yahweh's eye is ever upon the righteous, and nothing can happen to them without His knowledge. See the Lord's words of reassurance to the Apostles – Matt. 10:29-31.

"Thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever" – The Scriptures speak of two "generations" or classes: the generation of the wicked, and the generation of the righteous (see Ps. 14:5; and cp. with Prov. 30:11-14; Matt. 17:17). The latter are preserved from the attacks of the former, and are moulded for the kingdom, the *olam*, or hidden period, here rendered "ever."

VERSE 8

"The wicked walk on every side" – For the time being, the wicked stalk confidently and arrogantly on their way, impervious to the judgment of Yahweh that will ultimately overtake them.

"When the vilest men are exalted" – The brazen wickedness is permitted whilst vile men are exalted; but the confidence of the Psalmist was that this state of things will be brought to an end, and ultimately Yahweh will be exalted throughout the earth (Num. 14:21). For that day the Psalmist waited, and in view of it, and in confidence of its coming, he was prepared to endure the oppressions of wicked men. He left judgment in the hands of Yahweh, confident that by so doing, his ultimate vindication was sure beyond doubt. Let us manifest his same attitude of faith in this our day of opportunity.

– HPM.

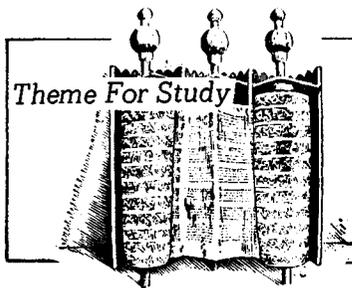
LOGOS TOUR OF BIBLE LANDS

THYATIRA: Gateway to Pergamos

From Sardis we moved down a pleasant road, which cut through a plain given over to agriculture. The sky had clouded over, and it began to sprinkle with rain. In the dis-



tance, were dark masses of mountains, brooding over the landscape; on the road we passed men riding



PSALM 13

Yearning For Yahweh's Help

This Psalm provides the antidote to depression and despondency. It commences on a note of despair (vv. 1-2), moves on to an expression of desire (vv. 3-4), and concludes with a triumphant proclamation of deliverance (vv. 5-6). It is brief, helpful, instructive. It was composed in circumstances of suffering, and so expresses in word that which many must feel in life. Its message may be summed up in the words of Isaiah: "Who is among you that feareth Yahweh, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of Yahweh, and stay upon his God" (Isa. 50:10).

Historical Background

This Psalm is inscribed as *A Psalm of David*, the significance of which title, we considered last month (see. p. 115). It was obviously written at a time of deep depression when David's patience and faith were taxed to the utmost, and in the bitterness of his experience, he was induced to lift up his voice in the almost despairing cry of *How long!*

From the reference to his "enemy" (v. 4), it seems as though the prayer was uttered towards the end of Saul's persecution of David. Such a time is suggested in 1 Samuel 27, 30. The treachery the men of Keilah and Ziph (1 Sam. 23:1-12, 19) which occasioned the composition of Psalm 12, was followed by the death of Samuel (1 Sam. 25:1), and further treachery on the part of the Ziphites (1 Sam. 26:1). On this occasion, David caught Saul off-guard, and was urged by Abishai to

slay him (1 Sam. 26:8). But David refused on the ground that Saul was Yahweh's anointed; and out of respect for His God, he refused to put forth his hand to deliver himself of such an enemy as that. There was temporary reconciliation between David and Saul, but obviously such a state could not last. David began to tire under the constant pressure. The next fit of pique on the part of Saul, and his life again would be endangered. Under such circumstances, and in the face of such treachery as he had experienced, whom could he trust?

David was assailed by depression which seriously challenged his faith:

"David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul; there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel" (1 Sam. 27:1).

This was among the plans devised by David at the time (cp. Ps.

13:2), as he wondered "how long" he must put up with such circumstances.

But worse was to follow. His sojourn among the Philistines was fraught with even greater trouble, which came to a climax when Achish forced him to return from the impending battle with the Israelites, David made his way back to Ziklag, only to find that another enemy had attacked the city and taken captive the families of David and his followers.

This was David's darkest hour. He was "greatly distressed," so that his very followers threatened to stone him (1 Sam. 30:6). They considered that their wives and children had been destroyed or were beyond help. But at that moment of utter depression, when all seemed lost, and the future was dark with foreboding, "David encouraged himself in Yahweh his God" (v. 4—compare these words with v. 3 of the Psalm). Surely, in that moment of deepest gloom, his prayer would have ascended to Yahweh: How long?

The answer came quickly. Within days, David, whose state seemingly had never been more hopeless, was elevated to the throne, to receive the loyal allegiance of his people! Surely this is an incident, that teaches the folly of giving way to despair, and the virtue of applying Christ's exhortation in all circumstances: "men ought always to pray and not to faint" (Luke 18:1).

Does not this reveal an element of weakness in the character of this great man; a time when "fear of man brought a snare" (Prov. 29:25)? Is this consistent in a "man after God's own heart?" Let us remember that the characters recorded in

the Word are those of real men with shortcomings common to flesh, but whose faith generally enabled them to overcome the problems that assailed them. Indeed, the recording of such incidents in the Word, is a source of comfort and encouragement to all who are similarly afflicted, exhorting them never to be utterly cast down by temporary failures, but to use the means that great men of the past have done to rise again. Certainly, such incidents provide a warning against those who condemn others for temporary lapses, for in so doing, they actually stand in judgment upon such as David. Indeed, three passages of the New Testament urge upon us the attitude to be adopted:

(1)—"Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand" (Rom. 14:4).

(2)—"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1).

(3)—"Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity" (Heb. 5:2).

Meanwhile, David's desire and plea for Divine intervention, foreshadowed the feelings of the Lord who declared: "But I have a baptism to be baptised with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished" (Luke 12:50). He waited the time of deliverance, that he might be in a position to help his brethren, far more than he was able to do in the midst of trial and anxiety.

Dominant Expression

This is surely the exclamation, *How long!* It is repeated four times in the first two verses, and is a cry re-echoed by saints throughout the ages. In Rev. 6:10 they are repre-

sented as praying:

"How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth."

This expresses the spirit of the Psalm before us.

Dominant Divine Title

Though the Psalmist uses the Divine name, the real title suggested by his experiences, though not expressed in this short but fervent prayer, is that which is used in the verse quoted above (Rev. 6:10). The word "Lord" as there used is *Despotes* in Greek, and signifies one with absolute power. It is the title given to an owner, ruler, master, lord or king, and is expressive of one exercising despotic power over his subjects. The title is used for God: Luke 2:29; Rev. 6:10; for Christ: 2 Pet. 2:1; Jude 4; and for slave-owning masters: 1 Tim. 6:1-2; 2 Tim. 2:21; Tit. 2:9; 1 Pet. 2:18. Peter used it to address the Father, after having experienced His help in the face of bitter persecution (Acts 4:24). It is the prevailing thought of the Psalm before us. David prayed to One Whom he recognised exercised absolute power, and would help him in his distress, if His wisdom dictated the need to do so.



**VERSE BY
VERSE
NOTES**

The Psalm is divided into three parts:

- (1)—Despair: A Lament – "How long?" – vv. 1-2.
- (2)—Desire: An Appeal – "Help me!" – vv. 3-4.
- (3)—Deliverance: A Declaration of faith – "I will sing" – vv. 5-6.

1. Despair: A Lament – "How Long?" – vv. 1-2.

The Psalmist is cast down by depression. He pours out his heart in prayer unto Yahweh, but seemingly without response. In his despair, he enquires, "How long?"

VERSE 1

"How long wilt thou forget me, O Yahweh? for ever?" – Does Yahweh forget his servants? He does not. The word *shakach* signifies to mislay, to be oblivious of from want of memory or attention, and therefore to be indifferent to an appeal. Sometimes Yahweh permits His servants to be tried, thus developing their characters, and giving them opportunity to demonstrate their fidelity to Him in the face of difficulty. The Psalmist was prepared to do that, but desired to know the duration of such trial. Was it to be "for ever?" The word "ever" is *netsach*, and though it does suggest remoteness, also implies termination. The Psalmist has not given himself entirely over to despair; for faith teaches him that the period in which Yahweh will remain silent is terminable. Thus faith fights and conquers depression and despair, whilst pleading, *How long?* The man of God ever realises that the seeming silence of Yahweh is limited.

"How long wilt Thou hide Thy face from me" – To "hide the face" in this context is to withhold blessings. It is in contrast to Yahweh "making His face to shine" upon His people, and "being gracious" unto them (Num. 6:25). Unanswered prayer is like light withdrawn.

VERSE 2

How long shall I take counsel in my soul" – The word "counsel" is *etsah*, and signifies "to devise plans." But human devising in the absence of divine blessing is only frustrating, and cannot bring the desired result. See Ps. 127.

"Having sorrow in my heart daily" – The period of waiting has been filled with devising plans for deliverance. This has been done of a night, with the objective of putting them into operation the next day. But the plans of the night fail, and heartfelt sorrow is the daily experience of the Psalmist.

2. Desire: An Appeal – Help me! – vv. 3-4.

In the face of disappointment and

frustration, what is the man of faith to do? He must continue to pray and not to faint (Luke 18:1-8). That was the example that David set in his distress (cp. 1 Sam. 30:6).

VERSE 3

"Consider and hear me, O Yahweh my God" — David pleads with Yahweh to look upon his state, and give answer to his prayer. The word "hear" is *anah*, and signifies to *take heed, to respond, to speak*. The R.V. renders it as *answer me*. "Look on my state and answer me!" is the urgent plea of the beloved.

"Lighten my eyes lest I sleep the sleep of death" — The danger of his situation is such that David despairs of life itself. When the vital powers grow dim, a Hebrew says his eyes are darkened. When he is refreshed and vitalised he says his eyes are "lightened" (cp. 1 Sam. 14:27, 29; Ezra 9:8). In distress, depression or illness, the eyes grow dim and lack lustre; in moments of joy, they light up in anticipation or pleasure. The Psalmist is at the extremity of his endurance, and is in danger of death. See 1 Samuel 30:3 for the suggested circumstances.

VERSE 4

"Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him" — David's death by any hand would be a triumph for Saul and his followers, and for the forces of error and evil.

"And those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved" — David is not praying merely for personal relief, but for the vindication of Yahweh's name. If he be overwhelmed, what of Yahweh's covenant? Because David had identified his cause with that of Yahweh, he could justly plead the intervention of God against his enemies, for they opposed the Divine purpose. However, as one writer has remarked: "We must be very sure that God's cause is ours before we can be sure that ours is His!"

3. Deliverance: A Declaration of Faith — "I will sing" — vv. 5-6.

As David turns to Yahweh, his confidence is restored. He recalls past deliverances, and on that basis anticipates more to come, enabling him to lift his voice in praise to his God.

VERSE 5

"But I have trusted in Thy mercy" — "Mercy" is an unfortunate word to use in

this context. David is not seeking forgiveness of sins; but rather pleading on the basis of Yahweh's *lovingkindness*, expressed by the word *chesed*, rendered "Mercy." The "lovingkindness" of Yahweh is bound up in His covenant, in which the Beloved had put his trust, and on the basis of which he now turns to Yahweh.

"My heart shall rejoice in Thy salvation" — As he turns his eyes from his immediate troubles to contemplate his privileged position before Yahweh, he is able to rejoice in spite of his difficulties. This is one of the great boons of the truth. It enabled Paul, though a prisoner in Rome, to urge upon his brethren to "rejoice in the Lord." To the Philippian brethren he wrote: "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice" (Phil. 4:4). To follow the Apostolic advice is to discover the antidote to depression, dismay and lack of faith. The one who "rejoices in the Lord" in the truest sense has his spiritual vision centred upon the "hope set before him," and though he may be assailed by frustrations, will never be utterly cast down.

VERSE 6

"I will sing unto Yahweh" — He expresses his determination to snap the bonds of depression that have held him tight, and to "rejoice in the Lord." His sighing will give place to singing; the darkness of his despair will be destroyed in the certainty of deliverance.

"Because He hath dealt bountifully with me" — His determination to raise his voice in singing is not the result of mere emotionalism, but rather the realisation and contemplation of benefits already received at the hand of Yahweh. He is determined to "count his blessings." God has helped him in the past, and surely that provides confidence to expect help in the present. Thus from the darkness of despair (vv. 1-2), the Psalmist finds life's stresses alleviated through prayer (vv. 3-4), and is finally able to rejoice in confidence that He Who has helped him in the past, overlooks him from the shadows, awaiting the appropriate time to help in the future.

"To the chief musician" — See our notes volume 41, page 60. This concluding dedication, prophetically refers the Psalm to the Messiah. Of him it is written: "For the joy set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the

throne of God" (Heb. 12:2). He has revealed the way, it is for us to walk in it. Paul, like David, discovered the great joy of so doing. He wrote: "We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts . . ." (Rom. 5:3-4). A close examination of Paul's words reveal that he was able to "glory in tribulation" because in his spiritual maturity, he discovered the purpose of trial, summed up in the word *knowing*. In his case, tribulation worked, or developed, patience, or endurance; and endurance worked experience. The word in the Greek (*dokimen*) signifies "full proof by trial." It is a word used to describe the testing and purifying of metal by fire. Tribulation tests our confidence in both God and ourselves. Let it remain unshaken under test, let us learn under test, receiving *full proof by trial*, that God lives and is not indifferent to our state, and "hope" will be deve-

loped. We will realise that He Who has helped us in the past, can and will help us in the future. It will demonstrate that we who have successfully endured trial then, are equipped to do so again. Above all else, it teaches that trials are limited in duration and though "sorrow may endure for a night, joy cometh in the morning." Therefore "hope maketh not ashamed." That was the experience of David. In the midst of bitter trial, he learned that Yahweh was not indifferent to his needs, and his faith was strengthened. He counted his blessings, recalled past deliverances, and by prayerful wrestling with his problem, at last succeeded in turning distress into determination, and sadness and sighing into songs of salvation and joy.

This beautiful little prayer-psalm can inspire us to do likewise. By all means let us pray *How long?* shall trial last, but never let us sink under the oppressive thought that it shall be forever.

--H.P.M.

Question
Answered



PAUL'S COMMENT

REGARDING THE HOLY SPIRIT

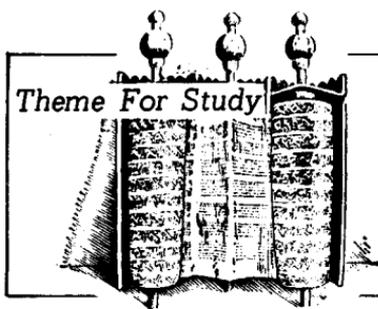
Reader K.M. (Qld) comments: "On p. 78 of The Holy Spirit and The Holy Spirit Gifts, the statement is made: 'His (Dr. Thomas) rendition of Acts 19:2 is supported by the Revised Version which renders the answer to the disciples as 'We did not so much as hear whether the Holy Spirit was given. . . .'"

"However, in The Herald of the Coming Age, April 1962, entitled The Doctrine of the Trinity Unscriptural, the comment is made on Acts 19:2: 'The disciples answered, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost (i.e. Spirit), so obviously, they had never heard of the doctrine of the Trinity.'

"On p. 80 of The Holy Spirit and The Holy Spirit Gifts, Dr. Thomas claims that the wording of the A.V. is incorrect. He describes it as 'a very incorrect rendering, and states that it should read: 'We have not so much heard as whether the Holy Spirit is received. . . .'"

"Would not the accepting of this rendition destroy the observation made in the Herald referred to above?"

"Whilst it is claimed that Dr. Thomas' rendition is supported by the R.V., other versions support the A.V. including RSV, Diaglott, Jerusalem Bible, J.B. Phillips, etc.



Psalm 14: YAHWEH'S RESPONSE to the Universal Corruption of Mankind

When a believer refuses to submit to the requirements of Yahweh, he is no better than an atheist. For him, there is "no God," and because of that he is "without hope in the world" (Eph. 2:12). It is this refusal to submit, on the part of people who should know better, that has resulted in the great calamities of the past, and will continue to do so until the coming of the Lord. But in spite of the atheistic contempt in which men of flesh hold the things of Yahweh, His purpose will ultimately prevail, so that finally, "Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad."

Historical Background

The inscription of Psalm 14 directs authorship to David. However, it is not given a title, as to whether it is to be treated as a Psalm or otherwise. For that we have to turn to Psalm 53, where this Psalm is almost exactly reproduced; and there described as *Maschil of David*.

The word *maschil* is from a Hebrew root *sachal* signifying to look at, scrutinise, look well into. Hence the noun suggests an *understanding developed from deep consideration* (see Prov. 13:15; Neh. 8:8). The Psalm provides an example of David contemplating the circumstances of his experiences in the light of the past; and pondering the lesson of them from the revelation of the Word.

This we all should do.

The first Psalm to bear the title of *Maschil* is Psalm 32, and it describes Yahweh as being the

channel of true understanding:

*"I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go;
I will guide thee with Mine eye.
Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule,
which have no understanding;
Whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle."*

Yahweh's Word can guide us into a proper assessment of the circumstances of life, unless we act the part of the fool and dispute the reality of His existence and influence.

However, the title *Maschil*, which is given to Psalm 53, is not given to the Psalm before us.

Why is that? And why are the expressions of Psalm 14 almost exactly reproduced in Psalm 53?

It seems that the composition before us represents David's private musings on the circumstances of life, and that of Psalm 53, a modification of them for public use.

In the Psalm before us, David recognises that the opposition he

received as king stemmed from people, like Saul, who manifested indifference to the requirements of Yahweh's covenant. They acted as though God had not spoken, and in so doing, treated the covenant as would an atheist. Their attitude reflected the general depravity of mankind as highlighted by the Flood, the confusion of tongues at Babel, and the overthrow of Sodom — incidents alluded to in Vv. 2-3. These tragedies of the past resulted from the folly of fools.

The foolish attitude of Saul was matched by that of the Jebusites. They mocked at the idea of David being able to take "the stronghold of Zion," though Yahweh had decreed it (see Psalm 132). Their irreverence towards the God of Israel, their contempt at Israel's assault upon their stronghold, emotionally moved David (see 2 Sam. 5:8), and, perhaps, caused him to pen the Psalm before us.

Dominant Expression And Prophetic Teaching

In v. 3, David expresses the basic fault of those described in the Psalm, and this becomes its theme:

"There is none that doeth good, no, not one."

This section of the Psalm (vv1-3) is cited by Paul in Romans 3:10-12, as a basis for his dissertation upon redemption. He does so in order to teach the need of man to seek the forgiveness of God.

This is only granted if they first recognise their true state before Him (cp. Matt. 9:13; Luke 7:37-50)

In Romans, Paul cites several Psalms, and for a very good reason. The Psalm before us describes the

state of the man who repudiates the authority of God, but the Jews could claim that this related only to Gentiles. Hence Paul continues by citing passages of Scripture that unmistakably apply to Israelites, and concludes with the reasoning:

"We know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:19-20).

In other words, we cannot relegate to unbelievers, such expressions as are found in this Psalm. A believer can be found in the state of rejecting the authority of God.

The Psalm, therefore, expresses the experiences of David, which revealed the need of a Redeemer.

Divine Title

Throughout the Psalm, attention is drawn to the name of God, even Yahweh. According to *The Companion Bible*, the use of "God" in Vv. 1, 2, 5, should be Yahweh, though the received text today shows *Elohim*. It is claimed that the Sopherim altered the text to read *Elohim* in these places.

Accepting the statement, the name of God occurs seven times in the Psalm which is significant in itself. For seven is the number of *completeness, the covenant number*, and it is certainly appropriate to the expressions of the Psalm.

The "fool" is then found repudiating that for which Yahweh stands, and not necessarily rejecting the concept of a Supreme Being. And as Yahweh is the covenant name of Deity, such "fools," though claiming to believe in Him, are

found living in indifference to His requirements (see Exod. 3:15).

The name of *Yahweh* proclaims the purpose of God to draw out of prevailing wickedness, a "people for His name" (Acts 15:14). That, indeed, is the theme of Exodus, which records the circumstances by which the Name was given to Moses.

It was a time when evil was triumphant in the earth; when the children of Israel had departed from the true worship; and men, generally, repudiated the covenant of Deity.

The prevailing attitude, both within Israel at first, and in Egypt throughout, was that expressed by Pharaoh: "Who is *Yahweh*, that I should obey His voice?"

This bold defiance ultimately had its reward; and Pharaoh's hosts

perished in the waters of the Red Sea. At the same time, those who heeded the voice of wisdom, separated themselves from the influence of Egypt and were saved through the separation of water by following the leadership of Moses.

The name *Yahweh* is expressive of God's purpose to reveal Himself in those who are prepared to accept His principles. The "fool," whilst acknowledging Him as a doctrine, resist His influence in action, and therefore will perish in his folly. The seven-fold proclamation of the Name in the Psalm before us, emphasises the need of separation from such as are defiant of God, whether they be in the Ecclesia or in the world.

— HPM

(Verse by verse notes to continue)



"Esteem them highly in love for their works sake"

(1 Thess. 5:13)

Has Our Proclamation Weakened?

We are apt to take many things for granted in life. Among them are our calling in the truth, and the hope of the Gospel. These were not brought to our attention by chance; it was by design of God. This, also was the case with those, whom He used to bring the truth to light in these closing days of the Gentiles. We can thank God for the labours of such men as Brother Thomas and Brother Roberts for

bringing to light the many beautiful phases of truth that we are now able to rejoice in.

Unlike many religious organisations, who claim their leaders were inspired of God, we know that the only inspired word of God is the Bible. Yet we do not have to be deep students to recognise that apart from God's help and guidance, they could not have established the Ecclesias, and expounded the Word as they did.

to the voice of His Father as it was heard from the pages of the Old Testament. More, he hearkened to heed, and so conquered the flesh.

In doing so, the Lord revealed the source and strength of his armour. Let us heed the example, and learn to listen to the words of

truth. Let us remain in the company of men like Ucal, asking nothing else than God's sufficiency as our personal allowance. Then we shall never go out seeking for manna, only to find none. We shall have ample for our needs.

— J. A. Swaish (Wales).



Psalm 14: YAHWEH'S RESPONSE to the Universal Corruption of Mankind

Last article gave the background to this Psalm: in this one we consider it verse by verse.

The Psalm is divided into three parts:

1. The Prevailing Wickedness of Mankind and its Cause – Vv. 1-3.
2. Man's Depravity as shown in the oppression of God's people – and its Punishment – Vv. 4-6.
3. A Prayer for the Consummation of the Covenant – V. 7.

It is expressive, therefore, of folly (vv. 1-3), fear (vv. 4-6), and faith (v. 7).



1. Folly: The Prevailing Wickedness of Mankind And Its Cause – Vv. 1-3

As David considers the folly of those who opposed the Divine will and purpose,

he observes in their attitude a repetition of the wickedness that resulted in the calamities of the Flood, the Confusion of Tongues, and the Destruction of Sodom. As Yahweh looked down from heaven and observed the prevailing wickedness on those occasions, so He does today.

VERSE 1

“The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God” – According to *The Companion Bible*, “God” should be Yahweh. In repudiating Yahweh, “the fool” is found in defiance of the divine covenant. The word “fool” is *nabal*, and it designates a stupid person whose stubbornness refuses to permit him to submit to the requirements of Yahweh's covenant, and therefore turns him into a wicked person. Nabal, the husband of Abigail, was a “fool,” as described by her to David (1 Sam. 25:25). Abner, though a brilliant commander, died as “a fool,” because, earlier, he had failed to recognise that Yahweh's

covenant demanded that David ascend the throne. Fleshly loyalties blinded his eyes to divine requirements, and he died "like a fool" at the hand of Joab (2 Sam. 3:33).

There are "fools" aplenty, both inside and outside the covenant people of God, whether Israel or the Ecclesia. Because of that, the Lord provided the parable of the "fool" (Luke 12:16-20). The "rich fool" (v. 16) became the self-centred fool (see the repetition of "I" and "my" — vv. 17-19); the self-centred fool became the ambitious fool (vv. 18-19); and the ambitious fool finally became the doomed fool (v. 20). The Lord's parable is not merely an indictment of believers who become spiritually bankrupt because they put great store in material wealth without being rich towards God; but also it is the parable of the world about us, which places its trust in material possessions and is doomed, despite its affluence.

In the Psalm "the fool" is said to make his boast *in his heart*. He does not openly repudiate Yahweh, but does so inwardly. His actions are more eloquent than his words. He may even go through all the motions of genuine worship, but there is not true feeling in it. By action, if not by profession, he is an atheist.

The Psalm represents the fool as saying: "*There is no God.*" The words in italics are not in the original. The "fool" is not boastfully denying the existence of God; in fact, he may theoretically accept His existence, but he refuses to be moved by His influence. There is no God for him. He refuses to submit to His requirements. In the terms of Psalm 10:4: "God is not in all his thoughts." Thus he reveals a practical atheism, whilst, at the same time, doctrinally subscribing to the belief in God. Cp. Psalm 73:11; Jer. 5:12; Zeph. 1:12; Rom. 1:28. As such, he is a proper fool!

"They are corrupt, they have done abominable works" — The Hebrew is more emphatic than the A.V. It reads: "They have become corrupt; they have done abominable deeds." The Psalmist refers to examples of the past in which men have manifested similar attitudes to those "fools" of his acquaintance, and have reaped the result of their folly. The world was "corrupted" in the days of Noah; his descendants "did abominable works" at Babel; there were not found sufficient righteous in Sodom in the days of Lot. In each case, Yahweh thoroughly investigated the circumstances (Gen. 6:3; 11:5; 18:21), and acted accordingly. The punishment manifested in the days of Noah, his descendants, and of Abraham, should teach "fools" that there is no future for them. If they persist in their attitude, they, too, will be punished.

"There is none that doeth good" — This is the beginning of Paul's quotation (Rom. 3:10-12). The statement is limited to "fools" as described, not to such as Noah who "walked with God" (Gen. 6:9). The former are described as following "the imagination of the thoughts of their heart" which was "evil continually."

VERSE 2

"Yahweh looked down from heaven upon the children of men" — Yahweh is infinitely just and merciful. He takes careful note of the attitude of individuals, so as to properly discriminate between them. As Abraham learned, "He does not destroy the righteous with the wicked" (Gen. 18:23), for as Judge of all the earth, He does what is right (v. 25). At the time of the Flood, the Confusion of Tongues, and the destruction of Sodom, He first sent His angels to deliver any who stood aside from the prevailing wickedness. That assurance remains true to the present day: "The

foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. 2:19).

The word "men" is *adamim*, the plural of Adam, revealing that the seat of sin is human nature.

"To see if there were any that did understand and seek God" —

The R.V. margin renders "understand" as *deal wisely*. The verb denotes right action as well as correct understanding. In fact, the application of truth spells the difference between the wise man and the fool; Christ being witness. In his parable, the wise man hearkened and acted; the fool hearkened only to ignore (see Matt. 7:24-27). The word "God," in this line is *Elohim* in Hebrew, but, according to *The Companion Bible*, quoting the *Sopherim*, it was originally *Yahweh*.

VERSE 3

"They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy" —

The Apostle Paul cites these verses to prove the universal depravity of mankind. Rotherham renders "filthy" as *tainted*. The Hebrew word *alach* signifies to *muddle, to turn sour like spoiled milk*.

2. Fear: Man's Depravity As Shown In The Oppression Of God's People — And Its Punishment — Vv. 4-6.

The universal wickedness of man finds expression in his antagonism to those who seek God. But their folly will end in fear, for Yahweh will arise to assist His own, who take refuge in Him.

VERSE 4

"Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge?" — Their iniquity is not due to ignorance, therefore they are without excuse (Rom. 1:20). Yahweh's revelation of past judgments reveals that He does not look upon such actions with indifference.

Lacking knowledge, such workers of iniquity cannot distinguish between right from wrong.

"Who eat up My people as they eat bread" — They consume the righteous as they eat their daily bread: that is as their right, without thought (see Num. 14:9). Knowing that the righteous will not retaliate, they do not care.

"And call not upon Yahweh" — They completely ignore Him because, as far as they are concerned, they do not recognise His reality.

VERSE 5

"There they were in great fear" — David now speaks of the time when Yahweh moved for the vindication of His people. Suddenly fear takes hold of those previously given to folly. Examples of this are found in the circumstances of the Flood, the confusion of tongues, and the destruction of Sodom.

"For God is in the generation of the righteous" — In this line, according to *The Companion Bible*, "God" is *Yahweh*. He is in the generation of the righteous, even though deliverance may be delayed. Therefore, as the Lord taught, they "ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1-8).

VERSE 6

"Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor" — "Fools" ridicule faith and trust; they make a mock of men putting confidence in Yahweh, and ridicule such action. The word "poor" signifies the *afflicted* as in Psalm 9:12.

"Because Yahweh is his refuge" — The R.V. margin alters this to "but Yahweh is his refuge." In time of challenge and of trouble, there is infinite comfort in rolling one's problems on to Yahweh. One does not do so in vain, though patience may be necessary to await Yahweh to move.

3. Faith: A Prayer For The Consummation Of The Covenant – V.7.

In his confidence in the reality of Yahweh, and his assurance that He will remain true to His covenant, David prays for its consummation.

VERSE 7

“Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion” – This was all David’s desire. See 2 Sam. 23:50, the motivation of his life.

“When Yahweh bringeth back the captivity of His people” – David “being a prophet” (Acts 2:30), and realising from his study of the Scriptures, that Israel would be taken into captivity (Deut. 28:49-68), looked for the time when the nation would be restored to “a place of their own, and move no more” never again to be afflicted by “the children of wickedness” (2 Sam. 7:10). There will be no place for “fools” in that day.

“Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad” – The Supplanter will become a *Prince with El*. The status of the nation shall be changed for ever; the transition from Jacob to Israel will be complete. As Jacob, the redeemed will rejoice in their deliverance; as Israel, they shall “be glad” in the revelation of their new status before God and man. The triumph of faith over folly will be complete; whilst fools will be consumed with fear.

Subscription

Unlike Psalm 53 which reproduces Psalm 14 with certain, significant variations, this one was not given over to the public worship. It is not dedicated *To the chief Musician* as is Psalm 53. It was evidently reserved for David’s personal use, until amended, as in Psalm 53, and given over to the Temple worship.

This Psalm, therefore, may well have been one upon which David often meditated personally. It is well for us to do so also, and to clearly assess the great difference between folly and faith. There is a tendency to be led astray by the apparent prosperity of the wicked, as Asaph expressed it in Psalm 73. It was only when “he went into the sanctuary of God, and understood their end,” (Ps. 73:17), that he comprehended the flimsy foundation of their present prosperity, and the certainty of their end.

Evidently David constantly meditated upon that theme. We can follow his example with profit; and by private meditation as in public worship, clearly see and give expression to the folly of fools, and the certainty of their end.

– HPM.

HELPERS AND HINDERERS

“We have reaped a harvest of hatred and calumny at the hands of those we have been compelled to oppose. We have also experienced much of the sweetness of help and love at the hands of such as appreciate courageous and true-hearted well-doing in Christ. For both we give thanks to God and take courage, resolving, as heretofore, to work as in His sight, while it is called today, refusing to sleep as do others and inflexibly bent on the enterprise of saving ourselves from this untoward generation in the company of as many as will hear and obey the Word presented. (These words, from the pen of Brother R. Roberts, express the experience and determination of the Editor of *Logos*. We thank Yahweh for the privilege of labouring in His vineyard, and trust that these efforts might produce fruit to the glory of His Name in the Age to come ...

Editor)."

cometh shall inherit all things" (Rev. 21:5). He shall become part of the "new Jerusalem" (Rev. 21:2), a bearer of the "new name" (Rev. 17:5; Isa. 62:2), a singer of the "new song" (Rev. 8:9; 14:3). All this stems from the "new covenant" which we must accept (Luke 22:20), and through which we become a "new creature, old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new."

How are we renewed? Paul answers:

"This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their minds. Ye have not so learned Christ, if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught of him, as the truth is in Jesus, that ye put off concerning the former behaviour, the old man which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, who after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Therefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour; for we are members one of another. Be ye angry and sin not: let not the sun go down on your wrath; neither give place to the adversary . . ."

He sums the matter up by exhorting: "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children, and walk in love . . . see that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:1,5).

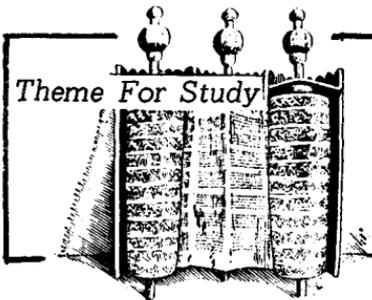
To the beloved Ecclesia of Philadelphia, Christ dictated a message:

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and I will write upon him my new name" (Rev. 3:12).

No wonder John concluded the Revelation with his own subscription, "Come, Lord Jesus!" In echoing his prayer we conclude with the thrilling words of Isaiah:

"The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

— E. Stallworthy (Holland)



PSALM 15

The True Citizen of Zion

This Psalm answers the question as to who will dwell in the holy hill of Zion in the Age to come. The answer is, Those who conform to the terms of Christ's policy speech for Kingdom citizenship, outlined in his "Sermon on the Mount." The principles and requirements of that are set forth in this

Psalm, which therefore foreshadows the teaching of the Lord on that occasion.

Historical Background

The Psalmist asks the question: "Yahweh, who shall abide in Thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in Thy holy hill?" What particular incident in his life would cause David to ask and answer such questions as those?

Surely it must have been the incident recorded in 2 Samuel 6:17:

"And they brought in the ark of Yahweh, and set it in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it: and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before Yahweh."

David was more than a king: he was a prophet, and as such recognised the typical significance of events that happened in his life. Peter made that abundantly clear when he proclaimed at Pentecost that the King foresaw the death and resurrection of his greater Son, and his ascension to the royal dignity upon his throne (Acts 2:29-30). David, therefore, must have comprehended the typical significance of his action in conveying the Ark to Zion, and placing it in the temporary tabernacle he provided for it before the Temple was built by his son.

It is obvious that the Ark was typical of Christ (cp. Heb. 9:12,24), and that its conveyance to Zion foreshadowed Christ's future glory in Zion as king-priest. But, as David knew (see 2 Samuel 23:1-5), when his greater Son reigns in glory from that significant Mount, there will be others with him. The question, therefore, was, Who shall dwell in Thy holy hill?

Construction of the Psalm

There is a degree of propriety

in having this Psalm follow Psalm 14. Psalm 14 describes the typical man of the flesh who refuses to submit to Yahweh's requirements, whose very attitude is atheistic in its tendency. Psalm 15, on the other hand, describes the typical man of God, a true citizen of Zion, presenting a contrast to the man of the flesh.

Moreover, it completes the sub-section of Book One of the Psalms. In our article contained in *Logos* vol. 40, p. 342-346, we pointed out that the Book of Psalms is divided into five parts, answering to the sections of the Law as recorded in the five books of Moses. We also showed that each of these sections is further divisible into sub-sections.

Book One, comprises Psalms 1 to 41, and is itself divisible into three parts:

- 1.—Man in relation to the Son of Man (Psalms 1-8).
- 2.—The man of the earth (Psalms 9-15).
- 3.—The Man: Christ Jesus (Psalms 16-41).

This final Psalm in section 2, provides a contrast to the world of wickedness considered in previous Psalms. Its dominant verse is v.5: "He that doeth these things shall never be moved."

The Psalm is divided into two parts:

- (1) The Positives of Godly Living (vv. 1-2);
- (2) The Negatives of Godly Living (vv. 3-5).

Sermon On The Mount In Embryo

The Psalm provides an epitome of Christ's policy speech for Kingdom citizenship, frequently

described as the "Sermon on the Mount." Notice how that every aspect of Christ's discourse is briefly covered by the statements of this Psalm. The question as to who shall dwell in Yahweh's holy hill, is answered by its general summary known as the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:3-12). The answer, "He that walketh uprightly" (v. 2), has its counterpart in Matthew 5:13-16 where reference is made to "walking in the light." The statement of the same verse which makes reference to "worketh righteousness," is matched by Christ's requirement of a "righteousness that exceedeth that of the Pharisees" (Matt. 5:17-20). The reference to "speaking the truth in his heart" is expressed by the requirements insisted on by Christ as recorded in Matthew 5:21—6:34. Christ warned against heart hatred (Matt. 5:21-26), heart adultery (vv. 27-32). He insisted upon heart almsgiving (Matt. 6:1-4), heart prayer (vv. 5-15), heart fasting (vv. 16-18), heart treasure (vv. 19-21), heart service (vv. 22-24), heart confidence in Yahweh (vv. 25-34).

In verse 3, the Psalm sets forth a series of negatives. The Godly man "backbiteth not with his tongue," nor "doeth evil," nor "taketh up a reproach with his neighbour." And this matches up with the negatives of Matthew 7:1-5, "why beholdest thou the mote in thy brother's eye." The Psalm continues, "In whose eyes a vile person is contemned," and Christ taught: "By their fruits ye shall know them" (cp. Matt. 7:15-23). The Psalm speaks of the Godly man "swearing to his own hurt but changing not" (v. 4); and Christ, likewise, referred to the

integrity of the words of his disciples, whose conversation was "Yea, yea, Nay nay" (Matt. 5:33-37). The Psalm states that the Godly man puts not his money out to usury, nor takes reward against the innocent (v. 5), and Christ referred to the need for liberality in money matters, so that his followers willingly "give" to the needy with no thought of reward (Matt. 5:38-42). Finally, the Psalm sums up the need of Godliness in action: "He that doeth these things" (v.5), and Christ does likewise by giving the parable of the man who built his house upon a rock, and by describing that attitude as both "hearing and doing" the things commanded of him (Matt. 7:24-27).

Thus the Sermon is a development of the Psalm; so that the teaching of Christ, is foreshadowed in the sayings of David.

It is fittingly described as "A Psalm (*mizmor*) of David," i.e. *the Beloved*. We have commented upon the significance of this title on p. 115 of this volume.



1. The Positives of Godly Living—vv.1-2.

Five positive characteristics of a true citizen of Zion are mentioned. They are (a)—abiding; (b)—dwelling; (c)—walking uprightly; (d)—working righteousness; (e)—speaking truth. Five is the number of grace; and these five principles lend themselves to graceful living.

VERSE 1

"Yahweh, who shall abide in Thy tabernacle?"—The question is tantamount to enquiring, Who is a true Israelite? The

LOGOS

previous Psalm revealed that "they are not all Israel, which are of Israel" (Rom. 9:6-8). Only those who follow the light will be found abiding in the Tabernacle of Yahweh (Ps. 43:3), and, as Psalm 87 reveals, even Gentiles can claim a spiritual relationship with Zion. The word "abide," as the margin shows, signifies *sojourn* in Hebrew, and to *sojourn* implies a temporary abode. This also is suggested by the use of the word *ohel* rendered "tabernacle." "Ohel", tent, is not a permanent shelter, but a "make-shift" dwelling. It was designed to be replaced by the Temple. The tabernacle in the wilderness, housing the Ark, was a type of the Ecclesia in its wanderings (see Heb. 9:11). Subsequently, the Ark was brought to Zion, from the temporary structure of a tent to the permanent erection of the temple; from the humiliation of a field to the glory of the Kingdom. In Psalm 132:13-14, David declared:

*"For Yahweh hath chosen Zion;
He hath desired it for His habitation."*

Meanwhile, saints sojourn in the temporary structure of the Ecclesia, waiting for the permanent change that will take place at the coming of the Lord.

"Who shall dwell in Thy holy hill?"—To "dwell" is to remain permanently. Many find a temporary place in the Ecclesia; how many will attain unto the glory of the Kingdom? The Lord declared: "Many are called, but few are chosen" (Matt. 20:16). The question therefore signifies: Who are the true members of an Ecclesia, destined to find an abiding inheritance in the Kingdom.

Yahweh's holy hill is Zion. Through David, He declared (Ps. 132:14):

*"This is my rest for ever;
Here will I dwell; for I have desired it."*

It will be in the holy hill of Zion that Christ will be proclaimed King before his assembled subjects (Ps. 2:6; Phil. 2:9-11).

The "house of prayer for all peoples" will be erected there, and in it the approved will be given "a name better than of sons and of daughters, even an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off" (Isa. 56:5-7). The summit of Mt. Zion will constitute the altar of the House of Prayer for all peoples, and is described as the "most holy" place (Ezek. 43:12). Ezekiel shows that only the immortal priests of the age to come will be permitted on its holy slopes (Ezek. 44:15-16).

VERSE 3

"He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness"—David first considers the positive attributes of Godliness. Those who ascend Zion in the age to come will be immortal priests, and their attitude was foreshadowed by the priests in Israel, who were required to dedicate their ears, hands, and feet to Yahweh, symbolic of hearing, working and walking in accordance with His teaching (Lev. 8:24). These principles are emphasized in this verse.

True priests (cp. 1 Pet. 2:9), walk uprightly. They set Yahweh before their eyes, and accept His revelation as the rule of their conduct.

They "work righteousness" for they give practical expression to the things believed. Peter used David's expression when drawing the attention of his listeners to the responsibilities of the Truth: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth Him, and *worketh righteousness*, is accepted with Him" (Acts 10:34-35).

"And speaketh the truth in his heart"—He is no hypocrite. His outward life is an expression of his inward conviction. In heart, where others cannot see, he still worships Yahweh. Whilst truth on the lips is important; Truth in the heart is all-important (see Ps. 51:6-7).

(To be continued).

DIVINE COMPASSION (Isa. 49:15)

A mother's tender compassion towards her off-spring, the exquisite metaphor by which God illustrates His regard towards Zion and her sons! This is stronger even than Psalm 103:13, for a mother's yearning affection may be thought to exceed a father's pity. Both forms of speech are declarative of His mind with whom we have to do. What an absence of coldness and harshness in the disposition of the Lord God of Israel! In no manifestation of love will He be outdone by any of His creatures. There have been cases in which the mother has forgotten; but He never! It is said that the sons of Israel were wont, on their arms and hands, to make a representation of the temple by certain indelible stains. "Behold," saith God, "I have graven thee upon the palms of *my* hands." We can never be more interested than He Himself in all that relates to His purpose. What a guarantee is here of its final accomplishment, in the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, and the blessing of all the families of the earth, in Abraham and his seed!

on the just and unjust" (Matt. 5:45-48).

The ritual commanded Israel concluded with a prayer for the Divine blessing:

"Look down from Thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless Thy people Israel, and the land which Thou hast given us" (Deut. 26:15).

Let the salt of such a prayer, savour our labours in His service.

Application To Us

James seems to draw upon the provision of this chapter to press home an exhortation to the Ecclesia of his day. He makes reference to the Father of Lights as the "Giver of every good and perfect gift" (James 1:17), and emphasises that real faith will be manifested in action:

"Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (v. 22).

He likens a "hearer only" to one who briefly glances at a mirror, and takes no real heed of what is reflected therefrom. The "doer of the word," on the other hand, is one who applies its lessons, and in consequence "shall be blessed in his deed."

He summarises the requirements of religion thus:

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this: To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

That is faith in action, such as Deuteronomy 26 demanded of the Israelite. It is a practical application of the responsibilities attached to a recognition of God as the giver of every good and perfect gift. As such, it is part of that "service" which reason demands every true son and daughter of Yahweh should render unto Him (Rom. 12:1). — Editor.

Theme For Study

PSALM 15

THE TRUE CITIZEN OF ZION

The exposition of this Psalm was commenced in our last number (pp. 247-250). We showed that the teaching of David therein synchronised with the teaching of the Lord in his discourse on the Mount. It comprises an epitome of Christ's policy speech for Kingdom citizenship. The Psalm sets forth positive and negative principles of Godliness. Our last article expounded upon the former; in this issue we complete our exposition of it by outlining the latter.

2. The Negatives Of Godly Living—vv. 3-5.

The negatives of Godliness are eight in number: (a)—no backbiting; (b)—no evil doing; (c)—no slandering; (d)—no condoning of sin; (e)—no going back on one's word; (f)—not given to usury; (g)—no

bribery; (h)—no vacillation. Eight is the number of circumcision, and these are eight natural attributes of the flesh that should be cut off.

VERSE 3

"He that backbiteth not with his

tongue”—The Law specifically condemned the talebearer (Lev. 19:16), and the Psalmist commended those who “keep their tongue from evil” (Ps. 34:12). James graphically describes the power of the tongue for evil, and shows that from that ever-bubbling fountain “proceedeth blessing and cursing” which things “ought not to be” (James 3:5-13). The same tongue that can eloquently expound the word for the gratification of the hearers, can also be used to destroy the reputation of others. This is a wicked evil, which a man of God should avoid. It is the first of the negatives. Let us learn to control the tongue, and we can control every attribute of our body. Backbiting is to bite when the back is turned. One writer has stated: “He is a knave, who would rob you of your good name; he is a coward that would speak of you in your absence what he dared not to do in your presence; but only an ill-conditioned dog will fly at and bite your back when your face is turned.” However, some so act, causing Paul to write: “Beware of dogs” (Phil. 3:2).

“Nor doeth evil to his neighbour”—

The Godly man not only “works righteousness” (v.2), but avoids “doing evil.” He not only avoids evil speaking, but also evil acting. A man might avoid openly speaking against another, but may secretly work for his evil. Not so the Godly man.

“Nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour”—This suggests indulging in scandal; the taking up and carrying on a rumour that is to the hurt of another. Very often, the introduction, “Do you know what I have heard,” is the prelude to a murderous assault upon the good name of another. It is a common failing that creates a situation that the victim finds almost impossible to counter, and, generally, must bear in silence. The word “reproach” is *cherpah* in Hebrew, from a root *charaph* signifying to *strip, make bare, or deprive of garments*. From this word comes the Hebrew *choreph*, “the winter,” in which the fields are stripped of their clothing. He who takes up a reproach against his neighbour “sets out to strip him of his good character. He is no true citizen of Zion who does that! Let many in the Ecclesias today take care!

VERSE 4

“In whose eyes a vile person is contemned”—Notwithstanding his kindness and charity, the man of truth refuses to condone wickedness. He will not whitewash conduct that violates the law of Yahweh, but will recognise it for what it is, and condemn

it. But he will do so in love, seeking a cover for the sin that he may redeem his erring brother. In his attitude, he anticipates the way of life to be manifested in the Kingdom (Isa. 32:5).

“But he honoureth them that fear Yahweh”—He recognises that the “fear of Yahweh is the beginning of knowledge” (Prov. 1:7), and he honours those who manifest such reverence for Yahweh and His word.

“He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not”—He is a man of complete integrity. He will not promise to perform a matter, and then withdraw because he sees that it is to his disadvantage. His word is his bond, and he carried out what he has agreed to do. God expects us to carry out our vows, and will require it of us if we do not do so (Ecc. 5:4-5). Therefore, let us be careful before we promise.

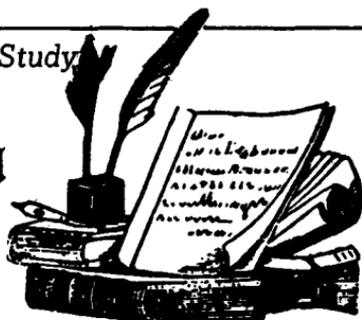
VERSE 5

“He that putteth not out his money to usury”—He scrupulously observes the requirements of Yahweh’s law in this regard (Exod. 22:25; Lev. 25:35-37). Under that law when an Israelite was in want, he was to be generously assisted without any charge of interest. The law only legislated in regard to loans for such a purpose; it was silent upon what should be done in regard to loans for business and other matters, and in the absence of law there is no transgression. The spirit of the law in regard to relieving those in dire want is expressed by the teaching of the Lord in Matthew 5:42: “Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow turn not thou away.” Again, the context signifies those in dire want. It does not mean that one should give to every person who wants to borrow money for any cause.

“Nor taketh reward against the innocent”—This means taking a bribe against a guiltless person. This is forbidden by the Law (Exod. 23:7-8; Deut. 16:19; 27:25), and is completely contrary to the spirit of Christ’s teaching.

“He that doeth these things shall never be moved”—There is no vacillation with the Godly man. He remains steadfast and dependable in the midst of changing conditions and circumstances (1 Cor. 15:58). He recognises the need not merely to listen to the words of Christ, but to perform them (cp. Matt. 7:24-27). He manifests in action the doctrines he believes in. As such, he becomes related to Zion in a very real way, for as Mount Zion shall never be moved, no more shall he (cp. Ps. 125:1). —HPM.

Psalm
16



**The Psalmist's
Portion in Life
and His Deliverer
Out of Death**

David in adversity is taunted by his enemies to seek other gods as apparently the God of Israel has forsaken him (1 Sam. 26:19). In response, he proclaims his complete trust in Yahweh, Whose portion and cup he is prepared to accept, and his utter dedication to Him in worship, in spite of what it may entail. This Psalm beautifully and consistently traces down to its final consequences what is meant when a man commits himself fully into the hands of God, and abides in Him. It expresses hope and comfort such as the lonely and the sufferer in every age can obtain in such circumstances.

Its Place In The Psalter

In an introductory article to our study on the Psalms (see *Logos* vol. 40, pp. 342-346), we drew attention to the way in which the Psalter is divisible into five separate books, answering to the five books of the Pentateuch. Of those divisions, Book One, comprising Psalms 1—41, can be linked with Genesis, for preeminently it deals with man. In turn, it can be sectionised into three parts:

1. **Man in relation to the Son of Man—Psalms 1-8.**
2. **The man of the earth—Psalms 9-15.**
3. **The Man: Christ Jesus—Psalm 16-41.**

The Psalms in section one describe in order the ideal set before man (Ps. 1), his rebelliousness (Ps. 2), his striving against sin (Ps. 3), and so on until Psalm 8 reveals that victory

will be only as the result of conquest—a battle won by the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of Man against the forces of sin (Heb. 2:14).

The second section describes the man of the earth (referred to specifically in Ps. 10:18), in his conflict with those who seek to emulate the Son of Man (cp. Ps. 9:4-9; 10:2-16; 11:6-7; 12:1-5 etc.). But, again, the section concludes on a note of triumph, for it reveals the ultimate destiny and glory of the true citizen of Zion (Ps. 15).

Psalm 16, therefore, commences the third section of Book One. In this section, the Man Christ Jesus is prominently-brought before us. It exhibits him in suffering (Ps. 16), in prayer (Ps. 17), in deliverance (Ps. 18). It predicts the extension of the Gospel message

(Ps. 19), the attitude of those who embrace it (Ps. 20), their joy in his exaltation (Ps. 21). It makes reference to him as sacrifice (Ps. 22), as shepherd (Ps. 23), as sovereign (Ps. 24). It concludes by describing the Lord as the perfect burnt offering (Ps. 40), and again ends on a note of triumph (cp. Ps. 41:12).

Throughout these Psalms, David is revealed as a prophet (Acts 2:30), anticipating the coming of the one who would reveal the channel of deliverance from oppressors in life, and from death itself, to manifest the glory of Yahweh on earth.

Historical Background

The Psalm is by David. It is described as *Michtam of David*. What is meant by the use of this term? It is said that absolute certainty cannot be claimed for its meaning, and some have chosen to render it as *A mystery poem*. But there does not appear anything particularly mysterious about the wording of the *Michtam* Psalms.

Thirtle in *The Titles Of The Psalms* states: "The term *Michtam* seems best explained by a *personal* or *private* prayer or meditation. The first person singular of the pronoun is very prominent in this psalm (i.e. Ps. 16).

The A. V. and R. V. render the word in their respective margins as *golden* deriving it from *kethem*, "gold." Gold is a precious metal, the symbol of a tried faith, and is something that is hidden away in a safe place, only to be displayed on special occasions. Applying this thought to the Psalm, it suggests that the title indicates a personal experience, in which the one concerned has exhibited faith; incidents

that are very precious, and are stored away in the memory for private meditation, or displayed publicly in order that others may likewise emulate the example given. As such, the title *A Golden Psalm* is appropriate.

However, according to *Strong's Analytical Concordance*, the word is from *Katham*, "to cut in, or engrave." The word occurs in Jer. 2:22: "Thine iniquity is *graven* before me." When words are engraven upon stone, or are cut unto some other hard surface, they are recorded permanently. A *Michtam* Psalm therefore, records impressions that are permanent: experiences that are engraven upon the memory to be recalled from time to time. Bullinger, in *The Companion Bible* states:

"This word is found in the *superscription* of six Psalms (16, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60). All are by David. The last five form a group by themselves.

"The *Michtam* Psalms are all pervaded by the common characteristic of being *Personal*, *Direct*, and more or less *Private*.

"The reference is to David's Son and David's Lord; and especially to His death and resurrection; or to a deliverance from imminent danger, or death, or even from the grave itself. See Pss. 16:10, 11; 56:13; 57:3; 58:10-11; 59:16; 60:5, 12. It is David, who 'being a prophet' (Acts 2:25-31), knew that 'God would raise up Messiah to sit on His throne.' Hence this is the truth *engraven* in the first of these *Michtam* Psalms (16)."

The Psalm expresses David's confidence in Yahweh in spite of dangers that threatened him (v. 1). He declared that Yahweh is his "portion and cup" (v. 5), and though troubles might beset him for a time, and even bring him to the grave, his faith could see beyond the darkness that surrounded him, to the glory beyond the resurrection (v. 9).

Thus David the prophet saw beyond death itself to everlasting life.

Some, under pressure of tribulation, may be induced to turn from God. Indeed, some urged David to do so; but, as a man of faith, he gave his answer to such advice. He declared that those who prove unfaithful in such circumstances only multiply sorrow to themselves; for they deny themselves the help and comfort that Yahweh can provide in time of need. David proclaimed his determination to remain constant in worship (v. 4). His confidence in Yahweh was absolute, and adversity would not move him (v. 8).

What circumstances in David's life caused him to compose this Psalm? Those recorded in 1 Samuel 26 provide an answer. Saul, intent upon destroying David, gathered a force of three thousand chosen men, and moved south to the hill of Hachilah. But under cover of night, the intrepid David and Abishai made their way to the encampment of Saul. Finding the sentries asleep, they crept to where the king was lying, and though sparing his life, took with them his spear.

It was a grand opportunity for David to rid himself of his enemy. Indeed, Abishai pressed him to do so, offering to plunge the spear into the heart of Saul himself. He urged David to grant him permission to slay Saul on the grounds that obviously God had delivered his enemy into his hands for that purpose (1 Sam. 26:8). It was a very persuasive and compelling piece of reasoning. But David withheld his hand. Human nature urged him to strike; another voice said, forbear! Twice David might have slain Saul, and twice he spared his life. Why? It is revealed in this interview between Abishai and David. Abishai des-

cribed Saul as "*Thine enemy;*" David described him as "*Yahweh's anointed.*" Both men looked upon Saul from different perspectives. Abishai spake from the viewpoint of flesh—seeing only the removal of an obstacle to power; David was moved by considerations more profound and spiritual. He recognised a divine appointment, which Yahweh, Himself, must cancel out in His own time.

His attitude manifested a high-light in his character. It resulted in a temporary reconciliation between David and Saul, leading to a statement and an explanation that forms a basis for the Psalm before us. To Saul, David declared:

"If Yahweh have stirred thee up against me, let Him accept an offering; but if they be the children of men, cursed be they before Yahweh; for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of Yahweh, saying, Go, serve other gods" (v. 19).

David complained that enemies at the court of Saul had driven him from Yahweh's inheritance, and urged him to serve other gods. His answer is provided in Psalm 16. Though driven from the centre of national worship, he placed his confidence in Yahweh Whom he describes as "the portion of his inheritance, and of his cup" (Ps. 16:5), Who would maintain his cause. As for the suggestion that he should go and serve other gods, he repudiated it, declaring that such a reaction to trials would result only in multiplying sorrows (Ps. 16:4). The Psalm before us, therefore, records the innermost thoughts and feelings of David at this time.

Saul, now thoroughly ashamed of himself, invited David to return with him, confessing that he had "played the fool, and had erred exceedingly" (1 Sam. 26:21). But David refused the

invitation. He realised that Saul's repentance would not last for long; and at the same time, he proclaimed his confidence in Yahweh:

"Yahweh render to every man his righteousness and his faithfulness . . . let my life be much set in the eyes of Yahweh, and let Him deliver me out of all tribulation" (vv. 23-24).

An echo of this is found in the first line of the Psalm:

Preserve me, O God (El); for in Thee do I put my trust.

Driven from his proper inheritance by man, and faced with the prospects of death (see 1 Sam. 27:1), David proclaimed that Yahweh was his portion in life, and would become his Deliverer out of death. This is similar to the heading given the Psalm in the American Revised Version, and it clearly states the theme that runs throughout it.

Prophetic Application

The Psalm is clearly Messianic, and is cited by both Peter and Paul in that relationship. Indeed, in his address on the day of Pentecost, Peter made powerful use of it to show that prophecy required the death and resurrection of the Lord. He reasoned that David's words: "His soul would not be left in hell; neither would Yahweh's Holy One see corruption" (Ps. 16:10), could not apply to their author, for, in fact, he did remain in the tomb and experienced corruption. He drew attention to the sepulchre of the king, then displayed in Jerusalem, as evidence of the fact (Acts 2:29).

That being the case, David obviously spake as a prophet, so that these expressions of the Psalm referred to "the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption" (Acts 2:31).

Paul, likewise, in his address

to the Jews of Antioch, drew heavily upon this Psalm to show that Scripture required the death and resurrection of Messiah (Acts 13:35-38). Therefore, to Jews at home and to Jews abroad, the powerful testimony of this Psalm was drawn upon effectively by these two foremost Apostles of the Lord.

The Psalm, therefore, is prophetic, concentrating attention upon the man Christ Jesus. It reveals that David's hope was centred in the coming of the one promised from the very beginning (Gen. 3:15), in anticipation of which he could say:

*"Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth;
My flesh also shall rest in hope."*

Dominant Divine Title

The Psalm opens with the use of the title *El*, expressive of divine power, of Yahweh's ability to effect the preservation of His saints which the Psalmist sought. From that vantage point of *Power* there is constant reference to the covenant name of *Yahweh*. That Name is the guarantee of all David's hopes. In the Psalm it is placed in contrast to the "names" of the false gods that some were urging David to worship (Ps. 16:4), but which he refused even to utter.

The name *Yahweh* is prophetic of the divine purpose, and sets forth the prospect of good things to come. There are four good things specifically enumerated in the Psalm which the covenant Name guarantees for the approved. They are the divine Portion (v. 5); the divine Path; the divine Presence; and the divine Pleasure (v. 11).

General Theme

The Psalm can be divided into three parts:

1. Prayer—vv. 1-5.

a. The benefits of true worship — vv. 1-2;

b. The bitterness of false worship — vv. 3-4.

3. Praise — vv. 5-8.

3. Prospect — vv. 9-11.

To summarise: the Psalm depicts David under trial, but expressing his confidence in God as the Source of greatest good, his rejoicing in hope of eternal

life, and his joy as he anticipates the glory awaiting him through a resurrection from the dead.

A dominant verse, expressive of the theme is v. 5:

Yahweh is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup.

— H. P. M.

Idolatry

“They bartered away the true God”

In calling attention to the gross evils of pagan Rome, which were so like modern Babylon, Paul wrote: “They bartered away the true God for a false one, and have offered reverence and worship to created things instead of to the Creator, Who is blessed for ever. Amen.” (Rom. 1:25 NEB).

Idolatry was the downfall of Israel. In the beginning, the people failed to destroy the Canaanites, and were soon found following their ways, and inter-marrying their sons and daughters. This brought in “pernicious ways” and false doctrines that soon undermined the truth.

The command prohibiting the making of images, was wisely based on the knowledge of man’s weakness and desire to worship something he could see and handle. The brasen serpent, typifying sin-bitten flesh, was a means of temporary salvation when looked upon in faith, but became an idol, *Nehushtan*, or a piece of brass, when “the created thing” became an object of worship, instead of a divine appointment for man’s deliverance.

Almost exactly, the same thing happened to the cross.

Originally it was a means of salvation, sacrifice and exhibition of God’s righteousness in the lifting up of His son “as the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness,” but wrongly used, it became a source of idol-worship for millions. Indeed, the “mark of the beast in forehead and hands” became a source of condemnation and eternal death, as John declares in Rev. 14:9. Once again, the created thing was worshipped more than the Creator; and that which was appointed as a means towards eternal life (Christ was made a curse for us in hanging on a tree—Gal. 3:13), became a way of death and destruction, because of man’s perversion.

Who would have thought the faithful Ecclesia in Rome would grow into the hateful Apostasy of today! Idolatry can be found in many, unexpected places, and in many ways, including that of “covetousness,” a modern form of idolatry (Col. 3:5).

Let us maintain our separateness in word, faith, doctrine and practise from all forms of activity, including those of modern Christendom that could lead us into idolatry.

—A.M.

Psalm

16



YAHWEH: The Psalmist's Portion in Life and His Deliverer Out of Death

This Psalm was introduced in our last issue (see pp. 330-334), and we conclude our treatment of it by the following verse by verse notes.

1. Prayer to Yahweh—vv. 1-5

Fleeing from Saul, David had been taunted with the prospect that Yahweh had forsaken him, and, therefore, he should throw in his lot with other gods. In answer, he turned to God in prayer, expressing his confidence both in the benefits of true worship (vv. 1-2), and the bitterness that is the lot of those who give way to false worship (vv. 3-4).

VERSE 1

“Preserve men, O God: for in Thee do I put my trust”—Under threat of Saul, David sought the help and refuge of God. Though surrounded by enemies, his confidence was in *El*, the God of strength and power. That, too, characterised the attitude of the Lord. The American R. V. renders the latter part of the line as: *for in thee do I take refuge* (see note Ps. 7:1).

VERSE 2

“O my soul, thou hast said unto Yahweh, Thou art my Lord”—The English R. V. renders this: *I have said*, rather than “O my soul,” as though the Psalmist holds colloquy with himself. The title “Lord” is *Adonai* in Hebrew, implying that the Psalmist addressed Yahweh as His servant. However, according to *The Companion Bible* this title was originally the name Yahweh, in which case, the Psalmist identified himself with the Covenant, Family Name of God.

“My goodness extendeth not to thee”—The Hebrew expresses it as “I have no goodness apart from Thee.” The “goodness of God” is an expression frequently used in Scripture, particularly for the hope of the Gospel, which was “all David’s desire.” Thus, in Ps. 31:19: “How great is Thy goodness, which Thou

hast laid up for them that fear Thee.” Paul exhorted: “Behold the goodness and severity of God: . . . toward thee goodness, if thou *continue in His goodness*” (Rom. 11:22). Hence the hope of the Gospel is expressive of the “goodness of Yahweh.” See reference to this *goodness* in the following Scriptures: Exod. 18:9; 33:19; Num. 10:29; Ps. 27:13; 65:4; 68:10; 145:7; Isa. 63:7; Jer. 31:12, 14; 33:9; Zech. 9:17. Yahweh’s grace or favour, manifested in the daily blessings received from Him, as well as the spiritual benefits revealed in the Word, are expressive of His goodness. The Psalmist saw Yahweh as the “Giver of every good and perfect gift” (James 1:17).

VERSE 3

“But to the saints that are in the earth”—The A. V. is obviously clumsy here, and is better rendered as the R. V.: “As for the saints that are in the earth.” The term saints relates to *holy* or *separated ones*, and, therefore, to those who are set aside for Yahweh’s use, and so manifest His characteristics. Such are found in “the earth,” a term that is frequently used to define the Land of Promise, and hence, in Israel. Though David was persecuted by Saul, he realised that there were those in the land who remained loyal to Yahweh, though separated for a time from David. A minority of similar “saints” were hidden in the land in the days of the Lord, the antitypical David of this Psalm. Rotherham renders “earth” (Heb. *erets*) as *his own land*.

“And to the excellent, in whom is all my delight”—This line also, is appropriately changed by the R. V. to read: “They are the excellent in whom is all my delight.” Rotherham, following the

Septuagint, attributes the "delight" to Yahweh:

It (goodness) belongeth unto the Holy one,

Whom in His own land Yahweh enableth,

In whom is all His delight.

Whatever reading is accepted, the conclusion remains the same. The Psalmist divides his contemporaries into two classes: (1)—Those from whom he must seek refuge, which he finds in Yahweh; and (2)—Those separated ones, who experience the divine goodness, and in whom either Yahweh or the Psalmist, or both, find delight. They comprise the excellent, or the noble in the earth, "of whom the world was not worthy" (Heb. 11:38). The world manifested its attitude towards such by persecuting them (v. 37), as the Psalmist, and the Lord Jesus were also persecuted. David found his delight in Godly men and things (2 Sam. 23:5).

VERSE 4

"Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god"—The R.V. renders this: "That change *Yahweh* for another god." This was David's answer to the suggestion that was made to him when he was persecuted by Saul, that he should seek other gods (1 Sam. 26:19). There is no satisfaction in so doing; in fact, such action will only multiply sorrow. David had a strong aversion to sin, or association with sinners, as is shown by the expressions of Psalm 1. He recognised that true worship provides a real foundation for true happiness.

"Their drink offerings of blood will I not offer"—He refused to identify himself with their action in any way, and had no fellowship with such workers of iniquity (1 Cor. 10:20-21).

"Nor take up their names into my lips"—His abhorrence of those who turn from the true worship of Yahweh was such, that he refused even to utter their names. He completely repudiated them and their philosophy.

2. Praise of Yahweh—vv. 5-8.

The prayer merges into praise, as the Psalmist gives expression to the great blessings derived from serving Him. He praises Him in the name of Yahweh his Portion.

VERSE 5

"Yahweh is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup"—Similar words were spoken by David when he fled from the persecution of Saul (1 Sam. 26:19).

They expressed his choice of Yahweh as his inheritance, and his readiness to drink of the cup offered him irrespective as to its contents; for "cup" expresses portion or condition (Ps. 11:6), as well as one's thirst for God (Ps. 42:2). At the time, David had been driven from his inheritance by Saul, and was drinking deeply of the bitterness of life. In faith, however, he was prepared to accept that state, confident that, in His own time, Yahweh would deliver him from his enemies, and elevate him according to His promise. In the meantime, his praise of God under the title *Yahweh my Portion* is significant. It emphasises the priestly aspect of David's call. The priests and levites were given no earthly inheritance, for Yahweh was their portion (Num. 18:20; Deut. 10:9; 18:1). As a priestly nation, Yahweh was Israel's portion spiritually (Exod. 19:6; Jer. 10:16), as He was also that of individuals who accepted Him in that way (Ps. 73:26; 119:57; 142:5). The Israelite who took upon himself the vow of the Nazarite accepted Yahweh as his portion, and, for the period of his vow, became as a priest of Israel. David, therefore, spake as king-priest, and in type anticipated the Lord's willingness to drink of the cup offered him (John 18:11).

"Thou maintainest my lot"—The Hebrew is *gowral*, and signifies the pebble by which the lot was determined (see Rev. 2:17). In the beginning, the division of the land was decided by lot (Num. 26:55). However, there was nothing of chance in such a selection; for the lot was governed by God. The use of the lot showed that no Israelite had exclusive right to any part of the land, for his inheritance was determined by Yahweh, as the great Disposer (see Isa. 17:14; Acts 8:21). In the N.T. *inheritance* and *lot* are synonymous terms. See Acts 26:18; Col. 1:12; Eph. 1:14, 18. As David's lot or inheritance was given him of Yahweh, he looked to Him to maintain it.

VERSE 6

"The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places"—The *lines* relate to that portion of the inheritance measured out for David, or Christ. Despite the persecution both suffered, they acknowledged that their measured inheritance was pleasant. They were able to speak thus in spite of unpleasant circumstances because their spiritual vision took in "the joy set before them" (Heb. 12:1-2). Note v. 11.

"Yea, I have a goodly heritage"—Cp. Ps. 27:4.

VERSE 7

"I will bless Yahweh, Who hath given me counsel"—He acknowledges the wisdom of Yahweh's instruction.

"My reins also instruct me in the night season"—"Reins" is old English for *kidneys*. To the Hebrew, the kidneys were the organ of emotion (see note Ps. 7:9). As a function of the body, they separate poison from the nutritive portion of food and expel it from the body. Properly working kidneys are essential to health, and for that reason, and to denote that a true Israelite should always be moved in accordance with Yahweh's will, the kidneys of sacrifices were always offered on the altar. The expression of the Psalmist means that in the quietness of the night, when free from the distracting influences of the day, he meditated upon his experiences, emotions and motives, and was instructed thereby. As he pondered the way of God, his conscience dictated his action.

VERSE 8

"I have set Yahweh always before me"—The Psalm is quoted by Peter as prophetic of Christ (Acts 2:25-28). Indeed, Peter claims that David wrote as "a prophet." Nevertheless, David typed the Lord in the things he now expresses. His spiritual vision constantly brought Yahweh in view; he "walked before Him" and aimed at perfection (Gen 17:1), to which, however, the Lord alone attained. In doing so, he typed the Lord who was ever conscious of the presence of his Father, and of the joy that He had set before him (Heb. 12:2).

"Because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved"—Objects at one's right hand are the more easily grasped, and are more readily accessible for help. The right hand is the position of strength. Yahweh was ever at the right hand of the Psalmist (Ps. 73:23, 26; 109:31; 121:5), and of the Lord (John 16:32) to help.

(3)—**Prospect: in view of Divine help—vv. 9-11.**

In view of divine help in the past, and in spite of pressing problems in the present, the Psalmist views the future with confidence.

VERSE 9

"Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices"—To the Hebrew, the heart was the seat of rational thought, so that when he determined upon an action, it was described as "presuming in his

heart to do so" (Est. 7:5). Exercising the mind upon the things of God rejoiced the heart of the Psalmist, and led him to give expression to it with the voice. His "glory" rejoiced. The Septuagint gives it as his *tongue* doing so, and Peter does also (Acts 2:26), for this organ of the body is capable of expressing glory to its Creator (see the expression used in that way: Ps. 30:12. Cp. Ps. 57:9; James 3:5-9).

"My flesh also shall rest in hope"—The Hebrew is, *Shall dwell confidently* (see mg. and R.V.). Christ confidently gave himself up to death, knowing that he would certainly rise from the grave (John 10:17-18). Those "in Christ" can also rest in hope, for they, also, shall be awakened out of the sleep of death (1 Thess. 4:14; Job 14:14-15; 19:26-27; Isa. 26:19; Dan. 12:1-2). How can David use the expression "my flesh" if the statement relates to Christ? In two ways. Firstly, David wrote as "a prophet" (Acts 2:30), and therefore it is the Spirit that saith: "My flesh shall rest in hope." Secondly, David could utter such words on his own account, for the Christ was "his flesh." Yahweh promised him: "I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom" (2 Sam. 7:12). Christ was "made of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Rom. 1:2).

"Neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption"—Peter's comment (Acts 2:24, 30-35) claims that David was writing as a prophet, and the fulfillment is seen in the risen Lord. How devastating this argument is to so-called *Jehovah's Witnesses*. They claim that the body of the Lord that went into the tomb, never came out alive, but that a different body was given the Christ! But Peter declares that David referred to the flesh of the Lord that went into the tomb as being subjected to a resurrection: "of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit on His throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ" (Acts 2:30-31). The "fruit of David's loins, according to the flesh," does not describe an intangible "spirit" such as they teach, but a real, tangible, visible body: the very body that was crucified and was placed in the tomb. Peter's words, moreover, show how completely David foresaw the death and resurrection of his glorious seed, as being the way to his own resurrection and glorification.

VERSE 10

“For Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell”—The grave loses its sting for the faithful; particularly since the Lord rose therefrom.

VERSE 11

“Thou wilt show me the path of life”—The “path of life,” denotes resurrection to life eternal. David clearly saw that this would only be possible through the death and resurrection of the Christ. In so doing he typed Christ who saw sacrifice as a means of salvation, and death as a door to deliverance.

“In Thy presence is fulness of joy”—Peter further states that David spake of the resurrection of Christ and his ascen-

sion to the right hand of God in glory (Acts 2:31-33). This was “the fulness of joy set before” the Lord (Heb. 12:2) to which David now gives expression in the Psalm.

“At Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore”—Christ ascended to this position, as Peter also declared (Acts 2:33). As such, he assumed the position of Advocate (1 John 2:1-2), the status of power and authority (1 Peter 3:22), and so is able to provide for the redemption of his house, and the ultimate subjection of the nations. Thus the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the pleasures of the future which shall extend through the age to come for evermore.

This Psalm illustrates how that David never wilted under the conditions of adversity to which he was subjected, but at such times, brought into view the concrete blessings received from *Yahweh his Portion*. By meditation upon the hope of his calling in Christ, out of weakness he was made strong, and so gained the victory over self. Christ did likewise, so that both provide an example for all who follow.

—HPM.



“AS A THIEF!”

Political signs indicate that Christ is at the door. As children of light, it is expected of us that we should be fully alive to the situation so that that day should not overtake us as a thief (1 Thess. 5:4). Nevertheless, the implications of Scripture are that among those who should be earnestly watching, there will be some, at least, who will be saying: “My lord delayeth his coming” (Luke 12:45). Christ warned that he will come upon both the household (Luke 12:37-39) and the world (Rev. 16:15) as a thief, with the possibility of taking them unawares. How important to be on the watch, as he exhorts! How encouraging, in this age of depression and evil, to be able to “lift up our heads” realising that “our redemption draweth nigh,” as he invites us so to do! The frustrations of life and the strivings against the flesh we experience now will be over; our efforts to form part of “a people prepared for the Lord,” will receive its reward. For those “who look for him,” and “who love his appearing,” the Lord will “appear the second time

Psalm

17



AN URGENT PRAYER FOR VINDICATION AND PROTECTION

Pressed beyond measure by ruthless and unscrupulous enemies, the Psalmist finds refuge in prayer and Divine communion.

Title Of The Psalm

The Psalm is given as *A Prayer of David*. It shares this title with Psalms 86, 90, 102, 142, all of which are prayers offered to Yahweh in times of stress, and therefore are urgent petitions for help in need.

The word "prayer" is *tephillah* which is expressive of prayer and intercession. A cognate word is *tephillim* which is the title given to the Book of Psalms as a whole. In that relationship, the word signifies a *hymn, a sacred song* as in Hab. 3:1.

Book Two of the Psalms (Pss. 42-72) is rounded off with the statement: "The prayers (tephilloth) of David the son of Jesse are ended" (Ps. 72:20).

Prayer is for both times of need and of rejoicing, and the word is broad enough to incorporate both. In the context of the Psalm before us, it is expressive of the heartfelt pleadings of David for help and communion in a time of bitter trial. The circumstances in which it was composed typified those of Christ, so that it also becomes the out-

pouring of the Beloved's heart to his heavenly Father.

Historical Background

David laments because of "the wicked that oppress me, my deadly enemies who compass me about" (v. 9). He faced dire danger, but found help and relief in communion with Yahweh.

The circumstances of 1 Samuel 23:25-29 provide a suitable background. Saul, determined to destroy David, had bribed some of David's own countrymen to betray him, and advised of his hiding-place, had pursued him with a strong army into the southern wilderness of Judah. David was trapped:

"And Saul went on this side and David and his men on that side of the mountain: and David made haste to get away for fear of Saul; for Saul and his men compassed about David and his men to take them" (1 Sam. 23:26).

In the maze of bald hills in this part of the land, two forces could be inaccessible the one to the other, and yet be within sight and hearing. G. A. Smith writes:

"The story of David's narrow escapes become very vivid among

those tossed and broken hills, where the valleys are all alike, and large bodies of men may camp near each other without knowing it. Ambushes are everywhere possible, and alarms pass rapidly across the bare and silent hills. You may travel for hours and feel as solitary as at sea, without a sail in sight; but if you are in search of anyone, your guide's signal will cause men to leap from slopes that did not seem to shelter a rabbit, and if you are suspected, your passage may be stopped by a dozen men, as if they had sprung from the earth."

Pursued by Saul under such circumstances as that, compassed about by a powerful army, and with escape apparently impossible, David was in deadly fear of his life. He had but one hope: divine protection. So he poured out his heart in prayer to God, and was delivered. On the eve of success, Saul suddenly received a message advising that the Philistines had invaded the land. He was compelled to withdraw from David to meet this great threat. Thus, the ways of Providence provided a means of escape for David. Little did the unknown Philistine leader, who ordered the attack, realise that he was fulfilling the will of Yahweh, and moving to the relief of David, who, later, would become a greater menace to the Philistines than Saul. Perhaps the Philistine attack on Israel had been incited by David's defeat of them at Keilah. Be that as it may, their invasion on this occasion provided the very diversion necessary to save David. Through natural circumstances, but nonetheless by Divine intervention, David's prayer was answered.

Typology

In our treatment of the

Psalms, we have seen that David types both the personal and the multitudinous, Christ. The Psalms composed during the early portion of his life, point forward to the experiences of the Lord; those afterwards, tintured with a consciousness of sin and failure, anticipate the experience of Christ's followers. This Psalm, therefore, is expressive of Christ's own feelings and prayerful utterances. The words of v. 3, though apt enough on the lips of David as an ideal, were fulfilled by the Lord in fact:

*"Thou hast proved mine heart;
Thou hast visited me in the night;
Thou hast tried me, and shalt find
nothing;
I am purposed that my mouth shall not
transgress."*

As the "perfect man" (James 3:2), the Lord accomplished this complete obedience; whereas all lesser mortals seek to do so, with only varying measures of success. Like David, Christ was opposed by enemies from whom he needed protection, and which he received from the Father, until the set time that he had to die. One such occasion was when he visited Nazareth, and the mob thrust him out of the city, and took him to the brow of the Mount of Precipitation, intending to fling him headlong down its steep slopes to his death. But "he passing through the midst of them went his way" (Luke 4:30). Evidently there was a diversion of some kind, and this enabled him to escape.

Analysis

The Psalm is made up of three stanzas (1)—vv. 105; (2)—vv. 6-12; (3)—vv. 13-15. The

thoughts expressed are those of:

- (1)—Desire (vv. 1-5);
- (2)—Danger (vv. 6-12);
- (3)—Deliverance (vv. 13-14);
- (4)—Destiny (v. 15).

Expressing these divisions a little more fully, we have:

- (1)—An Appeal for Justice by one unjustly accused (vv. 1-5).
- (2)—A Prayer for help against an unscrupulous enemy (vv. 6-14).
- (3)—A Request for deliverance from attack, and for the attainment of the promised destiny (vv. 13-15).



(1)—An Appeal For Justice By One Unjustly Accused—vv. 1-5.

The Psalmist earnestly expresses his desire for vindication in the face of unjust accusations. He turns to Yahweh and launches into urgent petition: "Hear," "give heed," "give ear." He seeks the judgment of One who judges impartially. He is confident in the result, for he claims to have set obedience to divine decrees always before his mind.

VERSE 1

"Hear the right, O Yahweh"—The Psalmist is constantly subjected to false accusations; but cannot understand why this is so. He appeals to Yahweh for justification. In this he typed the Lord (John 15:25, cp. v. 18).

"Attend unto my cry"—Rotherham renders this as *my loud cry*. The Hebrew word denotes a shrill, piercing cry, expressive of emotional stress.

"Give ear unto my prayer"—See note on the title of the Psalm.

"That goeth not out of feigned lips"—He emphasises his integrity to One who can read the heart. Rotherham renders: *On lips that would not deceive*. See also margin. Others were claiming that he deceived, that he was a hypocrite.

VERSE 2

"Let my sentence come forth from Thy presence"—"Sentence" is *mishpat*, or *verdict*, and has connotations like "justice" and "judgment." The vindication of the Psalmist rests with Yahweh alone, not with flesh; and to Him he turns with confidence.

"Let Thine eyes behold the things that are equal"—This is an appeal to judge impartially. Rotherham renders: *Let Thine eyes behold with equity*, the idea being, "Let Thine eyes behold the right."

VERSE 3

"Thou hast proved mine heart"—To the Hebrews, the heart is the seat of emotion based on knowledge. The heart is hidden from man, but open to Yahweh. Man can hide the real state of the heart by pretty words and hypocritical actions as did the Pharisees, but Yahweh sees through the disguise to the true state of affairs. The Hebrew *bachan* signifies to investigate, to prove as metal is tried. Despite the trials to which the Psalmist had been subjected, including the hypocritical attacks of his enemies, his heart had remained true with Yahweh.

"Thou hast visited me in the night"—At night thoughts tend to range unrestrained, and a person will appear in his true light (see Ps. 36:4).

"Thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing"—The word "tried" is *tsaraph* and signifies to put to the test so as to purge away impurities (see its use—Ps. 66:10). Only Christ could pray thus in the absolute sense. How, then, could David use such an expression? Only in relation to those allegations of which he was being accused falsely.

"I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress"—The ideal that David set himself was attained only by the "perfect man" (James 3:2), the Lord Jesus Christ. The Spirit in David thus anticipated the Christ. In thought, word and deed (see v. 4), he maintained his integrity before God.

VERSE 4

"Concerning the works of men, by the word of Thy lips"—Taking the next line of the Psalm into account, the Hebrew is: *As to the doings of man, by the words of Thy lips, I have kept from the paths of the violent*. In regard to his behaviour, as a man among men he had followed the

Word of Yahweh, and had resisted the temptation to retaliate against those who unjustly accused him, and sought to put him to death. In the lips of David, the reference to "the violent" points to Saul; in the mouth of the Lord, it takes account of the leaders of the nation who conspired to put him to death.

"I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer"—See note above.

VERSE 5

"Hold up my goings in Thy path"—The Hebrew is more positive; *My steps have held fast to thy tracks*. "Paths" in this verse is from a different word to that of the previous verse. Here it is *magaloth*, and signifies a deep track or

trench, something like a rut which directs the course of one walking therein. It is from a root signifying that which is circular in shape, so that the idea is that of going round and round in the same track, and not deviating therefrom.

"That my footsteps slip not"—Again, the Hebrew is a positive assertion: *My feet have not slipped*. The Psalmist asserts his integrity before Yahweh in contrast to the accusations of his enemy. The application to David is clear; the application to the Lord more complete. The former typed the latter in his ideals and his experiences, though not always in his obedience.

— H. P. M.

(To be continued)

GARMENTS of GLORY and BEAUTY

"They part my garments among them, And cast lots upon my vesture"—Ps. 22:18.

How many Jews, on that eventful day of Christ's crucifixion, called to mind the words cited above, and stood in wonderment at the remarkable fulfilment of Scripture?

Certainly, we can marvel at the foreknowledge of God, and His power to bring about such things as are written in this Psalm. As we do so, do we also enquire of ourselves, why, in God's purpose, they *parted* his raiment among them, and *cast lots* for his vesture? In fulfilment, John records:

"The soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout" (John 19:23).

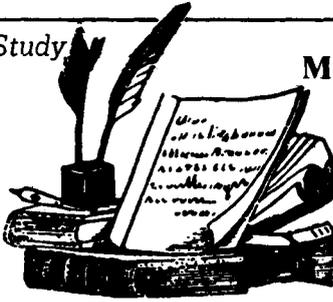
The Parted Garment

There are two garments spoken of here: "The soldiers took his garments." Regarding the first garment, it is recorded that they "made four parts of it." This was because the garment was made of four parts. The second garment, the coat, was different: "The coat was without seam woven throughout" (v.23). They therefore did not part this garment, but cast lots for it.

With that in mind, let us recall where other Scriptures refer to a four-part garment.

Aaron the High Priest, wore a garment, called the ephod, of four colours: blue, purple, scarlet and fine twined linen. (Exod. 28:40). It, therefore, was

Psalm
17



SAVIOUR OF
THOSE
WHO FLEE

We continue our study of this very moving Psalm, (see page 26), observing that it is Messianic in concept, though historically based upon the personal experiences of David. Beset by proud and pitiless enemies, David sought refuge in the protection and vindication of Yahweh Whom he addresses as "Moshiah Chosim," the Saviour of those who flee.

A Prayer For Help Against An Unscrupulous Enemy—vv. 6-14

In view of help received in the past, David makes an impassioned plea for further assistance in his present danger. He ventures to ask Yahweh to do something out of the ordinary on his behalf. He addresses Him as "Moshiah Chosim," and on the grounds that his enemies are also the enemies of God, he seeks His help to escape them. By graphic figures he illustrates their ferocious determination to destroy him.

VERSE 6

"I have called upon Thee, for Thou wilt hear me, O God"—Recalling previous occasions when God had answered prayer, David, in his present distress, again addressed God, convinced that He will answer. The word for "hear" is *'anah*. It signifies more than a passive listening, and denotes a response. The RV renders the phrase as *Thou wilt answer me*. David addressed his appeal to God, using the title *El*, the Strong One, who has the ability to save.

"Incline Thine ear unto me, and hear my speech"—Brief and urgent were the two pleas: *Incline Thine ear: hear my words*. David did not presume upon God's help, even though He had experienced it in the past; he humbly recognised the privilege of addressing

God, and prayed that He might bend His ear in condescension to hearken to his words. To incline one's ear, is to bend down in sympathetic concentration to listen to the words of one in desperate need. The idea is that of a visitor at the bedside of a desperately sick relation, bending down to hear his voice weakened through his illness.

VERSE 7

"Show Thy marvellous loving-kindness, O Thou that savest by Thy right hand them which put their trust in Thee"—David's need, at the time, was great, and his enemies strong. He pleaded for a special manifestation of divine grace, something out of the ordinary, in which to cope with the situation. The circumstances, most likely, were those described in 1 Sam. 23:27, when David was in retreat from Saul (see outline of the Psalm, p. 23). For their antitypical application to the Lord, consider how ruthless were his enemies, and how fervent were his prayers. Paul wrote (Heb. 5:7): "In the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save him out of (see Greek) death, and was heard in that he feared." Extraordinary circumstances of grace delivered David out of the hands of Saul, and Christ out of the

power of the grave. Both David and Christ "put their trust" in God, and fled to Him for refuge.

Now consider how completely David's prayer has been answered, and how we share in its provision. He requested a wonder out of the ordinary, in which Yahweh's loving-kindness, or grace, would be manifested to the superlative degree, providing a refuge to which one can flee. The prayer was answered in the provision of the Lord Jesus Christ, the channel of divine grace to humanity, who, himself, has earned the title of *The Wonderful* (Isa. 9:6). Indeed, so appropriate is the provision of the Lord to the antitypical requirements of the Psalm, that some have rendered the line: *Make Thy Holy One a wonder, and a Saviour to those who trust*. This rendition makes the prayer a request for the coming of Messiah, a hope that David had ever before him (Acts 2:25-31).

In the Hebrew, the words *Thou that savest them that put their trust in Thee* are represented by two words only, words which in this context, constitute yet another Divine title: one that can be used in time of desperate need—*Moshiah Chosim*. The first is derived from the verb *yasha*, "he will save," found in the name of Jesus, and therefore denotes *The Saviour*, whilst *Chosim* is a plural word denoting those who urgently and precipitously flee to a place of security, such as a city of refuge. Concerning this provision of the Law, Yahweh declared to Moses, "I will appoint thee a place whither he (the man threatened with death) shall flee" (Exod. 21:13; Num. 35:11,22-28; Deut. 4:41; Josh. 20:2). Elsewhere we read: "The name of Yahweh is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe" (Prov. 18:10). The name of Yahweh, in all its fullness, is manifested in the Lord Jesus Christ (Col. 1:9), who, in the terms of the title now before us, comprises a city of refuge for believers. So Paul exhorts: "By two immutable things (the promise and the oath), in which it was impossible for God to lie, we have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us" (Heb. 6:18).

David also prayed that Yahweh should extend Himself to save by His "right hand." The "right hand" of God is frequently used to describe the instrument of deliverance (Psa. 44:3; 98:1). Moses is described as Yahweh's "right hand" by which the people of Israel were

gathered out of Egypt (Isa. 63:12); and Christ is described as His "right hand" to effect the salvation of those called to that end (Psa. 80:17; 110:1,5; Acts 2:33). Who could doubt that this is a Messianic Psalm!

"From those that rise up against them"

—David put no confidence in his own ability to overcome such. See Ps. 5:11-12; 10:12-16.

VERSE 8

"Keep me as the apple of the eye"—This is a Scriptural expression that has found its way into the English language to denote something tender and precious, and is even listed as such in the *Encyclopedic World Dictionary*. But to what, in fact, does it refer? And what constitutes "the apple" of the eye? It is suggested that it relates to the pupil of the eye, a word taken from the Latin *pupilla*, literally signifying *little doll*. The eyes are the most tender parts of the body. By a wise Creator, they have been placed in the skull as to be protected by an encasement of bones. They are set back in a recess, so as to be out of harm's way, where the hands can more easily protect them. He has further guarded them from dust and other harm by eyelashes, eyelids, and eyebrows. An individual's personality shines forth from the eyes more than any other part of the body. The various emotions of anger, pity, love, or sympathy are reflected through the eyes more genuinely than elsewhere. The mouth might smile, or the tongue might speak, but if the eyes remain hard, the true attitude of the individual is thereby revealed.

The phrase, as it appears in the Hebrew, is even more significant than in the English version of the Psalm. There are three words used, all of which are highly significant in the context in which they are presented. The literal Hebrew is *the pupil the daughter of the eye*. The first word is from the Hebrew *'ishown*. It is a diminutive of *ish* (man), and signifies *little man*. Why should such a word be used to describe the pupil of the eye? Because when one looks at an object, a miniature reflection of it is revealed in the eye. In fact, the object looked at will seem to fill the eye. Thus, if the spiritual vision is centred upon the Lord Jesus Christ, he will be seen reflected therefrom. He will fill the eye, and will govern the entire outlook of such a

person. In his desperate need, David looked earnestly towards God, so that his spiritual vision was filled with the realisation that only He could help: and this became the "little man" of his eye. On the other hand, he asked Yahweh to so look upon him, that he become "the little man of God's eye," never out of the sight of Yahweh.

The next word of interest in the phrase, a word that has entirely been left out of the translation of the A. V., is the word *bath* or "daughter." Rotherham, in a footnote, gives the literal significance of the Hebrew: "the mannikin (little man) of the daughter of the eye." Why such a word, in such a context? Because David, like Christ, was representative of a class of persons: those described as the bride of Yahweh, or of Christ. In those cases, the brides can also be classed as daughters: "For thy Maker is thine Husband; Yahweh of hosts is His name" (Isa. 54:5). As such Israel had a claim on her Maker, and through the lips of David, pleaded His help in time of need.

The final word is *'ayin*, or "eye." The eye is the organ of sight and emotion. Spiritually, a healthy "eye" is vital (See Matt. 6:22-23), for through it light is brought to the whole body. It is significant, that in the Hebrew, the same word does duty for both *eye* and *foundation*, for as tears well out of the eyes, so water gushes forth from a fountain (cp. John 4:14). The redeemed are referred to both as "the eyes of Yahweh" (Zech. 4:10), and as wells of living water (John 7:38). They are moved with Godly emotion, as well as being repositories of the refreshing water of life.

"Hide me under the shadow of Thy wings"—The fierce protective care of a mother-bird for her young is illustrative of Yahweh's care for His own (Deut. 32:11), a characteristic which was manifested by the Lord Jesus even to Israel after the flesh (Matt. 23:37). It is significant that the figures of this verse, the apple, the eye and the wings are together referred to in Deut. 32:10-11.

VERSE 9

"From the wicked that oppress me"—The word "wicked" is rendered by Rotherham as *lawless ones*. Such a class violently opposed both David and Christ because they treated God's law with contempt. Reference to such an attitude

is made by John in his 1st Ep. 3:4, and there incorrectly rendered as *transgression of the law*. In the Greek, this is but one word *anomia*, and is better rendered as *lawlessness*. The phrase reads: "*the sin is lawlessness.*" The definite article is supplied to indicate the worst form of sin. Nobody "begotten of God" will commit that sin (1 John 3:8), though they may be guilty of lesser sins. Completely impervious to the law of God, lacking any respect for Yahweh, the lawless do not hesitate to treat His servants with violence. David described their ruthless ferocity in the expressions that follow.

"From my deadly enemies who compass me about"—The word "deadly" in Hebrew is *nepshesh*, elsewhere rendered "soul." David's enemies, like those of Christ, were intent upon destroying his very life (1 Sam. 24:11). The metaphor is taken from the practise of huntsmen, who encircle their quarry, so as to provide no means of escape.

VERSE 10

"They are enclosed with their own fat"—The RV mg renders: *They have shut up their heart*. Others: *Their heart is a lump of fat*. The idea is They have no thought or feeling. They "shut up their bowels of compassion" (1 John 3:17; Ps. 119:70). The expression is frequently used to denote prosperity (Ps. 22:29; 92:14), as well as dulness to divine responsibilities (Isa. 6:10).

"With their mouth they speak proudly"—They spake with confidence because they felt that they had their quarry in their power. That was the attitude of the enemies of both David and Christ, until Yahweh moved for their vindication.

VERSE 11

"They have compassed us in our steps"—David found himself surrounded with enemies so numerous and powerful, that he could not extricate himself, without the help of God. The Lord Jesus was in similar plight; but in both cases Yahweh came to their aid.

"They have set their eyes bowing down to the earth"—The RV renders this: *They set their eyes to cast us down to the earth*. In other words: their enemies watched intently for opportunities to overthrow them. This was true of the opposition experienced by both David

and Christ. However, the AV rendition suggests the attitude of the hunter searching for the footprints of its prey.

VERSE 12

"Like as a lion that is greedy of his prey"—Describing the fierce and unrelenting character of the pursuit of their enemy.

"And as it were a young lion lurking in secret places"—Implying the skill and virility displayed by the enemy.

(c)—A Request For Deliverance From Attack—vv. 13-15

Recognising his own inability to cope with the problem facing him, David prays for Yahweh to arise, and figuratively to take up His sword and rescue him from the fierce beasts that threatened to destroy him.

VERSE 13

"Arise, O Yahweh disappoint him, cast him down"—David recognised that the trial facing him was beyond his strength and ability to overcome, and sought the aid of Yahweh to that end. Let us remember that He is an ever ready help in time of trouble. Let us place our confidence and trust in Him as *Moshiah Chosim*, The Saviour of those who flee to the city of refuge.

"Deliver my soul from the wicked which is Thy sword"—"Wicked" is the same word in the Hebrew as that used in v. 9, but here it is in the singular number. David had in mind one particular enemy who relentlessly pursued him to destroy him: Saul. The RV renders the latter part of the line as *Thy sword*. The Hebrew merely has *Thy sword*. The RV, and mg of the AV seem to express the correct idea. David called upon Yahweh to relieve him of his enemy by entering the lists against him as a warrior.

VERSE 14

"From men which are Thy hand, O Yahweh"—See margin, and note above.

"From men of the world, which have their portion in this life"—The word "men" in this verse is from the Hebrew *mathim* signifying adult males, with also the implication of mortality. It has been rendered *mortal* (*Hebrew Students Manual*), and as such is in a fit context with the rest of the Psalm.

"And whose belly Thou fillest with Thy

hid treasure"—The reference to "hid treasure" suggests something whose value is not properly appreciated. The enemies of David, and of Christ, were also the enemies of God, yet they were completely dependent on Yahweh for all the things that make up the life that even they desire. See Job 22:18; Matt. 5:45; Luke 16:25.

They are described as being "men of the world," because their aims and objects belong exclusively to this temporal and passing world of mortality, "that passeth away" (See 1 Cor. 7:31; John 15:19; Luke 16:8; 20:34-35; Phil. 3:19, and contrast Ps. 16:5).

"They are full of children"—They have a numerous progeny, so that there are always plenty of "men of the world," and they seem to prosper (cp. Ps. 73:2-3). The confidence of such is in their numbers. Rotherham renders this line as *They must be satisfied with sons*, implying that their very mortality shows that they will have no personal future, and their only hope is in their posterity.

"And leave the rest of their substance to their babes"—This is rendered by Rotherham as *And must leave their abundance to their children*. Again this implies that they have no personal future, a great contrast to the confidence of hope expressed in the last verse of the Psalm.

(d)—A Plea For The Attainment of the Promised Destiny—v. 15

In contrast to "men of the world," who only have an appointed time to enjoy life, David sets forth his hope of life eternal by a resurrection from the grave, and the attainment of the divine likeness.

VERSE 15

"As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness"—In this statement, David boldly predicts his destiny. He looks beyond the resurrection when he will be clothed upon with divine nature (Dan. 12:2), and will be able to look upon that which it is impossible for mortal eyes to behold (see Matt. 13:43; 16:27; 1 Tim. 6:15-16).

"I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness"—David looked forward to when he will be made consubstantial with the Lord (See Phil. 3:21; 1 John 3:2-3). The redeemed will then possess the glory (Rom. 5:2), nature (2 Pet. 1:4), and name of Yahweh (Rev. 3:12), in contrast to men of the world,

who having had their day, will remain forever in the grave: "they shall go to the generation of their fathers; they shall never see light" (Psa. 49:19). As Paul contemplated the destinies of both classes he was able to say in truth: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not

worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18). The past sufferings and present glory of the Lord demonstrate that truth, and the time is approaching when David in post-resurrectional glory will do so also. —HPM.

you tell on ... yourself!

In a moment of deep stress and trial, a Sister came upon the following poem which greatly encouraged her. Later she learned that the fortitude she had manifested in her troubles had demonstrated to others her trust in the Father, and so there was opened up an avenue for proclaiming the Truth. Now, relieved of her distress through the mercy of God, she would like to share the poem with others.

*You tell on yourself by the friends you seek,
By the very manner in which you speak;
By the way you employ your leisure time,
By the use you make of the dollar and dime.*

*You tell on yourself by the things you wear,
By the spirit in which your burdens you bear,
By the kind of things at which you laugh,
By the records you play on your phonograph.*

*You tell what you are by the way you walk,
By the things in which you delight to talk,
By the manner in which you bear defeat,
By so simple a thing, as how you eat.*

*By the books you choose from a well-filled shelf,
In these ways, and more, you tell on yourself.
So there's not really very much sense
In trying to keep up a false pretense,*

YOU TELL ON YOURSELF.

with Christ's mission. So it is in ecclesias as believers grow to spiritual maturity.

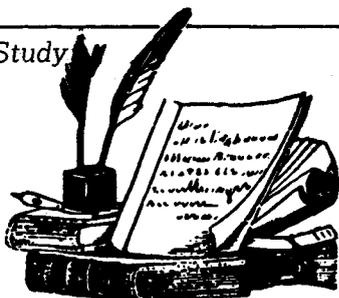
The record states the "Jesus loved Martha, Mary and Lazarus" (John 11). No greater encouragement could be given to any sister to walk in the footsteps of Mary than those words. She revealed many characteristics

that we can try to emulate. Though, like Mary, our attitude may result in misunderstanding, and even rebuke, on the part of some who should know better, let us press on in faith, knowing that an attitude like her's will win the love and approval of Christ in the end.

— I. Dyer (NSW)

Theme For Study

Psalm 18



DAVID'S PSALM OF PRAISE AND VICTORY

Probably the best example of David's poetic genius, and perhaps his favourite Psalm is the one we commence this month. We say this, not because we have any specific reference on the part of David claiming it as such, but found, in almost identical form, in 2 Samuel 22. When David desired to express his gratitude to Yahweh in a song of praise and victory, he did so in the words recorded there, and which find their amended form in the Psalm before us. We shall find the study of it — the longest Psalm in Book One of the Psalter, an exciting adventure in Bible exegesis.

Title Of The Psalm

The Psalm is given as coming from David, and it is prefaced with quite a lengthy introduction:

"A Psalm of David, the servant of Yahweh, who spake unto Yahweh the words of this song in the day that Yahweh delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul; and he said. . . ."

The Psalm, therefore, is the outpouring of David's heart in love and gratitude to Yahweh his Deliverer. David is described as the servant of Yahweh, a significant expression, for at the time referred to, David appears as both King and Servant. As a King, he is shown in his palace (2 Sam. 7:1); as a Servant, he is

described as sitting "before Yahweh" (2 Sam. 7:18-19). The King had been humbled by the magnitude of the covenant made with him, and, as a humble servant, recognised his subordinate status before his God.

The title over the Psalm tells us that this was a *song* that David composed. The word used signifies a form of poetry that gave expression to the rejoicing of his heart, causing his lips to respond with words of praise and adoration unto Yahweh. The Hebrew *shirah* (song) signifies to sing publicly, that others may hear. This, probably, accounts for the variations found in the two accounts of the Psalm; for there are slight emendations in that recorded as Psalm 18, in comparison with the son of 2 Samuel 22.

These changes have exercised the concern of commentators, but unnecessarily so. They have been made, we believe, because of the different circumstances and usages of the songs. In 2 Samuel 22, we have the song as David composed it originally, and offered it in praise unto Yahweh as the expression of his heart; in Psalm 18, we have the same song amended for the purposes of the Temple service. It will be noted that Psalm 18 is dedicated *unto the chief musician* a dedication lacking in the record of it in 2 Samuel 22. Psalms thus designated were given over to the Temple service; and from this, and for that purpose, we suggest that David changed the words of his original song. Thus both the account of the song in 2 Samuel 22, and that included in

the Psalter as Psalm 18, are equally inspired.

We shall note these changes as we discuss the Psalm verse by verse.

Historical Background

The title clearly indicates the circumstances in which the song was composed. It was at the time of David's triumph, when he was at rest in the kingdom, delivered from the hands of his enemies, including Saul.

The inclusion of Saul by name is significant, for he has found a place frequently in the Psalms, but usually without being named. He is the "wicked one" referred to in such places as Ps. 9:5, 16-17; 10:2,3,4; 17:9,13 etc., and appears in the Psalms as typical of the leaders of Judah who opposed the greater than David in the days of his flesh.

Historically, the Psalm draws attention to the time when David received the covenant of promise. The account of this covenances with the statement:

"And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and Yahweh had given him rest round about from all his enemies; that the king said. . ." (2 Sam. 7:1).

This, undoubtedly, is the epoch referred to in the Introduction to the Psalm. The circumstances reveal a remarkable transition. The Chapter first introduces the reader to the king seated in his palace, and in his prosperity expressing a desire to build a similar suitable edifice to house the ark of God. However, he is not permitted to proceed with his project, but instead is elevated by the wonderful promise that we know as "the covenant made with David." The

condescension of Yahweh in granting this promise so humbles the King that he leaves his palace and makes his way to the ark in its tent (temporary abode). There, as humble suppliant and servant, he "sat before Yahweh." His heart was full of overflowing with gratitude for all that he had received. He reviewed the past in regard to his life, and saw it as prophetic of the future. He recognised his life's history as typical of that of the seed promised him.

Actually, at that point of time, David's battles were not at an end. The kingdom was under his control, he had received the homage of all twelve tribes; but it had yet to be developed into an empire by the subjugation of surrounding nations. And this occupied his time after a short interlude, as the record shows, for in 2 Samuel 8, David is described as being engaged in a war of conquest.

The Psalm fits into those circumstances. Whilst it speaks of past triumphs over domestic enemies (cp. v.39), it refers to battles yet to be won in Yahweh's name (v.3), and of foreign powers that would be forced to submit to the King's authority (vv. 44-47).

But the early difficulties of David's lot were over, and the warrior-king was at peace. The hair-breadth escapes of his flight from Saul, when his life was in hourly peril, and he knew not whither to turn for safety, were finished. The miseries and bitterness of civil strife, through which, though chosen by Yahweh to rule His people, he had to

fight his way to the throne, had been successfully resolved. David had been preserved through every danger; victory had accompanied his arms; he was the accepted king of a united people; the surrounding nations recognised his royal dignity.

And to crown all else, Yahweh's message, communicated by Nathan, elevated, in prospect, the shepherd boy to the highest pinnacle of glory possible for flesh to attain. It opened up a vista of unending majesty and glory for both him and his posterity.

It was at such an hour of his greatest prosperity and happiness, and before further heavy dark clouds of trouble, caused through his folly rolled over to blot out for a moment the prospect of such a splendid future, that this magnificent hymn of thanksgiving and praise was composed. In it David surveys the course of his eventful life, tracing the hand of God in every step, and with heart overflowing in solemn gratitude for the past, and joyous anticipation of the future, acknowledges his dependence upon his God. It is to the loving care and unfailing goodness of Yahweh that the king owes both past and present, as well as the future yet to be revealed.

Typical Prophecy

The Psalm is Messianic. This is shown by the citation of it found in the New Testament. Compare the introduction with the words of Zacharias as he speaks of the significance of the birth of his son, forerunner of Messiah:

“That He would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve Him without fear” (Luke 1:74).

Such a statement is an echo of the introduction to the Psalm.

Again, consider the description David gives of God as “the horn of my salvation” (v. 2), in the light of Zacharias’ further comment:

“He raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David” (Luke 1:69).

In v. 3, David praises Yahweh because, as he says, “I shall be saved from mine enemies.” These words are also taken up by Zacharias:

“That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us” (Luke 1:71).

Other Messianic references are found throughout the Psalm, and it concludes by the words of praise.

Great deliverance giveth He to His king;

And sheweth mercy to His Messiah,

To David, and to his seed for evermore.

This final statement can only apply at the resurrection of David, when he will personally witness the glory of the promised seed.

How much of this Messianic content of the Psalm was appreciated by David? We believe much more than he is given credit for. We are convinced that David saw his life as a type of his greater son, and because of that composed this Psalm with even greater vigour. We say this on the basis of Peter’s comment on the Day of Pentecost:

“David being a prophet, and knowing

that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption” (Acts 2:30-31).

Peter claimed that David looked forward to the death and resurrection of Christ. More, than that, he also saw that Christ would be preserved from corruption in the grave. David, therefore, like Abraham before him, “saw Christ’s day and was glad.” He foresaw that the promised seed would “suffer,” be “chastened,” be put to death, and resurrected to glory (2 Sam. 7:14).

The Psalm before us gives expression to this. Borne out of David’s own troubles and strivings, and recording his personal thanksgiving to Yahweh for His overshadowing goodness, it is yet prophetic of what he knew his more glorious son would experience. In the opposition of Saul and his followers, David had suffered the “enmity” of the seed of the serpent (Gen. 3:15), and through his profound comprehension of the Divine purpose, recognised that the seed promised him, the future Messiah of Israel and the whole world, would experience similar opposition.

Thus, as David gave thanks for his personal victories, he, at the same time, provided a prophecy of Christ’s strivings and ultimate victory. As in another place where he states: “Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell,” and Peter explains that he was really referring to Christ as his glorious antitype, so in the Psalm before us.

In that light, the Psalm is remarkable. As prophecy it foreshadows:

- The Source of Christ's strength — vv. 1-3;
- The extent of his trials unto death — vv. 4-6;
- His resurrection and the wonders that accompanied it (darkness, earthquake, dissolution of the Jewish State etc) — vv. 7-18;
- The divine approval of the son — vv. 19-24;
- The calling out of a people by the Gospel — vv. 25-28;
- The future conquest of the world — vv. 29-45;
- Universal reign and worship — vv. 46-50.

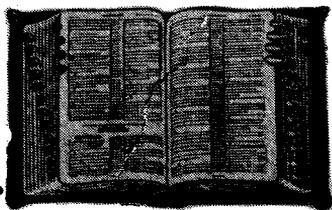
Viewed in this light, the Psalm

is a prophecy of the birth, life, death, and resurrection of the Lord; the proclamation of the Gospel; and the future work and glory of Christ's conquest of the nations and his reign. The life of David typed the life of the Lord, so as to foreshadow the whole purpose of Yahweh in him.

We suggest that the reader, with this prophetic analysis before him, again read the Psalm, as a preparation for a closer look at the verses. He may, perhaps, see more in it than he ever thought possible.

HPM.

Questions Answered



THE TWO FEET OF THE IMAGE

Continuing our answer to the questions posed last month (see pp. 60-62).

The Babylonish Head

Last month, our correspondent made the point:

"As the Image is smitten upon the feet, and the head of the Image is Babylon, is not the Image rather the final confederacy of the ten kings which give their power to the Beast (Papal Rome) in opposition to Christ, for one hour, before being subdued before the Lord's anointed?"

As is appropriate, we consider the head first, and will then move down to the feet. The head of the image is Babylon. This identifies it with modern-day Babylon, the Babylon the Great, of *The Apocalypse*. The identification of

the head of the Image as Babylonian, suggests that the political organisation to be set up in Europe will be Babylonish in thought and motivation. In other words, it will be Catholic in conception, for the teaching and practises of the Roman Catholic Church are Babylonish in concept.

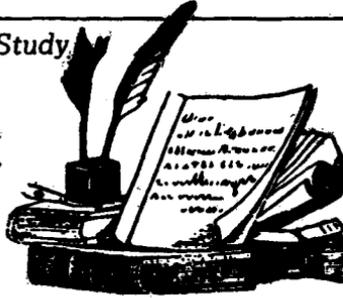
That being the case, we today, some 2500 years after the vision was displayed to the king, can see it developing. What is the unifying power of Europe? Undoubtedly, the Roman Catholic Church. It forms a uniting bridge

deliverance that had been devised by the Father for the redemption of His people; and in eating thereof, he witnessed that his redemption formed part of

the results that accrued from the offering of the lamb of which he, as the Lamb of God, was the glorious antitype.

Theme For Study

Psalm 18



DAVID'S SOURCE OF STRENGTH

David's praise of Yahweh finds expression in a profusion of Divine titles that are expressive of his source of strength, and, prophetically, reveal the means whereby Christ also overcame the flesh. We, too, in measure, can follow the Lord along the same path of obedience, seeking strength from Yahweh, and finding Him to be all that David did as expressed in the titles he used. This chapter of the Bible uses a greater variety of Divine titles than any other.

A Messianic Psalm

The Eighteenth Psalm is undoubtedly Messianic, yet not predictive of Christ in the same high and exclusive sense as the Hundred-and-tenth. It was written by David in thankful commemoration of the kindness of Yahweh in delivering him "from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul." Not only is there a superscription to that effect, but the whole poem is inserted in the history of David's reign (2 Sam. 22), as a document relative to the period. On what principle can we refer to Christ a song in which David speaks of himself, his dangers, his marvellous escapes, the eventual

establishment of his throne and the extension of his reign? On the principle of Biblical typology. The Spirit has selected incidents in the life of David that shadow forth the substance seen in the life of the Lord, and has fitted them into a Psalm that becomes prophetic of Christ in his birth, ministry, resurrection, ascension and future glory.

VERSE BY VERSE NOTES

(a) **The Source Of Christ's Strength — vv. 1-3**

David pours out his heart in thanksgiving unto Yahweh for the strength he obtained in life, by which he was enabled to conquer every difficulty. His experience foreshadows that of the Lord, "the son of man whom Yahweh made strong for Himself" (Psa. 80:17). The warrior-king

saw in God his real Weapons of war and Source of defence.

VERSE 1

"I will love Thee, O Yahweh, my Strength" — The verse (omitted in 2 Sam. 22) is challenging in its form. The verb *love* is the Hebrew *racham*, normally to extend or receive mercies. In *Qal*, however it becomes expressive of strong and tender love, and is rendered by Perowne as *Fervently do I love thee*. David had every reason to do so, for he could look back upon an eventful life: one full of peril and full of mercy, in which the strength of Yahweh had been manifested on his behalf. the word "strength" is from the Hebrew *chazaq*, signifying a strength obtained from help received. David was conscious of that help, as was also the Lord Jesus Christ. His love for Yahweh was more than matched by that of the Lord, who, to an even greater degree, could look to Yahweh as his source of strength: "For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself." There was matchless co-operation between the Father and the Son to produce the perfection of character thus revealed, so providing an acceptable sacrifice for sin.

VERSE 2

"Yahweh is my Rock, and my Fortress, and my Deliverer" — The warrior king describes Yahweh in military terms, illustrating that he placed no undue confidence in the normal weapons of war. To external appearances he advanced against Goliath with a sling and a stone, but, in fact, approached him in "the name of Yahweh of Armies, the God of the armies of Israel!" (1 Sam. 17:45). The terms he now uses illustrate that. Rock is *sela*. The word occurs frequently in Scripture as a divine title, always expressing the idea of permanence, of safety as a place of refuge, and of security as a shelter. It is from a root signifying that which is high and inaccessible. It suggests a rocky, precipitous cliff, upon which one might take refuge, or in the clefts of which can be found places of concealment, a safe refuge from danger. Yahweh is likened to such a cliff, for He is Himself immutable and immovable; He is an impenetrable shelter to all that seek Him.

The use of the word is found in 1 Sam. 23:25-28. David, with his followers, had found refuge in a rock (*sela*), but even

that vantage point was not sufficient to save him from Saul, and he had to withdraw from it. He was on the point of being caught by the superior forces of Saul, when an invasion of Philistines made it necessary for Saul to break off the chase, and defend his position before this greater enemy. David was saved: not by the rock in which he had earlier taken shelter, but by Yahweh Who had once again revealed Himself as a Protection for those who turn to Him.

In Song 2:14, the Bride of Christ is represented as hiding in the cleft of the Rock (*Sela*). The Bride is likened to the dove, that finds refuge in such places, immune from danger (cp. Jer. 48:28).

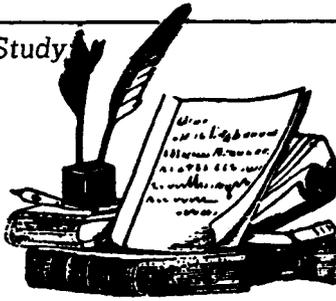
The word is used in Numbers 20:8 for the "rock" from whence came forth water to refresh the people of Israel. Moses was told to "speak" unto the rock and the miracle would happen. Instead, rendered impatient by the criticism of the people, he "struck" the rock, and though water flowed forth, he was punished for failing to carry out the instructions of Yahweh correctly. The Cliff should not have been smitten, as the previous Rock (*Tzur*) was smitten (Exod. 17:5). There is need only to speak to that "Sela," and refreshment will come (James 1:5).

Isaiah, in describing the character of the coming Kingdom, declares that the Lord, as the manifestation of *Yahweh the Rock* shall be "as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Here the word is used of a cliff as a place of refuge and shelter from the burning sands of the desert unrelieved by any sign of growth — a "weary land."

On one occasion, we visited the Dead Sea area in the middle of summer. The heat was intense and extremely exhausting. Not only did it stream down from the sun above, but was reflected from the white, salt-coated earth beneath. The only shelter was in a cave in a cliff. We were warned to enter it gradually, as the contrast in temperature was so extreme. We doubted the need of the warning, but found it to be true to fact. Though, in the sun, the temperature was over 150%, in the shelter of the cliff-cave it dropped to about 70% and the relief was intense. An enterprising Jew was even selling cool drinks, chilled only by the temperature of the cliff cave. The Dead Sea area was well known to David. He was familiar with its cliffs and caves but his real Shelter was not in such, but in Yahweh his God.

—HPM

Psalm
18



DAVID'S
SOURCE
OF
STRENGTH

DAVID'S DEFENCE AND WEAPONS OF WAR

David continues to address Yahweh in terms that reveal his complete trust and confidence in His help. He uses titles that demonstrate the aid that is available to the faithful in the warfare of the truth. Our last article considered portion of v. 2: "Yahweh is my Rock, and my Fortress, and my Deliverer," dealing specifically with Yahweh as the Rock, or Cliff, as the Hebrew expresses it. We now consider the other titles used.

Yahweh was to David, not merely a cliff, but also a fortress. The Hebrew word is *metseudah*, and signifies a mountain fortress, encircled with a strong defence. Imagine a high, precipitous cliff, at the top of which, protected by its craggy peak, there is established a well defended fortress. In such a place, a warrior would be immune from effective attack. The Jebusites had such a fortress, and boasted to David that the blind and the lame were sufficient to defend it against attack (2 Sam. 5:6). David manifested no such self-confidence in normal means of defence. His mountain fortress was Yahweh. He looked to Him for protection from attack. In the stress and battle of life, God had ever proved Himself to be a reliable refuge and hiding-place for David. He subscribed to the principle expressed in Prov. 18:10: "The name of Yahweh is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe."

Finally, in this line, David describes Yahweh as his Deliverer. The Hebrew root signifies a means of escape. How often on the point of capture, had David been delivered from the hands of his enemies through the help of Yahweh! From Saul, from the Philistines, from other enemies, even from his son, he had experienced treachery, but his life had been overshadowed by Yahweh, Who had provided a means of escape in the

most difficult of circumstances. He was his Deliverer.

And whilst these expressions were true of David, they were more completely true of Christ, the Messiah, who is never lost sight of in this Psalm. Time and again, the Lord was able to escape from the hands of those who set out to harm him. In Nazareth, when the mob would have flung him to his death down the steep slopes of the Mount of Precipitation, and angrily assaulted him to that end, "he passing through the midst of them went his way" (Luke 4:30). Some diversion occurred which provided him with the opportunity to escape, and he made use of it. Again, when in Jerusalem the people took up stones to cast at him, a means of escape was provided which he used (John 8:59). On another occasion, when he had angered the leaders of the people by describing them as hirelings, in contrast with the good shepherd, and they determined to apprehend him, "he escaped out of their hand" (John 10:39). His time, as he told his opponents on one occasion, "had not yet come," and until it did, their efforts to destroy him were in vain.

Yahweh was to the Lord a means of shelter, protection and escape. He can be so to all who put their trust in Him, though they need to use the opportunities that He will provide. Neither David, nor

the Lord, were exempt from trouble and trial. Nevertheless, in all difficult circumstances they learned to place implicit trust in God, and therefore could view Him as expressed in the titles before us.

David's application of the titles to God, reveal them to be descriptive captions of what Yahweh can become to all those who are prepared to trust Him in their daily lives.

"My God, my strength in whom I will trust" — The divine titles continue to flow from the pen of David as he reviews his life. Yahweh is his God. The word is *El*, and is expressive of power and might. His strength was God derived, because he permitted God to work through him. Paul wrote: "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). We can permit God to work in us, or we can resist His will in that regard. The Lord prayed: "Not my will but Thine be done," and in doing so submitted to whatever his heavenly Father required of him. God becomes our strength, our *El* when we permit His word to motivate us, and shape our characters. He was such to David; and He was such, to an even greater degree, to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord's sonship provided a basis for even greater strength, so that it is said of him: "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father" (John 1:14). Certainly such a one illustrated that Yahweh was his *El*.

He was also David's "strength." Here the word is *Tzur*, a word frequently rendered as *Rock*. This word is used to describe the rock that Moses was called upon to smite to provide the water of life, as recorded in Exodus 17. The people had asked, "Is Yahweh among us or not?" The smitten *Tzur*, with its life-giving water freely flowing therefrom provided the answer. There was no doubting that Yahweh was among them when such a miracle was in evidence. "And that rock was Christ" (1 Cor. 10:4), for he was "God manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3:16). The people had evidence in the risen Christ that Yahweh is *El* (power). The Christ-rock had been smitten when he was crucified, but as the risen Lord, had revealed himself to be a Rock (*Tzur*) of strength from whence came the refreshing water of life.

The hard, rugged, granite of rocks that Moses saw in the wilderness of Sinai are expressive of that which is immutable.

unchangeable, enduring. Accordingly, in his Song of Witness to the people of Israel, Moses refers to Yahweh as a Rock (*Tzur*) no less than five times — the number of grace (Deut. 32:4, 15, 18, 30, 31). He so used the term as to denote eternal strength and unchangeableness. In all the shifting sands of his life, Yahweh as the Rock stood as something stable and firm. To a people on the march, amid all the hazards of a journey through the desert, it was inexpressibly reassuring to realise that the God in whom they trusted was constant, firm, unchangeable; a sure foundation upon which to build, and a real shelter from the storms of life.

David in similar circumstances used the title frequently (Psa. 18:2, 31, 46; 28:1; 62:2, 7; 78:35 etc.). Whether amid the perils of war, under pressure from attack by Saul, betrayed as he was at times by his own tribesmen, David could lift his eyes from the problems and trials of life to One who was as firm and unchangeable as the granite rocky mountains.

In another place (Psa. 34) he wrote:

"This poor man cried and Yahweh heard him,

And saved him out of all his troubles.

The angel of Yahweh encampeth round about them that fear Him,

And delivereth them.

O taste and see that Yahweh is good;

Blessed is the man that trusteth in Him."

Skilled as he might be with the sling, sword or spear, David's confidence was in his God. He looked to Him as His defence and weapons of war, and trusted not in vain. The Lord Jesus did likewise, and provided an object lesson for all who would follow in his steps. The experiences of both David and his greater son, exhort all others to view Yahweh as did they: "O taste and see that He is good."

"My buckler and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower"—The warrior king placed his confidence in Yahweh more than in the weapons of war which he used so skilfully. "Buckler" is *magen* in Hebrew. It denotes a small shield designed to turn the thrusts of the enemy. By describing Yahweh as his shield, David revealed that he looked upon God as his real Defence and Protection. The *magen* was particularly used to protect the head and the heart,

which gives the title added significance when related to Yahweh.

David also described God as "the Horn of his salvation." This expression is cited by Zacharias in Luke 1:69, and applied by him to the Lord Jesus. It is a particularly significant title. Those in danger of death at the hand of an avenger fled for mercy to the horns of the altar (1 Kings 2:28). When sacrifices were offered they were attached to it (Ps. 118:27). It was also an emblem of power, so that in another place it is written: "There (in Zion) I will make the horn of David to bud" (Ps. 132:17). Yahweh truly was the strength, or horn, of David's salvation.

The Psalmist's third title in this line is "high tower," from the Hebrew *misgab*. This word denotes anything high and inaccessible, lifted up steeply above the plain below, and therefore affording one the ability to view life in proper perspective. Yahweh was like that to David. He figuratively lifted him up above the trouble spots, enabling him in faith to view life from the divine perspective, and elevating him, as it were, to such heights of spiritual grandeur as to provide protection from the attacks of flesh.

That was the experience of David as the type of Christ. In measure it can become that of all who put their trust in Him.

VERSE 3

"I will call upon Yahweh Who is worthy to be praised"—In view of the manifestation of Yahweh to the Psalmist, he expresses his intention to draw upon His help in prayer. In confidence of the result he expresses the worthiness of God to receive praise. The title given to the Psalter is that of *Tehillim*, or *Praises*, and its key word is *Halleluyah* or *Praise ye Yah*. The word "praised" in this verse is from *halal* expressive of enthusiastic praise.

"So shall I be saved from mine enemies"—Again these are words cited in relation to Christ (Luke 1:71). He saved himself that he might save others, and so become the channel of saving truth to all who put their confidence in God.

(2) The Extent Of Christ's Trials Unto Death — vv. 4-5

David types Christ throughout this Psalm, hence the use of the Lord's title in our sub-heading. Having spoken of the

strength derived from Yahweh and the protection afforded him, David now reveals that such did not immune him from trial — it only assured his ultimate triumph. Meanwhile, he experienced trials that brought him down into the valley of the shadow of death.

VERSE 4

"The sorrows of death encompassed me"—The margin gives the Hebrew as the *cords* of death. These were drawn so tightly about the Psalmist, as to cause pain. Both David and Christ were conscious of the death-doomed nature they inherited. The former succumbed to it (Ps. 51:5), the latter conquered it. But in both, as in all others, it bound them so as to cause them sorrow.

"The floods of ungodly men made me afraid"—The term "ungodly men" is *belial*, denoting *worthlessness, wickedness*, and the destruction to which such will be brought. The Psalmist speaks of the "floods of wickedness" that threatened to engulf and destroy him. It is an expression drawn from a condition of things with which the Psalmist would be familiar. The brooks of the land are ordinarily dry. When storms burst, they overflow their banks, submerging the surrounding country, destroying its growth, and turning it into a quagmire (cp. Judges 5:21). The morass thus created, can entrap the unwary, causing such to slip and sink in mud, inducing fear. The term, therefore is expressive of the hidden dangers and traps to which both David and Christ were subjected during their ministry.

VERSE 5

"The sorrows of hell compassed me about"—"Sorrows" should be *cords* as in the previous verse. David in experience, Christ in fact, was brought down to the grave, from whence the Lord arose. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," wrote David, in relation to the Christ. Peter, commenting upon this, remarked of the Lord: "his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption" (Acts 2:31).

"The snares of death prevented me"—In this line, death is personified as a hunter with snares and traps to take the Psalmist. It implies that the enmity

manifested (whether against David as the type, or against Christ as the antitype) was cunningly contrived to destroy. In old English, the word "prevented" signified *anticipated, to go before*. The Hebrew *qadam* has this meaning, denoting *to project, precede, anticipate*. The RV has *came upon me*. The idea is that the enemies of the psalmist were ever present before him, going before to lay their traps, and ultimately confronting him with bitter determination to bring about his death.

The expressions of the Psalm suggest

the tension under which both David and Christ must have lived as they faced bitter and unscrupulous enemies bent on their destruction. They had to be ever on guard, exercising care lest they make a false move and so become entrapped in the snares constantly being laid to catch them. They had to "walk in wisdom" as well as in faith, for often their foes came before them in the guise of friends, hypocritically claiming to help them, whilst, in fact, they sought their disgrace and death.

— H. P. M.



Strangers and Pilgrims

The modern spate of materialism indicates that we live at the time of the end (Luke 17:27). The Lord warned against the false sense of security that possessions induce when he declared: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth" to the exclusion of those in heaven, because "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:19, 21). The apostle John expanded the principle when he later added: "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 Jhn. 2:15). The Brotherhood is faced with the danger of the prevailing spirit of materialism rubbing off on to its members. "Treasure upon earth" can cause one devoid of a love of the Word to unconsciously question the need of God. On the other hand we have the example of Abraham. Despite his material wealth, he recognised the transient extent of its benefits, and his need of God. Instead of seeking the world, he confessed that he was but a "stranger and a pilgrim" in it (Heb. 11:13). He laid up "treasure in heaven," and looked forward in hope to greater blessings than material things could grant him. Today, the "perilous

look for now is blessing, mingled with sorrow. Constituted as we now are, trouble is a necessity. It is difficult at times to fathom in this the way of Providence, but we know that "by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better." Paul's words must not be forgotten — "If ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then ye are illegitimates and not sons." The time for full recognition and

favour is still to come. Whilst taking comfort, therefore, from the knowledge that God's favour and help are now extended to those who fear Him, let us keep our eyes well fixed upon the day ahead — the day when there shall be "neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

C.H.J.

Theme For Study

Psalm 18



HELP
IN
TIME
OF
NEED

#1

This Psalm records experiences of David that were typical of those of Christ. Indeed, as we outlined on pp. 85-89, in orderly fashion it moves through the stages of the Lord's ministry from the trials to which he was subjected through to his death and resurrection, the proclamation of the truth, throughout the intervening ages, on to his return and the conquest of the forces of darkness. This month, we consider the verses typical of his death.

Held By The Cords of Death — vv. 4-6

David recalls a time of extreme peril when he despaired of life, but sought the help of Yahweh in prayer. In type it takes us to the Garden of Gethsemane, and to the prayer of the Lord, from which he derived strength to successfully encounter the evils he had to endure. The record states, "there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him" (Luke 22:43). Though such a visible theophany will not be experienced by us, the Source of help in time of need, remains the same today.

VERSE 4

"The sorrows of death compassed me"—The margin renders this as "cords of death," and the context suggests that these were so tightly drawn as to cause pain. On several occasions, David was hemmed in with deadly perils, so that it seemed there was but "a step between him and death" as he expressed it on one occasion (1 Sam. 20:3). In such an extremity, his experiences were typical of the trials of the Lord. In describing them the Psalmist personifies death as a hunter with nets and snares to take him. They

foreshadowed the experiences of Christ: "In the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save him out of (*ek*) death, and was heard in that he feared" (Heb. 5:7). The "cords of death" were tightly drawn around the Lord, but he escaped them through the strength of Yahweh by a resurrection from the grave.

"The floods of ungodly men made me afraid"—The literal Hebrew expresses the former part of this line as "*torrents of wickedness*." The expression is derived from a characteristic of the land. Palestine has few rivers that constantly flow. Most of them are brooks which are ordinarily dry, but become destructive torrents which overflow their banks when a storm breaks. Then the land becomes swampy, and the unwary are in danger of becoming entrapped. David expressed his feelings in these graphic terms as he was faced with the "floods of ungodliness" on the part of those who desired to destroy him, and who were unscrupulous enough to attempt any means. Christ's experiences were the same. A tremendous burden rested on him, because the salvation of the race depended upon the success of his mission. He knew the weakness of flesh which is well calculated to make one afraid, and hence sought the strength of Yahweh. It is recorded of him that "he was heard in that he feared."

VERSE 5

"The sorrows of hell compassed me about"—The word is better rendered as *cords* (see margin and RV). Like the ram caught in the thicket that Abraham offered in sacrifice (Gen. 22), the Lord could not escape the cords of death and the grave. Death was an element in his own redemption as in that of those he came to save, and he could not escape it. On one occasion he declared: "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? But for this cause came I unto this hour!" (John 12:27). It will be noticed that we have turned the second portion of the Lord's words into a question, as in the Diaglott, and we believe that this is correct. The Lord asked the question, could he pray to be saved from that hour? And gave the answer that such was impossible. The request made in Gethsemane, that this "hour might pass from him," is not a

contradiction of this, but constitutes a prayer that he should successfully endure that hour so that it might pass from him. The Lord was bound with cords of hell from which he could not escape, except by a resurrection from the dead (See Acts 2:31).

"The snares of death prevented me"—The word "prevented" is awkward in this context, but originally, in old English, it signified to *anticipate, to go before, to permit*. Thus the RV renders it as "*come upon me*." In the mouth of David, death and the grave are personified as hunters ready with snares and traps to take him. He describes them as having gone before him to entrap him, so that now they might boldly confront him when he approaches. The Lord's experiences were similar. He was not indifferent to the anguish of trial through which he had to go. On one occasion, he told his disciples: "I have a baptism to be baptised with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished" (Luke 12:50). As he moved towards Jerusalem, he knew that death and the grave awaited him, and that he would be confronted by his enemies when he arrived there. He explained this to his disciples though they refused to believe it (Mat. 16:21). He knew that the cords of death and the grave were so tightly bound around him, that he could not escape from them except through resurrection to glory. The Psalm is expressive of his feelings at the time. We sometimes read of the Lord's trials in a detached way, as though he did not greatly feel the anguish of the moment. It is valuable, therefore, to study such Psalms as this one for it brings us closer to the innermost feelings of the Lord as he steadfastly, courageously and in faith moved towards the crisis of his life.

Assistance From Above — vv. 6-11

Hemmed in by trouble, brought face to face with death and the grave, the Psalmist (whether David or Christ) cries unto Yahweh for help, and by a mighty theophany of power is granted assistance.

VERSE 6

"In my distress I called upon Yahweh"—Prayer becomes more powerful in time of need, providing the distressed with the strength and comfort of communion with Yahweh.

"And cried unto my God"—The

Hebrew suggests continuous and repeated cries indicative of the urgency of the occasion. See the fulfilment in Christ's case — Heb. 5:7.

"He heard my voice out of His temple"

—The reference is to heaven, for no temple was erected on earth at the time. Indeed, the earthly temple was but a symbol of the dwelling place of Yahweh in the heavens. Prayer elevates the prayer to heaven (Col. 3:1; Heb. 6:19-20; 10:19-22).

"And my cry came before Him, even unto His ears"—That being the case, it would not be ignored, even though, in His wisdom, Yahweh might delay to act. In regard to Christ, however, it is recorded, that he was "heard in that he feared" (Heb. 5:7).

VERSE 7

"Then the earth shook and trembled"—In David's experience, the descriptive words that follow describe a terrible storm that broke out over the land, which he recognised as the manifestation of Divine power. The crash of thunder reverberated among the hills, shaking, as it were, their very foundations; the heavy dark clouds of heaven, like smoke out of the nostrils of a wrathful God enshrouded the earth in darkness; fiery flashes of lightning appeared as burning coals of divine anger; the heavens, heavy with storm clouds, appeared as if bowed down with their weight, covering the earth with a pall of darkness, illuminated only with flashes of lightning; the roar of the wind as it swept across the land bent all before it; and, most terrifying of all, the shaking of the earth beneath filled all creation with fear. All this was evidence to David of divine power. Though we are not told of the incident in his life when it occurred, prophetically it pointed forward to the time of Christ's death. The anger of Yahweh at the callous wickedness of Jewry was so great that He shook Jerusalem with earthquake so severe as to damage the Temple, and cause the veil that divided the Most Holy from the Holy Place to be torn asunder (Matt. 27:51).

"The foundations of the hills were moved"—This describes the extent of the earthquake, which affected the hills about Jerusalem.

"And were shaken because He was wrath"—The earthquake was an indi-

cation of Yahweh's anger against His people. The fact that the Lord's death was necessary for the salvation of man, and was according to the "determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23), did not exonerate the Jewish people from the blame of repudiating His teaching and crucifying him. They "by wicked hands" had done this, and so became the "betrayers and murderers" of the prince of life (Acts 2:23; 7:52). Their envy and hatred fulfilled the will of God, but His justice required that they be punished for so doing.

VERSE 8

"There went up a smoke out of his nostrils"—Smoke is indicative of wrath (Ps. 74:1). The term is expressive of Yahweh's breath or *ruach*, spirit, being manifested in consuming fire (2 Thess. 1:8).

"And fire out of his mouth devoured"—Fire is the emblem of Yahweh's consuming wrath (see Exod. 15:7; Deut. 32:22; Ps. 97:3; Heb. 12:29).

"Coals were kindled by it"—Burning coals are symbolic of the fiery messengers of divine vengeance (Ps. 140:10), or the means by which sin can be purged (Isa. 6:6-7). That was the alternative before Israel as the result of the crucifixion of the Lord: the people had either to seek the purging of their sins, or suffer the consequences in the destruction of the nation that would follow. That was the theme of Peter's address on the day of Pentecost. Notice his warning to the people of "blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke" (Acts 2:19) if they failed to take heed.

VERSE 9

"He bowed the heavens also and came down"—When heavy storm clouds blot out the light of the sun, they seem to bow down the heavens by their very weight, and men wait in trepidation the fierce, destructive avalanche of heavy rain. The storm-clouds of political trouble rolled over Palestine following the death and resurrection of the Lord, threatening to blot out the light of the sun: the ruling Jewish authorities.

"Darkness was under His feet"—Behind that storm (whether the literal storm in the days of David, or the political storm that followed Jewry's rejection of the Messiah) there was God. See other

theophanies where Yahweh has made use of "thick darkness" as the RV renders the phrase in this place (Exod. 19:16; 20:21; 1 Kings 8:12; Ps. 97:2; Isa. 64:1). This last reference is prophetic of divine action through Christ.

VERSE 10

"And He rode upon a cherub, and did fly"—The element of the storm: cloud, darkness, lightning, rain, represent the speedy chariot of Yahweh, and are symbolic of His Elohist agents for "He maketh the clouds His chariots" (Ps. 104:3; see also 103:19-22); and "His strength is in the clouds" (Ps. 68:33-34). The invasion of Egypt by Christ and the saints in the future is described as "Yahweh riding upon a swift cloud, and coming into Egypt" (Isa. 19:1). The storm that broke over guilty Judea in AD 70 was the work of Yahweh, in fulfilment of the type presented in the Psalm before us.

"And He did fly upon the wings of the wind"—This describes the storm breaking in all its fury. The wind roars throughout the land, driving all before it, lashing the ocean into a fury, rending the habitations of man, causing fear and terror on all sides. It is seen as an evidence of divine anger. And what of the Lord's day? Wind is used symbolically of armies (cp. Dan. 7:2), and Judea never experienced a more devastating "wind" than the Roman attack upon Jerusalem. The Lord described it as Yahweh "sending forth His armies, and destroying those murderers, and burning up their city" (Matt. 22:7). There is a variation in the Psalm at this place from the expression found in 2 Sam. 22:11. In Samuel it is said that He was "seen" in

the wind; in other words the violence of the storm was indicative of divine power. Here, however, it is said that He did "fly upon the wings of the wind." The only difference in the Hebrew is in one word that looks very much like the other: the insertion of daletth 7 instead of resh 7 so that *yera* "He was seen" occurs instead of *yeda* "He soared." The Hebrew is a word often used to describe the sweeping down of birds of prey (Deut. 28:49; Jer. 48:40; 49:22). That, indeed, is what happened to Judea when the Romans advanced against the land.

VERSE 11

"He made darkness His secret place; His pavilion round about Him"—It is only the initiated who perceive divine action in the political storms that occur; to most people they have nothing to do with God, so that they remain "the secret place" of His manifestation. The Psalmist describes how that Yahweh wrapped Himself in the darkness and gloom of the storm, so that His presence was not known of men. They felt His power but could not discern His presence, and therefore could not beseech His face until the storm was over. The verse describes a momentary lull in the storm before it bursts forth in its greatest fury — like the breathing space granted Jewry in AD 70, when the Roman armies unaccountably withdrew, and permitted those who desired so to do to escape the full violence of the attack yet to come.

"Dark waters and thick clouds of the skies"—Ominously suggesting the violence of the storm about to break.

(to be continued)

HPM

Book Review

THE SPIRIT: A GENERAL EXPOSITION ON NEW TESTAMENT USAGE

It is now over two years since Brother Aleck Crawford's notes on the Holy Spirit were published in California, and his latest book is a reorganised and vastly expanded version of those notes, which are now virtually out of print. Those who are familiar with Brother Crawford's earlier offering will know that his views on the important

Psalm
18



THE
STORM
BREAKS

The death and resurrection of the Lord were accompanied by amazing phenomenons of nature. The light of the sun was darkened at noonday; earthquake tore asunder the veil of the Temple, thus affecting the celebration of the Jewish Passover that year; and again, later, earthquake rolled away the stone from the tomb. These physical manifestations of divine anger, foreshadowed the political earthquake and storm referred to by Peter on the Day of Pentecost, that brought the Jewish State to an end (see Acts 2:19-20). This was foreshadowed in an experience of David's, that caused him to write prophetically of it in this Psalm.

The Wonders That Accompanied Christ's Resurrection — vv. 12-18

Yahweh did not look with indifference upon the suffering of the Messiah (whether David or Christ), but moved against those who dared thus "touch His anointed." The death and resurrection of the Lord were accompanied by darkness, earthquake, and finally, by the dissolution of the Jewish State — political earthquake and storm.

VERSE 12

*"At the brightness that was before him his thick clouds passed"—See the variation from this line as expressed in 2 Samuel 22:13. Delitzsch renders the Psalm: *From the brightness before Him there pass through His thick clouds hailstones and coals of fire.* In other words, the storm breaks, discharging itself in thunder, hail and lightning. These are manifestations of divine wrath, and were exhibited at the crucifixion of the Lord by the darkness that covered the earth as predicted by Micah (Ch 3:6), and the earthquake which split the Temple.*

"Hail stones and coals of fire"—The latter expression denotes lightning: a manifestation of spirit-power. Whether a storm of hail hit Jerusalem at the time of

the crucifixion, we are not told, but it would have been appropriate. Certainly Yahweh's anger was manifested against His people.

VERSE 13

"Yahweh also thundered in the heavens"—This, too, could have been the case at the crucifixion.

"And the Highest gave His voice"—On an earlier occasion, when the Voice spake from heaven, some misinterpreted it as thunder (John 12:29).

"Hail stones and coals of fire"—cp. v. 12.

VERSE 14

"Yea He sent out His arrows, and scattered them"—Forked lightning are the arrows of Yahweh. Cp. Ps. 77:17.

*"And He shot out lightnings, and discomforted them"—The RV has *lightnings manifold* referring to the extent of the storm.*

VERSE 15

*"Then the channels of water were seen"—The account in 2 Samuel 22:16 gives "waters" as *sea*. The earthquake caused tidal waves so that the very beds*

of sea and rivers were revealed. This is reminiscent of the Exodus (see Exod. 15:8). It is significant that the offering of the Lord is described in the very same terms, for the word "decease" (Luke 9:31) is *exodos* in Greek.

"**And the foundations of the world were discovered**"—The RV has *were laid bare*. This was by earthquake. Literal earthquake tore open tombs at the crucifixion of the Lord; and political earthquake brought guilty Judea to an end.

"**At Thy rebuke, O Yahweh**"—These were manifestation of divine anger at the wickedness of Jewry (Acts 2:23).

"**At the blast of the breath of Thy nostrils**"—An expression indicating the extreme indignation of Yahweh, as though, in anger, He was breathing heavily. "Breath" is *ruach*, elsewhere rendered "spirit."

VERSE 16

"**He sent from above, He took me**"—There were angels sent to minister unto the Lord both before and after his death. They strengthened him to endure the trials that came upon him, and ultimately supervised his resurrection.

"**He drew me out of many waters**"—The word is found elsewhere only in the repeat of this Psalm in 2 Samuel 23, and in Exod. 2:10 in reference to Moses. Moses was drawn out of water to deliver Yahweh's people, and Christ was delivered from death for the same purpose. For the use of "great waters" as emblematic of danger, see Ps. 32:6; 66:12; 69:2-3. Christ referred to his impending crucifixion as "a baptism" (Luke 12:50), from which, of course, he safely emerged.

VERSE 17

"**He delivered me from my strong enemy**"—David's strong enemy was Saul; but Christ's strong enemy was the *diabolos* (Heb. 2:14), which dominated the leaders of Jewry in his day.

"**And from them that hated me**"—The leaders, dominated by the *diabolos*, "hated him without a cause" (John 15:25).

"**For they were too strong for me**"—Christ conquered with the aid of his Father, without Whose help, the flesh would have been too powerful (2 Cor. 5:19; John 16:32).

VERSE 18

"**They prevented me in the day of my calamity**"—The RV renders this as *They came upon me*. This relates to the capture of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane.

"**But Yahweh was my stay**"—In every circumstances the Lord leaned upon Yahweh, and not in vain.

The Divine Approval Of The Son — vv. 19-24.

The perfect obedience of the Son ensured his resurrection to life eternal.

VERSE 19

"**He brought me forth also in a large place**"—A "large place" is one free of the restrictions previously endured. As far as the Lord is concerned, the expression relates to his resurrection and glorification.

"**He delivered me because He delighted in me**"—The perfect obedience of the Son ensured his resurrection to life eternal. The justness of Yahweh would not permit that the grave should have domination over him. Peter declared: "It was not possible that he should be holden of it" (Acts 2:24). He was "obedient unto the death of the cross," wrote Paul, "Therefore God also hath exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name." Justice and mercy are beautifully and skilfully interwoven in the atonement effected through the offering of the Lord.

VERSE 20

"**Yahweh rewarded me according to my righteousness**"—This was the basis upon which Yahweh dealt with both David and Christ, and upon which He will deal with all the Redeemed. The Hebrew *gamal* rendered "rewarded," actually means to *treat with*. God treats with all accordingly to their treatment of His way of salvation. David found mercy in a time of need because he had manifested mercy to Saul when he had him in his power.

"**According to the cleanness of my hands hath He recompensed me**"—The Lord's hands were clean, for he always fulfilled the will of his Father; our hands can be cleansed by the forgiveness of those shortcomings of which we are guilty.

VERSE 21

"**For I have kept the ways of Yahweh**"—Even in his sin, David did

this, for he sought the covering of Yahweh (Ps. 32:1).

“And have not wickedly departed from my God”—This Psalm was composed before the great sin of David; but the expression is applicable to the Lord throughout his life. Note how that “sin” is described as a “separation” from Yahweh — “departing” from Him. Notice the same language used for sin in Heb. 3:12.

VERSE 22

“For all His judgments were before me”—The commandments of Yahweh were ever before the minds of both David and Christ; and became the ruling motivation of their characters: in David imperfectly; in Christ completely.

“And I did not put away His statutes from me”—The statutes of Yahweh were ever present to the mind of both David and Christ, even when the former sinned.

VERSE 23

“I was also upright before Him”—The margin alters this to *with Him*. The

relationship of the Psalmist with his God was in sincerity and truth; there was no hypocrisy present.

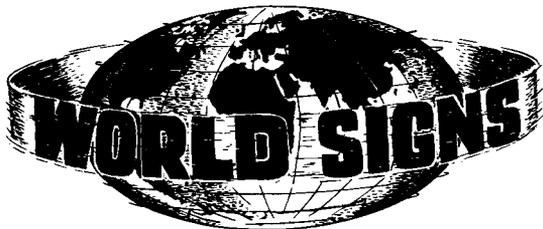
“And I kept myself from mine iniquity”—The Psalmist (whether David or Christ) claims to have carefully supervised his life so that he might not transgress before Yahweh. As noted previously, the Psalm was evidently composed before the fall of David. It is completely true of Christ in every sense. In that regard, his “iniquity” relates to the bias of the flesh which the Lord ever kept in check.

VERSE 24

“Therefore hath Yahweh recompensed me according to my righteousness”—See v. 20.

“According to the cleanness of my hands in his eyesight”—Hands are representative of actions, as feet are of walk. Christ performed the will of the Father in all things: “Not my will but Thine be done,” was the guiding principle of his life.

HPM



EARTHQUAKE: FROM MOSCOW TO ROME!

By some such headlines as the above, the world was told of the disastrous earthquake that devastated Rumania, the tremors of which were felt from Moscow to Rome. To link two such significant cities of destiny in such a news-item surely must cause the hearts of all Christadelphians to throb a little quicker. The return of Christ will be accompanied by seismic upheavals of an unprecedented extent. All nations will be effected by them, when Yahweh shall arise “to shake terribly the earth” (Isa. 2:21). The first premonitions of this widespread disaster, will be the shaking of the earth which shall accompany the appearance of the Lord on the Mount of Olives (Zech.

When the apostle John was shown the glory of the redeemed, he was asked in the vision as to their identity and origin. He, like Ezekiel, replied, "Thou knowest" (ch. 7:14). In reply came words of wonderful assurance. These were they who had pursued the pilgrim path in sincerity, and were delivered in due time out of all their tribulations.

We look within ourselves — appearances are all against such a glorious destiny being ours, but in the light of these wonderful assurances, who could doubt the power of our God to bring us to the Kingdom He has promised?

— B. Philp snr (NSW)

Theme For Study

Psalm
18



CALLING OUT
A PEOPLE
FOR THE
NAME

#3

Psalm 18 is prophetic of the purpose of Yahweh in His Son. If read with this in mind its significance will be better appreciated. We, therefore, repeat our prophetic epitome of it, showing how that it foreshadowed Christ's ministry from his birth to his future glory. All this was typified in the experiences of David, as the man after God's own heart. The suggested divisions are as follows:

- The Source of Christ's strength — Vv. 1-3.*
- The Extent of his trials unto death — Vv. 4-6.*
- His Resurrection, and the wonders that accompanied it, including the dissolution of the Jewish State — Vv. 19-24*
- The Separation of a people by the Gospel — Vv. 25-28.*
- The Future Conquest of the world — Vv. 29-45.*
- Christ's Universal Reign and Worship — Vv. 46-50.*

The Separation of a People by the Gospel — vv. 25-28

He will help His sons: those in whom He finds a reflection of Himself. The Psalm shows that Yahweh discriminates between those who obey Him and those who do not, and overshadows their lives for good or otherwise even now.

VERSE 25

"With the merciful Thou wilt show

Thyself merciful" — The word "merciful" is *chased*, and signifies *loving-kindness*. This is a divine characteristic. It was proclaimed to Moses as part of the Divine character when the terms of the divine name were revealed unto him in a special revelation (Exod. 34:6-7); and it is summed up in the statement by John that "God is love" (1 Jn. 4:8). The grammatical construction of this statement implies that this quality is part of

God's nature: it is incidental to Him to love. But the love in question is not that fleshly sentimentality that passes current in the world for love, but a divine attribute, styled *agape* in the N.T., that sees for the object of it the greatest possible good, even at the sacrifice of the one extending it. Such a love stems only from God, and is brought into being by the influence of His truth upon our lives. Those who manifest it are, indeed, His children; and to them He will reveal Himself as a God of loving-kindness. They have been separated unto Him, and experience that loving-kindness even now; how much more in the age to come!

"With an upright man Thou wilt show Thyself upright" — We meet a very interesting word in this statement; it is the Hebrew *tamiym*, and it is from the same root as comes the word *Thummim* which signifies *Fulnesses* and is related to the completeness of the stones in the High Priest's breastplate. The word, therefore, signifies, that which is *entire* or *complete*. It implies a man who is fully grown to maturity, not, however, the maturity of flesh, but that of the mind and spirit. The spiritually-minded man is a complete, or entire, man. Those who lack that quality are only half-men: they have the bodies of men but the minds of children. "In malice, be ye children, but in understanding be men," wrote Paul (1 Cor. 14:20). The margin renders the word "men," as *perfect*, or of a ripe age, that is, *mature*. The same Greek word is rendered *perfect* in 1 Cor. 2:6 and elsewhere. The R.V. renders "upright" as *perfect* in the verse before us.

The word "man" is *geber*, signifying a *mighty man*, a *hero*. So our "upright man" becomes a *perfect hero*: a "hero" in the sense that he has won the greatest battle of life in that he has learned to "rule his spirit" (Prov. 16:32). The man who manifests such single-minded devotion, declares the Psalmist, will be repaid with unswerving faithfulness from Yahweh. He need for him fear no future.

VERSE 26

"With the pure Thou wilt show Thyself pure" — Literally this is *With the purified*, or one who has purified himself in the sense of 1 Jn. 3:3—"Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." The true worshippers of Yahweh recognise the need of them developing the qualities He

manifests, so that He, as revealed in Christ, becomes the ideal of their lives. They are "pure in heart," and as such have the assurance that they "shall see God" (Matt. 5:8).

"And with the froward Thou wilt shew Thyself froward" — In this statement, the word "froward" does duty for two different Hebrew words. The first is *ikesh* and signifies "perverse." It relates to those who are morally distorted, whose hearts are stubborn and rebellious against Yahweh. The second is from the root *pathal*, to "twist, twine, wrest," hence to *wrestle* or *contend*. Whilst God, who shows Himself kind and compassionate to those who reveal His characteristics, He becomes the bitter Adversary of those who are morally perverse. Israel was told: "If ye will not be reformed by Me by these things (i.e. judgments), but will walk contrary unto Me; then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins" (Lev. 26:23-24). The Psalm, therefore, implies that we can "change" the character of God towards us. Paul exhorts: "Behold the goodness and severity of God; towards thee goodness if you continue in His goodness" (Rom. 11:22). Yahweh is a God of goodness or severity according as we respond to His word.

VERSE 27

"For Thou wilt save the afflicted people" — The word signifies those who are influenced by their afflictions: the lowly who have learned humility in the school of suffering.

"But wilt bring down high looks" — Literally, "high looks" are "haughty eyes". Eyes proudly lifted up are one of the seven abominations hated of Yahweh (Prov. 6:17), to be humbled to the dust in due time. There is a variation of this line in the form of the Psalm contained in 2 Sam. 22; it is there rendered: *Thine eyes are upon the haughty that Thou mayest bring them down* (v. 28).

VERSE 28

"For Thou wilt light my candle" — The margin, correctly, has *lamp* instead of "candle." The Scriptures do not refer to "candles" as such, but always to oil lamps. In 2 Sam. 21:17, David is likened to the "lamp of Israel," but he obtained the "oil" for illumination of such from Yahweh (Ps.-119:105). The line in 2 Sam. 22:29 expresses this: *For Thou art my*

Lamp, O Yahweh. Figuratively, "a light" is also expressive of a following, or a line of descent. To blot out David's name in Israel would have been to quench his lamp. Hence, when Israel became divided, Ahijah told Jeroboam: "Unto his (David's son) will I give one tribe, that David My servant may have a lamp always before Me in Jerusalem" (1 Kings 11:36). Therefore, whilst the line in the Psalm can apply historically to David the king, it also does prophetically to Christ. He was granted a posterity. The words of Isaiah are applied to him in relation to the Ecclesia: "Behold I and the children which God hath given me" (Heb. 2:13). Believers constitute the "light of Christ" in the darkened world of today. They are "children of the light" (1 Thess. 5), "the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom they shine as lights in the world" (Phil. 2:15). Paul's words take hold of the very expressions of the Psalm and apply them to the Ecclesia.

"Yahweh my God will enlighten my darkness" — The light of David continued to shine after his death, and will be found doing so at his resurrection. Prophetically, however, the words relate to Christ. His "darkness" was enlightened in the manner expressed by Isaiah: "Yet it pleased Yahweh to bruise him; He hath put him to grief; when Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin (when the "horror of great darkness came upon him"), he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Yahweh shall prosper in his hand" (Isa. 53:10). His "darkness" was enlightened by his resurrection, and the Godly seed that has been granted him since. By this means his name has been kept alive among the Gentiles.

The Coming World Conquest of Christ — Vv. 29-45

In these lines, David speaks as the warrior-king who owes his skill and success to Yahweh. Prophetically, they point forward to the conquests of Christ. David destroyed Goliath foreshadowing the victory of Christ over the Devil (Heb. 2:14). He subdued his enemies, reigning triumphantly as king in Jerusalem; and Christ will do likewise. He proclaims that his victories stemmed from Yahweh, Who also is the Source of Christ's prowess (Jhn. 1:14). David could have had in mind two specific incidents in composing

these words: the overthrow of the Amalekites (1 Sam. 30 — cp. the use of the word "troop," "company" in vv. 8, 15, 23); and the conquest of Zion, when the defenders boasted that the walls were impregnable (2 Sam. 5:6-8).

VERSE 29

"For by thee I have run through a troop" — David, foreshadowing Christ, ascribes to Yahweh his skill and success in war. Though, to the flesh, his opponents were far more numerous and powerful than he, he gained the victory through the strength of Yahweh.

"By my God have I leaped over a wall" — David describes in military terms the victories he has gained through the help of Yahweh manifested through the Elohim, or angels. He attacks the enemy, breaks its ranks, rushes its fortified towns, mounts and leaps over the walls that protect them, and captures them. But he recognises in all his success the overshadowing care of Yahweh's "ministering spirits" (Heb. 1:14).

VERSE 30

"As for God, His way is perfect" — It is without blemish, entire, complete. The word for "God" is *El*, expressive of Might and Power in bold relief. Such power is adequate and complete for all purposes.

"He is a Buckler to all those who trust in Him" — The word "buckler" is from the Hebrew *tzinnah* (contrast with a different word used in v. 2 — cp. notes p.154). This was a large shield that covered the whole of the body, giving the warrior ample defence together with complete movement as he engaged an enemy. Goliath's armour-bearer carried such a shield as that (1 Sam. 17:7). It was like a movable fort, and was placed on the ground so that the warrior could shelter behind it. In addition, there was a smaller shield which was used to cover other vulnerable parts of the body, reference to which is found in v. 2. When David met Goliath on the field of battle, both had their *Tzinnah*, or large shield covering most of the body. Goliath's was there for all to see; but David's could only be seen by the eye of faith. Nevertheless, it was more effective than Goliath's, and enabled him to gain the victory: a victory that foreshadowed Christ's on Mount Calvary through which he rose again from the grave.

VERSE 31

“For who is God save Yahweh” — Here the word “God” is *Eloah*, Mighty One. Yahweh is the source of all Power and Might.

“Or who is a rock save our God” — The word “rock” is *Tzur*, a divine title used by both Moses and David. See the use of it in Deut. 32:4,15,18, etc., as well as in Ps. 18:2,31; 92:15. The term, as applied to Yahweh, was first used by Moses, and appropriately so. He could see in the granite rocks of Sinai symbols of the eternity, stability and unchangeableness of Yahweh, Who revealed His purpose to Moses in such an environment. A rock in the desert suggests stability in the midst of instability; a sure foundation in the midst of trouble and doubt. It symbolises the enduring faithfulness and unchangeableness of Yahweh (Mal. 3:6). Yahweh is a Rock, for He is immutable and immovable in contrast to the shifting sands of the desert. He is a shelter and a shade from the blazing sun, such as a Rock affords (Ps. 84:11; Rev. 7:16). He is an everlasting foundation upon which to

build (Matt. 7:24-25). In all the unsettled and troubled period that David experienced during the period that he fled from the face of Saul, he found Yahweh a Rock of support and help. That Rock was ever with him throughout his life. The same word is rendered strength in v. 2 of this Psalm (see notes). In the line before us, David acknowledges that the only true shelter and foundation is in God.

VERSE 32

“It is God that girdeth me with strength” — Here, again, the word “God” is *El*, expressive of divine might and power. The analogy is drawn from the form of clothing then used. In oriental dress, the girdle is essential to all free and active movement; and David found such help in *El*.

“And maketh my way perfect” — The influence of *El* strengthened David spiritually; as it did even more so the Lord Jesus (John 1:14). See note v. 30, and compare the exhortation of Matt. 5:48.

— HPM.



DAYS OF NOAH AND LOT

World events indicate that we have entered the “time of the end” (Dan. 11:40; 12:1), the closing days of the Sixth Vial when nations would be rent with factions, and a belligerent spirit would dominate their relationships (Rev. 16:15). Accordingly, the words of the greater than Solomon in reference to these times deserve careful attention. In Luke 17:25-30 the Lord drew attention to two epochs as parallels to conditions that would exist at the time of his return. He referred to the days of Noah and Lot: two men saved by God out of evil generations. However, in both cases it can be shown that the world had a deleterious effect upon the Ecclesia. In Noah’s day, his family alone “called upon the name of Yahweh” in truth (Gen. 4:26). Yet the record of Genesis plainly states that the patriarch had brothers and sisters of the flesh who apparently fell by the wayside (Gen. 5:30). Indeed, the account clearly shows that it was the attitude of the “sons of God,” in forgetting the separateness to which

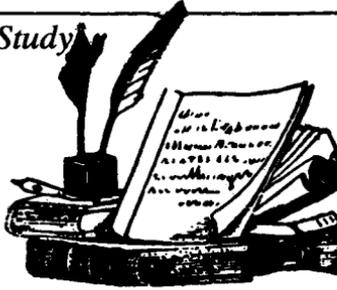
him at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so?" Adonijah was a good-looking, conceited young man (1 Kings 1:6) who brought sadness to the heart of his father.

There is no room for complacency or smugness in the upbringing of children. Sometimes, in spite of all efforts, failures are reported. Though these are often traceable to parental neglect, it is not always the case. We recall that though Yahweh exercised the greatest care in the education of His children, and thoroughly disciplined them in wisdom, many went astray. The cause cannot be attributed to His neglect, but to the stubbornness of those who refused to respond to His guidance and love.

Let us keep all these factors in mind as we give ourselves to the care and upbringing of that precious little congregation that parenthood has introduced into our home. Much can be done to guide children in the way that they should go; and in view of the very dangerous environment of these times, we need to exercise ourselves in so doing.

Theme For Study

Psalm
18



#4
**CHRIST'S
COMING
CONQUESTS**

Commenting upon this section of the Psalm, Brother Thomas (Eureka vol. 1, p. 176) wrote: "In this passage the Eternal Spirit through the prophet speaks of Messiah in the crisis of his controversy for Zion, in which as the head or chief of John's Son of Man, he puts his feet upon the necks of the kings of the earth, scatters their armies like dust before the wind, and becomes Prince or head of the nations in their stead. But this is true also of all the other individual members of this 'New Man.' If the New Adam himself thus makes war upon and tramples in the mire the kings and armies of the Old Adam-nature, he had promised that all approved believers 'in him' — all who are Abraham's Seed by being Christ's — that is, all the Saints shall do the same: and share with him in the fruits of his and their victory. In proof of this the reader is referred to the following testimonies — Ps. 58:10-11; 75:10; 76:12; 82:8; 148:14."

For convenience of readers we again set out suggested sub-headings for the Psalm.

The Source of Christ's strength — Vv. 1-3.

The Extent of his trials unto death — Vv. 4-6.

His Resurrection, and the wonders that accompanied it, including the dissolution of the Jewish State — Vv. 19-24

The Separation of a people by the Gospel — Vv. 25-28.

The Future Conquest of the world — Vv. 29-45.

Christ's Universal Reign and Worship — Vv. 46-50.

In our last article we completed verse 32.

VERSE 33

"He maketh my feet like hinds' feet"—

The hind is noted for its surefootedness and its fleetness; these facilities, in warriors are great aids in the pursuit of enemies (2 Sam. 2:18; 1 Chron. 12:8). In addition, the hind is used to illustrate the Godly man (Ps. 42:1), the spiritually sound (Isa. 35:6), and, because of its fleetness, the giver of goodly words (Gen. 49:21). The application of these attributes to Christ, the antitypical David, is obvious. His surefootedness, his fleetness to do good, the goodly words he spake, all stemmed from God, through Whom he was made strong (Ps. 80:17).

"And setteth me upon my high places"

—See Hab. 3:19. Christ was elevated above flesh, like the hind on the inaccessible mountain tops, and craggy rocks.

VERSE 34

"He teacheth my hands to war"—

Brother Thomas, in his exposition of this Psalm (see *Eureka* vol. 1, p. 175), gives these lines in the present tense: "He is training my hands for war; so that the bow of brass has been broken by my arms." Christ was trained for war by the Word of God, and having won the victory over the flesh, is competent to gain it over the world (Prov. 16:32; Heb. 2:14).

"So that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms"—

This speaks of his strength and ability to wage war. The R.V. renders: "Mine hands do bend a bow of brass." Brass is used in Scripture for the flesh; and this will be brought into conformity with Yahweh's requirements through the warfare of the Son.

VERSE 35

"Thou hast also give men the shield of Thy salvation"—The word "shield" in this place is *magen*, and is rendered *buckler* in v. 2 (contrast with our notes on *buckler* in v. 30). The *magen* is a small shield, designed for quick movement to protect vital parts of the body, and therefore analogous to the "shield of faith" referred to by Paul (Eph. 6:16).

"And Thy right hand hath holden

me"—The right hand is the hand of strength and the position of privilege. The Lord ascended to the "right hand of the Father" (Ps. 110:1), which Peter describes as "being by the right hand of God exalted" (Acts 2:33). By the same power and authority, Christ's foes will be made his footstool (Acts 2:35). David saw this, for he recognised his experiences as typical of the Messiah (Acts 2:29-31).

"And Thy gentleness hath made me great"—

The word "gentleness" can be rendered *condescension*. Elsewhere, the exalted status of the Father and His loving condescension, are inferred in such terms as the following (Ps. 113:4-6; and see also Isa. 57:15):

Yahweh is high above all nations,

And His glory above the heavens.

Who is like unto Yahweh our God,

Who dwelleth on high?

Who humbleth Himself to behold,

The things that are in heaven, and in the earth.

The Hebrew word rendered "great" is *rabah* and denotes *an increase*. The margin renders the word "Thou has multiplied me." The sense and manner in which this has been accomplished is outlined in Heb. 2:9-13. One man has increased into a multitude: the multitudinous Christ.

VERSE 36

"Thou hast enlarged my steps under

me"—The idea is that ample space has been provided enabling the subject of the Psalm unobstructive movement (see v. 19). In the days of his earthly ministry, the Lord was hemmed in with enemies; that is not the case today, and certainly will not be so tomorrow. Bro. Thomas renders it in the future tense: "Thou wilt cause my steps to be enlarged. . . ."

"That my feet did not slip"—The margin renders "feet" as *ankles*. This agrees with Brother Thomas' rendition in *Eureka*: "my ankle-joints have not wavered."

VERSE 37

"I have pursued mine enemies and

overtaken them—Brother Thomas, following the Hebrew, renders this in the future tense: "I will pursue my enemies and shall overtake them." David is not referring to past victories, but future exploits. He recognises himself as type of his greater son.

"Neither did I turn again till they were consumed"—Again render this in the future tense: it is yet to be fulfilled in the conquests of the Lord at Armageddon and its aftermath.

VERSE 38

"I have wounded them that they were not able to rise"—In fulfilment of Gen. 3:15.

"They are fallen under my feet"—His enemies will be completely overthrown.

VERSE 39

"For Thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle"—The conquest of the nations by Christ at his return is an extension of his victory over sin at his first advent. His success in both encounters is through strength of Yahweh.

"Thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me"—Jew and Gentile both rose against the Lord at his first advent, and both will be subdued by him through the power vested in him by God (cp. Matt. 28:18; 1 Pet. 3:22).

VERSE 40

"Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies"—The Hebrew *oreph* signifies the *nape* or *back of the neck*. The name Orpah (Ruth 1) is derived from this, and is applicable to her because she turned back from following Naomi. Accordingly, the RV renders this line of the Psalm as *made mine enemies turn their backs unto me*. This is an idiom signifying the complete conquest and utmost disgrace of the vanquished, as they turn their backs in ignominious flight.

"That I might destroy them that hate me"—This will include those of Israel who will resist the claims of the Lord at his return (Luke 19:27), but more particularly those Gentiles who will continue to resist him, and make ready to continue the struggle against him (Rev. 17:13-14). The future conquests of Christ, as depicted in these verses, have been beautifully summarised in the following terms: "Thus fighting in God's strength, with God's weapons, and God's assistance, he beats, subjects, annihilates all his enemies in domestic and foreign wars." In

measure, as Peter declared on the Day of Pentecost, David was able to comprehend the significance of the type, and recognise in the words that the Spirit caused him to utter, reference to the future glory of his greater son.

VERSE 41

"They cried but there was none to save them"—This is set in contrast to the time when he cried, and Yahweh extended Himself to help (cp. v. 6).

"Even unto Yahweh, but He answered them not"—Little use the enemies of the Lord crying unto Yahweh; they must first accept his Messiahship. See Ps. 50:14-22.

VERSE 42

"Then did I beat them small as the dust before the wind"—As mentioned above, the verses should be rendered in the future tense, as in *Eureka*, for the expressions relate to the coming conquests of Christ. As fine dust is driven before the wind, so will the discomfited armies flee before the Spirit manifested through Christ and the saints (see Dan. 2:35; Zech. 4:6). The Hebrew has *on the faces of the Ruach* (wind or spirit), and this is how Brother Thomas renders it in *Eureka* vol. 1, p. 175 (old edition). — See also Rotherham). Brother Thomas aligns the expression with the multitudinous Christ, as the "faces of the spirit." See the reference from *Eureka* at the head of this article.

"I did cast them out as the dirt of the streets"—The parallel line in 2 Sam. 22:43 renders this as "I did stamp (trample) them as the mire of the streets." This seems more appropriate and evidently should so be rendered here. The only difference in the Hebrew is in one letter daleth ך and resh ך.

VERSE 43

"Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people"—The Hebrew *am* is the singular number, and therefore relates to one people, in this case the Jewish people. Accordingly, the parallel line in 2 Sam. 22:44, has "my people." They strove against the Lord at his first advent, as they strove against David when Saul was intent upon destroying him; but both David and Christ were delivered through the intervention of Yahweh. In Christ's case, by a resurrection from the dead (Heb. 5:7).

"Thou hast made me the head of the

heathen—The Hebrew is *goyim*, Gentiles. Christ will not only be acknowledged as King of the Jews, but head over the Gentiles.

“A people whom I have not known shall serve me”—Relating to the conquest of all foreign countries both near and far.

VERSE 44

“As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me”—The reputation of Christ following the conquest of the nations will be such that those remote from the centre of conflict will submit.

“The strangers shall submit themselves unto me”—The word “submit” is *kachash* and signifies that which is untrue, a lie. Like the Gibeonites of old, some nations, having been forcibly vanquished, will pay unwilling homage to Christ the conqueror. The term *strangers* literally signifies *sons of a foreign woman*, no doubt a reference to the harlot of Rev. 17. Thus Catholic countries having been overwhelmed in battle (Rev. 17:14) will reluctantly submit. Should such nations contemplate revolt, they will be dealt with in the manner prescribed in Zech. 14:17-19.

VERSE 45

“The strangers shall fade away”—These are the sons of the foreign woman who give feigned submission to Christ. Catholicism will be entirely eradicated (see Dan. 7:11).

“And be afraid out of their close places”—They will recognise that their fastnesses, the secret places where they will seek refuge, are ineffectual (see Isa. 2:19).

Christ's Universal Reign And Worship— vv. 46-50

The conclusion of the Psalm reaches a point of high triumph and greater rejoicing. Acknowledgment is given to Yahweh as the giver of victory, and praises and thanksgiving are offered to Him because of what He has done.

VERSE 46

“Yahweh liveth; and blessed be my Rock”—The reality of Yahweh as a living God will be apparent when Christ is on the earth again. Today the fact is clouded because flesh still reigns in the earth. The word “blessed” is *barak* from the root signifying *to kneel*, and hence to render reverential praise to Him. “Rock” is Tzur, reference to which is found in our notes on v. 31.

“And let the God of my salvation be exalted”—He will be exalted in the earth in that day when mankind will have tangible and visible evidence of His salvation in the multitudinous Christ.

VERSE 47

“It is God that avengeth me”—The word “God” is *El* as in vv. 30, 32. In avenging the Psalmist, He will vindicate righteousness.

“And subdueth the people under me”—Here the word for “people” is *amim*, a plural word, invariably used in Scripture for the Gentiles.

VERSE 48

“He delivereth me from mine enemies”—See notes above.

“Yea, Thou liftest me up above those that rise up against me”—The Psalmist now directly addresses Yahweh in thanksgiving.

“Thou has delivered me from the violent man”—Or “the man of violence” as rendered in the margin, and by Bro. Thomas. This is Paul's man of sin (2 Thess. 2). In David's case, this was typed by Saul; in Christ's case, it was manifested in the opposition and violence he received from the Jewish leaders. The “man of sin” lives on in the Catholic Apostasy.

VERSE 49

“Therefore will I give thanks unto Thee, O Yahweh, among the heathen”—These words are cited by Paul in Rom. 15:9, and applied by him to the acceptance of the Gospel by Gentiles.

“And sing praises unto Thy name”—This is appropriate, for in the multitudinous Christ then assembled as one, there will be seen manifested physically as well as morally a fulfilment of the promise inherent in the divine name (see Acts 15:14; John 17:20-21).

VERSE 50

“Great deliverance giveth He to His king”—In 2 Sam. 22:51, “deliverance” is given as *tower of salvation*. The literal Hebrew is *Magnifying the salvations of His king*. The reference to “salvations” in the plural could relate to the individual salvation of saints, the complete revival of Israel as a nation, the incorporation of Gentile nations into the kingdom.

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yet at the right hand of power for many centuries. Though once like the daily manna, corruptible, he has been and for ever will continue to be, like the manna in the Ark, incorruptible."

We look for his appearing, that we who are corruptible, may be worthy to be made like unto him, and so eat of the manna that

has been 'concealed!' We have the essential vitamins in the Word. God has summed it up in that atomic verse from Micah 5:4: "And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the Name of the Lord his God; and they shall abide; for now he shall be great, unto the ends of the earth."

J. Alec Swaish (Wales)

Theme For Study

Psalm 18



SUMMARY

In our exposition of Psalm 18 last issue, the following summary was crushed out through lack of space.

"And sheweth mercy to His anointed" — "Mercy is better rendered as loving-kindness or *favour*. It does not relate to mercy as in the forgiveness of sins, but to the abundant goodness of Yahweh. "Anointed" is *Messiah*: and both David and Christ inherited that title.

"To David, and to his seed for evermore"—The name David applies to both the son of Jesse as to the Son of God. It signifies *Beloved*, and both earned that title from the Father. The "seed of David" comprise those who accept the Truth (Isa. 55:3), and as such they are treated as the seed of Christ (see Isa. 53:10). The word "evermore" is *olahm*, signifying the *hidden period*, and applied Scripturally to the Millennium, when the Psalm will have its final fulfilment.

Thus this wonderful Psalm covers the life and labour of the Lord Jesus from birth to the

future age. It warrants the closest study and earnest meditation of those who are Christ's and whose future is outlined therein. Let such study it verse by verse, and ponder it to their individual pleasure and profit. The following provides an analysis.

Summary

How Yahweh Appeared To The Psalmist

His Strength, Hiding place, Fortress, Deliverer, Rock, large and small Shield, Horn of salvation, High Tower, Saviour (v. 2), Illuminator (v. 28), Teacher (v. 34), Perfector (v. 32), Support (v. 36) Strengthened (v. 39), Source of victory (v. 40).

How The Psalmist Responded to Yahweh's Goodness

With love (v. 1), confidence, trust, praise, prayer (v.3), thanks (v. 49). He

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acknowledges that Yahweh lives, delivers, avenges, elevates (vv. 46-48), and that He should be revered, exalted, thanked and praised (vv. 49-50).

The Personal Experiences Of The Psalmist

He is surrounded by enemies, the threat of death, floods of ungodliness, snares of the grave (vv. 5-6), hatred, evil activity, calamity (vv. 17-18).

How Yahweh Saved Him

He heard, sent, drew him out of

danger, delivered, supported, guided, and rewarded him (vv. 16-20).

How The Divine Theophany Was Revealed

In earthquake, smoke, fire, tempest, darkness, lightning, thunder, hail, flood, wind, destruction (vv. 7-15).

Why The Psalmist Was Delivered

He was righteous, clean, avoided iniquity, was obedient, upright, alive to his responsibilities (vv. 20-24).

THE GLORY AND INFLUENCE OF THE WORD OF YAHWEH (Psalm 19)

A prominent feature of the Psalms is their appreciation of nature. At least six psalms (8,19,29,65,93, 104) are superb illustrations of this truth. It is beautifully expressed in the eighth psalm which draws from nature to illustrate Yahweh's future purpose in the earth. It discloses the experience of many hours of lonely meditation spent by David beneath the stars (v. 3), comparing the divine glory manifested therein with that which is yet to fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. The Psalm before us does likewise, with this difference: that whereas the eighth Psalm paints the glory of the heavens as seen by night, that before us does so as seen by day.

The Author

According to the title this is "a psalm of David." The Hebrew word *mizmowr* is from a root *zamar* signifying "to strike," and hence to touch the strings of parts of a musical instrument. The title, therefore, designates a poem set to music, one calculated to pluck the strings of the heart.

And certainly, the Psalm before us can do that. It speaks of the glory of creation by day, as Psalm 8 speaks of it by night. We

need not look for any specific incident in the life of David to establish when it was written. Many a time, as a shepherd, David must have contemplated the glory of creation by night or by day. As he did so, he recognised that the stellar host and the solar day were controlled by law: they obeyed the dictates of a wise and wonderful Creator.

Therefore, it is appropriate that such a meditative, spiritual mind as his should align the glory of Yahweh as seen in His work,

with that as seen in His word.

As David's eyes took in the glory of the former, his mind opened out to the power of the latter. As during the still watches and darkness of night, he saw in the moon and the stars a witness to the existence of God, so he saw in the shining forth of the rising sun, a token of His grand purpose to flood the earth with the light of His truth (Ps. 89:37).

The sun that he describes in the Psalm before us, is the early morning sun: the sun arising over the eastern horizon whose healing beams turn night into day. How glorious is the orb of heaven at such a moment. Many a time in the early morning, has the writer viewed the glow of golden light edging the mass of dark mountains east of Adelaide, and has awaited the bursting forth of the sun in all its majesty, instantly dispelling the gloomy darkness of, perhaps, a sleepless night. Under such circumstances, a troubled mind finds rest, and turns with hope to yet another day.

Some consider the Psalm as disjointed. At first sight it may appear incongruous to join together the majesty of God in creation with the influence of His law so abruptly as is done at v. 7; and so harsh is the division that many believe that the Psalm once comprised two.

But to us there is no disjointedness, no harshness, no real break, but a beautiful symmetry. The Psalmist has before him two books: *The Book of Nature* and *The Book of the Law*. He finds both equally wonderful, equally witnessing to the "glory of El." The heavens are so majestic in

their glory, so vast and magnificent as to be beyond the ability of flesh to search them out. Even today, with all the instruments of science, man is unable to plumb the heavens. The larger the telescope the greater the number of stars there is revealed, so that the further man pushes back into space, the more complex becomes the mystery of creation.

For example, what is beyond space? And for those who doubt the fact of eternity, what is at the end of space if it has an end?

"Where did God come from?" a cynic once asked the writer. "You tell me what is at the end of space, and I will explain where God came from," was our reply. ~~He could not~~ do so, and recognised the point. God is from eternity, and therefore is incomprehensible to flesh. The human mind cannot grasp that stupendous fact anymore than it can measure or comprehend space that embraces infinity.

Now consider that other Book of God: the Bible. Has anybody ever plumbed the depths of its wisdom? Does not the eternal evidence of the Book demonstrate that it is divine? We have spent years in the study of this wonderful Book: yet with all the thought that a limited mind can exercise upon it, despite all the searching of Hebrew and Greek, and verse by verse Bible marking, only the surface has been scratched. The more time we put into its study the greater our understanding, and the more there is revealed to us. We have "marked up" several Bibles, and the one before us as we write has verse by verse notes on every chapter. But have we completely

exhausted its meaning? By no means! At present we are re-studying the narrative of Exodus, and are discovering truths of thrilling significance that previously eluded us. David found the same. "Oh how love I Thy Law, it is my meditation all the day," he exclaimed. And yet he found that all his meditation did not exhaust the possibilities of the word. A little thought therefore, will reveal that it is completely appropriate that one with such a mind as David's should link together *The Book of Nature* with *The Book of Revelation* as he has in this Psalm.

In regard to the inexhaustible mine of wisdom in the Word, consider also Paul's words as he contemplated the "riches of the glory of the inheritance in the saints." Like the scientist who looks into the heavens, he found it impossible to express in words his admiration for God's revelation, or to the depths of truth revealed therein:

"O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11:23-33).

He wrote of the "love of Christ which passeth knowledge," he declared that God is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:18-19). In this he was like the Psalmist who wrote:

"For as the heaven is high above the earth,

So great is His mercy towards them that fear Him.

As far as the east is from the west,

So far hath He removed our transgressions from us" (Ps. 103:11-12).

We cannot measure heaven above; nor can we measure the extent of God's love nor the

wisdom of His word. As the heavens cause us to contemplate the miracle of creation so the Scriptures lead us to meditate the miracle of revelation.

In our opinion, therefore, there is nothing incongruous in linking the work of God with the word of God as we have it in Ps. 19.

The Psalm Is Prophetic

But the Psalm does not merely express the wonder of God in creation or in His word: it likewise sets forth the glorious purpose of God. As the Psalmist observed order and design in creation, so he did in the word. As he contemplated the glory of the majestic sun appearing above the horizon and bathing the world in a golden light, he thought of the coming millennial "day," when mankind will be illuminated with the light of truth, and there shall be "glory to God in the highest; on earth peace and goodwill towards men." He saw in the rising sun a physical representation of the glory of the Sun of Righteousness when he shall arise with healing in his beams (Mal. 4:2), and when a new heavens and earth shall "declare the glory of God," and "shew forth His handiwork."

This is the application of the Psalm made by Paul. He cites it to justify the universal preaching of the Apostles (Rom. 10:8). As the sun diffuses light and destroys darkness, so God purposed that the Gospel should be universally proclaimed. Hence Paul's primary application of the prophetic aspect of the Psalm. The complete fulfilment, of course,

awaits the establishment of the Kingdom of God throughout the world, as we shall show in our notes.

The Psalm, therefore, in symbol, shows the glorious future, and directs attention to the wondrous word by which it can be attained. That word should be heeded because of:

- Its Author — Yahweh (v.7)
- Its sufficiency — it is perfect (v. 7);
- Its utility — it converts, gives wisdom (v. 7);
- Its infallibility — it is sure (v.7);
- Its benefit — it rejoices and enlightens the heart (v.8);
- Its purity — it cleanses from sin (v. 8);
- Its perpetuity — it endures for ever (v.9);
- Its purpose — to warn and reward (v. 11);
- Its value — more precious than gold, sweeter than honeycomb (v. 10).

Dominant Divine Title

The Psalm sets forth "the glory of God." The word is *El* in Hebrew and is expressive of God in *Power*. Concerning this word, Brother Thomas writes (*Phanerosis* p. 42):

"As often as this word 'El' passed before his mind, (the mind of the Hebrew), the idea of POWER, might, strength would stand out in bold relief. 'It always,' says Gesenius, 'presented to the Hebrews the idea of strength and power'."

Strength and power are manifested in the works of creation. The One who created the heavens and earth, and Who, by His mighty power, holds the marvellous orbs in place, whilst hurling them through space at tremendous speed, is certainly capable of fulfilling the predictions of His word. His ability to do the latter, is demonstrated by His power in relation to the

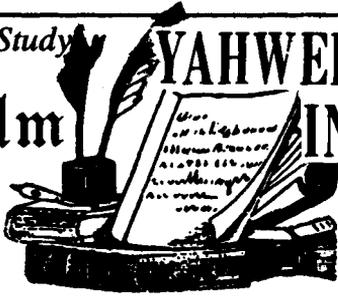
former. Therefore the two thoughts are placed in conjunction in Psalm 147:1-5:

*"Yahweh doth build up Jerusalem:
He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.
He healeth the broken in heart,
And bindeth up their wounds.
He telleth the number of the stars;
He calleth them all by their names.
Great is our Lord, and of great power:
His understanding is infinite."*

The strength of *El*, however, is not limited to mighty acts of creation, but is manifested through His word, in changing the characters of people. Christ is the channel of such strength, causing Paul to write of certain matters: "I can do all (those) things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13), God (*El*) worketh in those of the elect who uses the strength He makes available to them (Phil. 2:13; 1 Cor. 15:10; 2 Cor. 4:6-7; John 17:17), so that the glorious company of the redeemed are described by Him as "the work of My hands, that I may be glorified" (Isa. 60:21).

Therefore, as the literal heavens above witness to the glory of *El* in all His majesty and might, so also will the political heavens of the age to come; and as the word is powerful to change the lives of men now, so its predictions of the future will be vindicated (v.11). This is the theme of David in this Psalm as he draws together the witness of God's work with the witness of His word, and in faith rejoices in that which this did to him — and can do to us.

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YAHWEH'S MAJESTY IN HIS WORKS AND WORD

As our Introduction to this Psalm illustrated (see pp. 343-346), David compares the evidence of Divine majesty and wisdom as exhibited by Creation, with the wonders of the Divine mind and purpose as revealed in the Word.

The Division Of The Psalm

The Psalm is divided into two sections:

(a) — The Revelation of Yahweh's glory and majesty in nature, foreshadowing His future glory in the earth (vv. 1-6);

(b) — The Revelation of Yahweh's power and purpose in His Word proclaiming the glorious future (vv. 7-14).

A key to the real interpretation of the Psalm is provided in Romans 10:18, where Paul cites it in relation to the preaching of the Apostles. He obviously saw the references to the atmospheric glory above as typical of the political heavens and earth yet to be set up on earth in which will "dwell righteousness" (2 Pet. 3:13; Isa. 65:17-18). As David contemplated the majesty of the heavens by night, and the glory and power of the sun by day, as it commenced its journey of light across the vault of the firmament above, his mind meditated upon the "new day" yet to be manifested, when the Sun of righteousness will shine forth in glory from a cloudless political sky (2 Sam. 23:4; Mal. 4:1-2).

VERSE BY VERSE NOTES

(a) — The Glory Of Nature As Foreshadowing The Glory Of The Future — vv. 1-7

As nature reflects to the glory of El, so will His political creation of the future.

VERSE 1

"The heavens declare the glory of God"—The Hebrew is emphatic present: "The heavens are declaring the glory of El." Their's is a continuing witness. The wonderful order of the heavenly bodies proclaims the fact of Design in creation; and Design provides a compelling argument in support of the existence of an intelligent and purposeful Creator. Why is there life upon the earth, and yet none upon the other planets? The argument of design reasons because an intelligent Creator has a purpose with the earth (see Num. 14:21).

Creation not only proclaims the wisdom of Yahweh, but also His power: His ability to accomplish His designs whatever they may be. Hence the word "God" is *El*, the God of Power and Might: the One Who is able to accomplish His purpose.

In addition to the literal use of the term *heavens*, David also recognised its use in a political sense. Moses had addressed the government and people of Israel as "the heavens and the earth" (Deut. 32:1), and David took the same theme upon his lips, proclaiming that the establishment of a "new (political)

heavens and earth" in the future was "all his salvation, and all his desire" (2 Sam. 23:3-5). Doubtless he meditated the record of Genesis, and realised that as Yahweh had produced order out of the primeval chaos, so He will do so politically in the age to come. That, indeed, is the theme of "his last words" recorded in 2 Sam. 23:1-7.

As we contemplate the glory of the heavens above, with all its mysterious power, order, and regularity, let us also meditate the grand future of Yahweh to establish among nations "glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and goodwill towards men." The thought has been beautifully expressed in the words of the hymn:

*What though in solemn silence all
Move round the dark terrestrial ball?
What though no real voice nor sound
Amid their radiant orbs be found?
In reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice,
For ever singing, as they shine,
"The Hand that made us is divine"*

"And the firmament sheweth His handiwork"—Whereas "heavens" relate to the illimitable distances of space which, during the night, are lit up with innumerable stars, each of which is a sun in its own right, governing its own universe, "the firmament," is the great expanse above, which divides the waters above, from those beneath (Gen. 1:6-8). The "waters above" denote the clouds of heaven; those "beneath" are the rivers and the seas of the earth. As symbols, the former denote the saints in glory, drawn out of the waters of the earth, and elevated into positions of eminence. Thus Moses likened the teaching of such to the dew, the light rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass (Deut. 32:2). In the age to come the "waters above" will extend their, fructifying influence by emptying their water upon the earth beneath.

VERSE 2

"Day unto day uttereth speech"—The verb is from the Hebrew *naba* which signifies to *gush forth* in abundance, like the waters of a swiftly flowing stream. That teaching is apparent at the dawn of every new day, for it heralds the Divine purpose to provide a future political day of glory: a Day of Yahweh extending for "a thousand years" (Mal. 4:1-2; 2 Pet. 3:8). As the golden dawn chases away the

sorrows of the night, so will the Millennium. Meanwhile, the absence of Christ as the "Light of the earth" is accounted as "night" (see John 9:4-5; Mic. 3:6).

"And night unto night sheweth knowledge"—In Ps. 89:37, the moon is accounted as "a faithful witness in heaven." To what does it witness? To the reality of the sun: for its silvery light is but a reflection of that orb of the day. When the sun is hidden from human sight, its glory is partially seen in the moon, which therefore witnesses to its existence. The shining moon, therefore, proclaims the fact that there will be a tomorrow, and therefore "sheweth knowledge" of the purpose of God with the sun. That is the type presented by the Psalm, as Paul interpreted it. In the absence of the Sun of Righteousness, the Ecclesia, as the Moon, witnesses to his existence by reflecting his glory, and proclaiming the gospel, that there will be a future day. Its silvery light illustrates the principle of redemption whereas the dark of heaven's vault from out of which it shines, suggests the darkness of Gentile times in the midst of which the Ecclesia must shed its light (Phil. 2:15; Isa. 60:1-2).

VERSE 3

"There is no speech nor language"—As the light of the sun and the glory of the moon are exhibited in every land under heaven, so the proclamation of the Truth has leaped the barriers of speech and language, and has drawn out of "every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" individuals who have responded to its influence.

"Where their voice is not heard"—The words in italics can be eliminated, and then we read: "No speech, nor language, their voice is not heard (yet) their line is gone out into all the earth." There is no audible voice from the orbs of heaven above, yet their influence is profound; the voices of the Apostles are not heard today, but the impact of their teaching continues to move individuals throughout the world. The Lord made reference to those who "believe on him through their (the Apostles') word" (John 17:20), whilst, in *The Apocalypse*, he described the result of this as "a great multitude, which no man could number, out of all nations" (Rev. 7:9).

VERSE 4

"Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world"—The "line" refers to the measuring line marking the limits of possession (see 2 Cor. 10:16). The Septuagint, however, renders the word as "sound," and this is carried on into Paul's citation of the passage (Rom. 10:18). He quotes the passage to justify the Apostolic preaching of the Gospel throughout the world. His use of the Psalm warrants the figurative application of it relating to the political heavens and earth of the future. The Apostles, as preachers of righteousness, were as "the wise" who shall "shine as the brightness of the firmament;" and "as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. 12:3). Though inarticulate, natural creation "speaks" of the wonderful design, and the power of its Architect, and therefore provides fitting symbols for Christ and his fellow-workers in setting forth the light of truth (John 1:9). Though the voice of Christ and the voices of the Apostles are not heard today, their influence (or line) extends throughout the earth.

"In them hath He set a tabernacle for the sun"—This implies that the sun has a fixed position within the planets of heaven which thus must revolve around it. As such it is the centre of all the activity of the universe. So it will be with the Sun of Righteousness at his appearing and his Kingdom (Mal. 4:2).

VERSE 5

"Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber"—In natural creation this refers to the diurnal progress of the sun. How appropriate this is to the figurative application of the expression used. Christ is both the Sun of righteousness, and the Bridegroom of the second Eve. As the sun is hidden away from the world until it appears on the eastern horizon, so it will be with the Bridegroom. He shall be hidden away with the elect, until the time comes for him to be manifested unto the nations (Isa. 26:20). The word "chamber" is *mechuppatho* and is better rendered "canopy," or "veil." A canopy erected on four poles which protected the Bridegroom was part of the marriage accoutrements of ancient times (cp. Song 2:4).

"And rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race"—The term "strong man" is *gibbor* in Hebrew and denotes a mighty

man, a hero, especially in war. The expression of the Psalm suggests the action of a strong man eager to prove himself. The sun is as a bridegroom for glory and splendour, and as a strong man for power and heat; and both aspects have application to the Lord.

VERSE 6

"His going forth is from the end of heaven"—The sun commences its journey from the east, and moves towards the west. This, too, will be the direction of the conquests of the Lord. See also Mal. 1:11.

"And his circuit unto the ends of it"—The reference to "circuit" suggests the annual progress of the sun which produces the revolution of the seasons. By this means the benefits of the sun are shared by all the world. It is significant that though, to us, there appears to be variations in the heat of the sun according as to whether we experience summer or winter, that is not the case in reality: the sun is stable in its strength. It is only our situation on earth, our relationship to the sun, that seems to cause this. Now this fact of science is endorsed by the Word, which states that in regard to the "Father of lights" as typified by the Sun, there is "no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17).

"And there is nothing hid from the heat thereof"—All the earth profits from the beneficial heat of the radiant sun: as all nations will from the reign of Christ on earth (Zech. 14:9).

(b) — The Revelation Of Yahweh's Power and Purpose In His Word — vv. 7-14

As great as are the works of Yahweh, they do not match the wonder of His word. Natural religion must be supplemented by revealed religion. The former proclaims the reality of God; the latter reveals Him to us and sets forth His purpose. It powerfully affects those who come under its influence by changing their characters.

VERSE 7

"The law of Yahweh is perfect, converting the soul"—"Law" is the Hebrew *torah*. It is from a root *yahah* signifying to instruct, direct, guide. It denotes Yahweh's system of instruction by which men are:

(a) Taught His will;

- (b) Directed how to work in conformity therewith;
 (c) Redeemed and guided along the path of truth to life eternal.

The word "perfect" (*tamiym*) signifies that which is complete, entire, all-necessary. It provides all that is needful for the purpose of "converting" the soul. The word is rendered *restoring* in the margin and R.V. The doctrine of truth refreshes, invigorates, sustains, comforts and encourages (see Ps. 23).

"The testimony of Yahweh is sure making wise the simple"—The title of *Testimony* is given to the ten commandments as forming the basis of the Mosaic Covenant (Exod. 25:1, 21), because they bear witness to Yahweh's will and man's duty. They are "sure" in that they are not variable or changeable. The testimony that they announce gives wisdom to the simple. The Hebrew word *pethiy* is from a root *pathay* signifying that which is open: therefore the person whose heart is open or receptive to the teaching of the law. Such may appear "simple" to the modern sophisticated world, for they accept the truth "as a little child." On the other hand, "the world through wisdom knows not God" (1 Cor. 1). The wisdom it professes is foolishness with God, for it is "wise in its own conceits." Not so the simple, who are humble enough to recognise their own deficiencies, and seek the aid of Yahweh.

VERSE 8

"The statutes of Yahweh are right, rejoicing the heart"—The "statutes" are Yahweh's appointments (Heb. *pikkudim*) rendered "precepts" in the R.V. They relate to the various special injunctions in which man's obligations are set forth. These are "right." The word signifies that which is upright, straight, the opposite of that which is crooked.

"The commandments of Yahweh is pure, enlightening the eyes"—Yahweh's demands are like the pure light of the sun: destructive of the darkness and gloom of night (see Prov. 6:23).

VERSE 9

"The fear of Yahweh is clean, enduring for ever"—In this context, "fear" suggests reverence, awe, submission to authority, respect for the majesty of Yahweh. One of the purposes of the Law was to induce that fear (Deut. 4:10). Such

a fear is the firstfruit of knowledge (Prov. 1:7 — Heb.), and is cleansing in its moral influence, providing a basis for eternal life.

"The judgments of Yahweh are true and righteous altogether"—Yahweh's judgments are His decisions, His ordinances. They are in accordance with Truth and Righteousness (see John 17:17; Deut. 4:8).

VERSE 10

"More to be desired are they than gold; yea, than much fine gold"—The Word of God is a treasure to be sought and prized greater than the finest of gold. Many may subscribe to that principle as a matter of words: but how many are prepared to give practical application to it. Note the teaching of Prov. 3:13-18.

"Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb"—The Hebrew expression is "honey and the droppings of honeycombs" — the purest honey which drops naturally from the comb. Honey is a laxative, a soother and a strengthener. The Law of Yahweh is similar. It guards against evil, it soothes and it strengthens.

VERSE 11

"Moreover by them is thy servants warned"—The word *nizhar* signifies *clear*; thus to be "enlightened," or to "see clearly." Yahweh's law is illuminative, causing one to clearly discern his natural want of wisdom and the folly of his ways.

"And in keeping of them there is great reward"—See Prov. 22:4; 1 Tim. 4:8; 6:6; Rom. 2:13.

VERSE 12

"Who can understand his errors?"—The personal pronoun *his*, which is in italics, should be eliminated. The idea is, who can properly discern right from wrong apart from the aid of divine Law?

"Cleanse thou me from secret faults"—See Heb. 4:12. The word of God is a discerner (*a critic*) of the thoughts and intents of the heart, and therefore is capable of revealing secret faults.

VERSE 13

"Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins"—Wherever the word *presumptuous* is used elsewhere, it relates to proud, overbearing men. The Psalmist prays to be delivered from the oppres-

sions of the proud and godless lest he be tempted to deny Yahweh. See Ps. 86:14; 119:21,51,69,78,85,122 where the same word has been rendered *the proud*. The word "sins" does not occur in the Hebrew text of the Psalm before us, so that the word can be rendered "proud or presumptuous men or enemies." Rotherham renders the line: "Even from the presumptuous keep back thy servant."

"Let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright"—David recognised that the influence of ungodly and presumptuous enemies could divert him from the path of righteousness. His prayer is similar to that of the Lord's: "Deliver me from evil." Through weakness of flesh, unjust oppression can often cause a person to do that which is wrong.

"And I shall be innocent from the great transgression"—The definite article is not found in the Hebrew justifying the marginal rendition: *much transgression*.

VERSE 14

"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight"—Words may sound acceptable, but Yahweh alone can judge the heart. Acceptable words which reflect the true state of the heart are like a sacrifice: without spot or blemish. See Ps. 107:22; 116:17; 141:2.

"O Yahweh, my Strength, and my Redeemer"—The line signifies: He Who will be my Rock and my Redeemer. "Rock" is *Tzur*. We met this same title in Ps. 18:31. It is one used most frequently by Moses (Deut. 32) and David, both of whom saw in the timeless rocks of desert places symbols of permanency and power. Such rocks became places of refuge from the storm, or hiding places from the enemy. Yahweh as a Rock

provides a sound foundation upon which to build (see also Matt. 7:24-27). "Redeemer" is *Goel*, a title given to the next of kin whose duty it was to care for one in trouble, to avenge him if hurt, and to sustain him in time of need. Among other things, the Redeemer had to build up the family of his brother if he died childless (see Ruth). How did Yahweh become Redeemer, a Next of Kin to those whom He would save? By revealing Himself in one of human race, and by that means becoming as next of kin to those He would redeem. So "God was manifest in flesh," in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and was revealed as the Redeemer of all who would come unto Him through the Lord.

Thus Yahweh is revealed as a Rock to sustain and protect; and as a *Goel* to redeem and rebuild.

Summary

This glorious Psalm, therefore, reveals that though the miracle of creation exhibits the Creator as wise and powerful; His word shows Him to be kind and gracious. The Law instils the fear of Yahweh in the hearts of those exercised by its teaching; but Divine grace draws such to Him in confidence and in hope. As we contemplate the majesty and might of the heavens above, let our hearts meditate upon the greater wonder of that book close to our hands (see Rom. 10:6-10), and the glorious future that is presented by its hope.

HPM

Reflections

"I HAVE BEEN YOUNG AND NOW AM OLD"

The insertion of this short article in a recent publication is from the book *Christadelphian Facts* published by the late Bro. Jannaway in 1921. I still have my copy of this book which I purchased when it was first published.

The article, based on Ps. 37:25, was by Bro. S.A. Garside in a



Theme For Study

PSALM 17

A PRESSING PLEA FOR PROTECTION

This Psalm pictures David in dire trouble. Pressed beyond all human aid by a ruthless, unscrupulous and powerful enemy he seeks refuge in prayer and communion with Yahweh.

Its Place In The Psalter

In an introductory article to our study on the Psalms (see *Logos* vol. 40, pp. 342-346), we drew attention to the way in which the Psalter is divisible into five separate books, answering to the five books of the Pentateuch. Of those divisions, Book One, comprising Psalms 1-41, can be linked with Genesis, for preeminently it deals with man. In turn, it can be sectionised into three parts:

1. *Man in relation to the Son of Man* — Psalms 1-8.
2. *The man of the earth* — Psalms 9-15.
3. *The Man: Christ Jesus* — Psalm 16-41.

The Psalms in section one describe in order the ideal set before man (Psa. 1), his rebelliousness (Psa. 2), his striving against sin (Psa. 3), and so on until Psalm 8 reveals that victory will be only as the result of conquest — a battle won by the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of Man against the forces of sin (Heb. 2:14).

The second section describes the man of the earth (referred to specifically in Psa. 10:18), in his conflict with those who seek to

emulate the Son of Man (cp. Psa. 9:4-9; 10:2-16; 11:6-7; 12:1-5 etc.). But, again, the section concludes on a note of triumph, for it reveals the ultimate destiny and glory of the true citizen of Zion (Psa. 15).

Psalm 16, therefore, commences the third section of Book One. In this section, the Man Christ Jesus is prominently brought before us. It exhibits him in suffering (Psa. 16), in prayer (Psa. 17), in deliverance (Psa. 18). It predicts the extension of the Gospel message (Psa. 19), the attitude of those who embrace it (Psa. 20), their joy in his exaltation (Psa. 21). It makes reference to him as sacrifice (Psa. 22), as shepherd (Psa. 23), as sovereign (Psa. 24). It concludes by describing the Lord as the perfect burnt offering (Psa. 40), and again ends on a note of triumph (cp. Psa. 41:12).

Throughout these Psalms, David is revealed as a prophet (Acts 2:30), anticipating the coming of the one who would reveal the channel of deliverance from oppressors in life, and from death itself, to manifest the glory of Yahweh on earth.

Historical Background

The Psalm is by David. It is described as *A Prayer of David*. The word *tephillah* signifies a prayer of intercession, and is related to the statement of Psalm 72:20: "The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended". The Hebrew *kalah* in this verse can be rendered *accomplished* or *fulfilled*, and therefore is appropriate to Psalm 72, for it provides a prophetic picture of "all David's salvation and desire" (2 Sam. 23:5). The establishment of the Kingdom dominated his

pecting the treachery of the Ziphites, found himself in a most dangerous situation. The army of Saul discovered his hideout, and David was forced to flee. In fear he endeavoured to extricate himself, but in vain: "for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them" (v. 26). David's avenue of escape was cut off, and he found himself in deadly peril.

Unable to match the might of Saul, it seemed that he must be taken by his powerful and unscrupulous enemy, who un-

In volumes 40-42, we provided a series of articles expounding the first sixteen Psalms. Requests have been received to revive the series, and accordingly, we have allocated space for that purpose.

thoughts, and filled his prayers.

The prayer before us, however, relates to an occasion when David was so beset by a powerful and pitiless enemy as to be beyond hope of escape, apart from Divine intervention. Such an occasion is that recorded in 1 Sam. 23:25 when David was betrayed by the men of Ziph — men of his own tribe.

Learning that David was in their vicinity they sent to Saul offering to betray David to him. It was a grand opportunity for the latter to capture his hated enemy. Gathering an army about him, he quickly made his way to the wilderness of Maon, about eight miles south of Hebron. It is an area of hills and valleys of such a nature, that one party can be in a valley within sight and sound of the other, and yet have a barrier of hills for protection. (1 Sam. 23:26). David, unsus-

doubtedly would have put him to death. In that extremity, all that David could do was to throw himself upon Yahweh, to seek His help in prayer: the prayer of this Psalm. Fervently he poured out his petitions to his God, and remarkably and in a most unexpected way, they were answered.

An urgent report came to Saul: "The Philistines have invaded the land!" The very terms in which this was expressed implied that they were spreading themselves through the territory of Saul in such a way as would jeopardise his rule. Urgent means had to be instantly taken, so that Saul was forced to withdraw from his pursuit of David to face this greater threat to his power.

And David was saved; his prayer was wonderfully and effectively answered.

Prophetic Application

The primary application of the Psalm is to the circumstances of David the king, but the prophetic application is to Christ the King. He is the true Beloved (Matt. 3:17), who was typed by David. Whilst in a temporary sense the words of v. 3 can apply to David, they do so to Christ in the absolute sense:

*Thou hast proved mine heart;
Thou hast visited me in the night;*

Thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing;

I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.

The Lord had powerful and unscrupulous enemies opposing him as did David; and prayer enabled him to overcome (cp. Heb. 5:7).

General Theme

The prayer expresses David's ardent desire (vv. 1-5); and then breaks off to speak of his present danger (vv. 6-12), his plea for

divine help (vv. 13-14), and his confidence in his ultimate destiny (v. 15). Therefore it can be divided into four parts:

1. *Desire* — vv. 1-5.
2. *Danger* — vv. 6-12.
3. *Deliverance* — vv. 13-14
4. *Destiny* — v. 15.

His desire will find fulfilment in his destiny; the danger in which he found himself was overcome by deliverance. His experience, though painful, confirmed his confidence in Yahweh, and his prayer concludes on a note of triumph.

There are some very significant statements in this beautiful prayer. Consider v. 8:

*Keep me as the apple of the eye,
Hide me under the shadow of Thy wings.*

Or v. 15:

*As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness;
I shall be satisfied, when I awake,
with Thy likeness.*

In our treatment of the expressions of this prayer, we shall see how they applied to David, to Christ, and can apply to us.

HPM

Gold & God's Temples Part One

Gold For The Tabernacle

AMONG metals gold is unique. It is called a "precious" metal because it never tarnishes, and cannot be dissolved by any single acid. The double acid used which will dissolve it is called *aqua regia* or the kingly acid. Gold is a good conductor of heat and electricity, and its malleability is phenomenal, as it can be beaten out very thin indeed, when it is described as "gold leaf". In its

100% pure state it is very soft, so it is usually alloyed with some baser metal. Pure gold is 24 carat, and the best gold is usually 22 carat. Its value has been recognised since the dawn of history, and it comes as no surprise to find numerous references to it in the word of God, and especially in connection with God's temples.

When the Children of Israel were in the wilderness, after they had been delivered from that fur-



Prayer For Protection (Psalm 17)

Having provided the background and prophetic application of the Psalm (see last issue), we now consider its personal message.

Desire — vv. 1-5

In view of the threats made against his life, David seeks for vindication and justice. To that end, he appeals unto Yahweh to hear and heed his cry.

VERSE 1

"Hear the right, O Yahweh" — David cannot understand why he is subjected to the bitter hostility he experiences from his contemporaries, and appeals to Yahweh for justification. The word "right" is *tsaddiq*, and signifies *righteousness, justice, vindication*. David's experiences typed those of the Lord, who, likewise, was unjustly treated (John 15:25). He warned his followers that they can expect to be similarly treated (John 15:18).

"Attend unto my cry" — Rotherham renders this as *my loud cry*. The word in the Hebrew implies a shrill, piercing cry expressive of great emotional stress.

"Give ear unto my prayer" — See the title of the Psalm.

"That goes not out of feigned lips" — The Hebrew is *without lips of deceit*. There is nothing feigned or deceitful in David's approach unto the Father.

VERSE 2

"Let my sentence come forth from Thy presence" — David recognises that whereas man might distort and deceive, true vindication, true judgment, cometh from Yahweh.

"Let Thine eyes behold the things that are equal" — Rotherham renders this: "Thine eyes behold with equity".

The Psalmist expresses perfect confidence in Yahweh's assessment of his case and his state. He knows that He will judge impartially.

VERSE 3

"Thou hast proved mine heart" — God is able to penetrate into that which is hidden to man, for He is not deceived by external appearances. A man can hide his true state under a cloak of pretty words and hypocritical actions as did the Pharisees; but Yahweh can see through the subterfuge.

"Thou hast visited me in the night" — Night is the time when a man's thoughts range unrestrainedly, and reveal him for what he is (contrast Psa. 36:4 with Psa. 16:7).

"Thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing" — This is an expression used in relation to the purifying of metals (Psa. 66:10). David recognises that the trials he experiences are designed to purify his character. Others were leveling accusations against him which were untrue, as would be revealed if the facts were thoroughly tested. Rotherham renders the Psalmist's statement as: "until Thou couldest find nothing".

"I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress" — The man who can control his lips is a perfect man (James 3:2). David does so as far as the individual trials of that time are concerned. He treats Saul with the utmost respect, although on other occasions he "spoke unadvisedly with his lips. Christ, however, in thought (heart), word and deed (v.4) consistently, throughout life, rendered per-

fect obedience unto his Father; and therefore, at no time, had anything to fear from the divine scrutiny.

VERSE 4

"Concerning the works of men, by the word of Thy lips, I have kept myself from the paths of the destroyer" — In this line, the Spirit in David refers to his conduct as a man among men. Guided by the Word of God, he has kept himself from the paths of the destroyer, or "of the violent" (*Companion Bible*). David does not retaliate Saul's violence against him; Christ submitted to the indignities laid upon him, and expects his followers to do likewise. Non-resistance to evil was preached by him in his discourse on the mount.

VERSE 5

"Hold up my goings in Thy paths" — The Hebrew of this verse is positive: "My steps have held fast to Thy tracks; my feet have not slipped". David can only use such terms relatively, in regard to specific incidents; the Spirit of Christ in him (1 Pet. 1:11), speaking prophetically of the Lord, does so in the absolute sense. The Hebrew word rendered *paths* in this verse is different from that rendered *paths* in v. 4. There it is *'orachoth*, and signifies a well trodden road such as is used by many. Here it is *maqalath* and denotes *tracks* or *ruts* such as others have worn into a path, and which once entered are difficult to leave. The Psalmist claims that he has continued in the tracks of faithfulness made by others. David follows the example set by such as Abraham. Christ did likewise, but more perfectly than others. In Hebrews 12:1-3 his life is set forth as the perfect and supreme example of faith in action, bringing to a climax the acts of faithful men and women throughout the ages.

Both David and Christ sought the help of Yahweh in the difficult paths before them.

"That my footsteps slip not" — Or "My feet have not slipped". The claim is to one of complete consistency. By

drawing upon the help of Yahweh, both David and Christ succeeded where others failed. This section of the Psalm ends upon a note of triumph in the moral victory of David over Saul.

Danger — vv. 6-12

Having set forth a case of consistency in righteousness, the Psalmist now spells out in detail the dangers that beset him and his companions. They are in a situation of extreme danger from which they can be extricated only by the help of God. Nevertheless, David is confident that such help will be given.

VERSE 6

"I have called upon Thee, for Thou wilt hear me, O God" — The manner in which the Psalmist's prayers have been answered in the past, gives him confidence to petition Yahweh in his present need. In doing so, he uses the title of *El*, signifying *Strength, Power*. His strength is in God. Both David and Christ had constant recourse to the Father in prayer, and found strength in so doing.

"Incline Thine ear unto me, and hear my speech" — He recognises the great privilege of prayer, and seeks the condescension of God in hearkening to his further requests.

VERSE 7

"Shew Thy marvellous lovingkindness" — The present need of the Psalmist for divine help is great; and therefore he pleads for a special manifestation of "loving-kindness". The Hebrew word is *chesed*, which relates to the covenant love of God, the "grace" of the NT. The prayer is answered quickly if it were composed at the time suggested by us in our introduction; for Saul is compelled to leave off the pursuit of David by the Philistines invading the land. In the antitype, Messiah also found help of his Father in the hour of his greatest need, as the Apostle testified (Heb. 5:7).

TO BE CONTINUED

There liveth not a man upon earth that sinneth not. Forgiveness and the Lord's commendation for doing the best we can, will rescue such as fear and strive to obey; this is the Editor's hope, whose self-estimate is fixed at a very different standard from what some imagine (1880). — R.R.



Prayer For Protection (Psalm 17)

This Psalm can be divided into four sections: Desire (vv. 1-5); Danger (vv. 6-12); Deliverance (vv. 13-14); and Destiny (v. 15). Having treated with the first portions of it in our last issue, we now complete the balance of it.

Danger — vv. 6-12 (cont.).

VERSE 7

“O Thou that savest by Thy right hand them which put their trust in Thee” — The “right hand” of Yahweh is an expression used of Christ (see Psa. 80:17), and therefore appropriate for David who was the anointed of Yahweh in his day. Both David and Christ were channels of salvation for those who put their trust in God: David in a national sense; Christ in a personal sense. If either were to fail, the means of salvation in their respective ages, would be cut off. Therefore, in pleading their own individual causes, they pleaded the cause of all those who are drawn to God by their individual means. When Christ prayed to the Father for strength to bring his ministry to a successful completion, he also prayed on behalf of others who would be saved through that means. This seems to be the sense of this line in the prayer-poem. The word “trust” is *chacah* and denotes an active trust, not a mere passive one. It signifies the action of *fleeing* for protection; and hence to do something on one’s own behalf, in order to secure the salvation from danger that God might grant.

“From those that rise up against them” — The enemies who recognise that if they succeeded against David, or Christ, they would triumph also against their followers. The salvation of the

latter is dependent upon that of the former.

VERSE 8

“Keep me as the apple of the eye” — In the Hebrew there are two words which have been rendered by the single word *apple*; they are *ishown* and *bath*, “little man” (i.e. *pupil*) and “bath” (*daughter*). Both words are emblematic of love and care. Firstly, consider the pupil of the eye itself. There is no more sensitive part of the body: we react instantly to any harm that comes to it. Let the slightest grain of dust enter therein, and the whole body feels the discomfort and pain. Therefore the eye is guarded with especial care and solicitude. The Psalmist asks that Yahweh care for him in similar manner. But the Hebrew word in the verse before us, unlike the Hebrew word used elsewhere for a similar expression (cp. Zech. 2:8), is *ishown*, “little man”. This seems to relate to the manner in which a person’s image is reflected in the pupil of the eyes of one observing him. If the eye is centred upon a particular object, it reflects a miniature of the object seen. The Psalmist is praying that Yahweh may so centre His eye upon him that it will be filled with his reflection, and there would be no possibility of him being overlooked. He does not plead this for mere selfish means, but in recognition of his great need of Yahweh’s help if he is to succeed in that

which Yahweh has given him to do. It is an acknowledgement of his great need of divine help, and so he pleads that Yahweh may ever bear him in sight.

The word *bath* is the Hebrew word for "daughter". The Psalmist pleads that he should not only become the "little man" of Yahweh's eye, but, in addition, that he should be considered as the "daughter" of it. A daughter is very dependent upon the help of her father, and the insertion of the expression here, denotes a dependence of the Psalmist upon the help of God. It is significant, that in the expression of Deut. 32:10, the expression "the apple of His eye" is used in conjunction with a mother bird hovering over her young, and bearing them on her wings (v.11). The "daughter of the eye" is suggestive of one utterly reliant upon God for salvation, and who is in need of His especial, most jealous care. In Matt. 23:37, the Lord uses the tender image of the hen gathering her brood under her wings for protection, and the Psalmist uses expressions to denote that he is to be treated not only as the "little man" of Yahweh's eye who fills His vision, but as His daughter, in need of help and care.

"Hide me under the shadow of Thy wings" — See note above and compare with Matt. 23:37.

VERSE 9

"From the wicked that oppress me" — The word "oppress" suggests violent opposition and not merely mental oppression.

"From my deadly enemies, who compass me about" — The Hebrew is very strong: enemies against my soul (see margin). Enemies who will be satisfied with nothing short of his very life. True of David who "fellowshipped the sufferings of Christ", and certainly true of the Lord who was put to death by his enemies. In order to fulfil their desires, David's enemies "compassed" him about; in other words, they hunted him as they might an animal. The expression is particularly apt for the circumstances that drew out this prayer, for if we are correct in surmising that they are those recorded in 1 Samuel 23:24, David is literally compassed with the army of Saul, and is only saved by the providential invasion

of the Philistines.

VERSE 10

"They are inclosed in their own fat" — This expression means that they are impervious to all feeling. The RV mg renders: "They have shut up their heart". Others give it as: "Their heart is a lump of fat". They have no thought or feeling. See Psa. 119:70; 1 John 3:17.

"With their mouth they speak proudly" — They speak with the greatest confidence because they believe that they have the Psalmist in their power. And this they did until the Philistines drew them off.

VERSE 11

"They have now compassed us in our steps" — David finds himself in a position from whence he cannot extricate himself, and is in dire need of divine assistance. Christ found himself in a similar position, but explained to the Apostles: "Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me" (John 16:32). It was through the strength of Yahweh, supplemented by his own resolute determination, that he succeeded.

"They have set their eyes bowing down to the earth" — The expression describes the attitude of the hunter, carefully watching the ground for tracks of his prey. The RV renders it: "They set their eyes to cast us down to the earth". The enemies of David, like those of Christ, watch intently for opportunities to destroy. David lives in an atmosphere of hate, surrounded by enemies who seek to make capital out of any mistake he might make. Hence he has to live most circumspectly.

VERSE 12

"Like as a lion that is greedy of his prey" — David's enemies are fierce and rapacious in their desire to destroy.

"And as it were a young lion lurking in secret places" — A young lion is full of strength, and is noted for ferocity and craftiness in stalking the prey (cp. Psa. 7:2; 10:8-9).

Deliverance — vv. 13-14

In view of the strength of the enemy, and the extreme difficulty in which the Psalmist finds himself, he calls urgently upon God to help him in his need. He is specific in his terms.

VERSE 13

"Arise, O Yahweh, disappoint him, cast him down" — The trial is beyond David's strength to overcome, so he calls upon the help of God. This was true, also, of Christ. The Father and the Son in collaboration won the victory over the devil (Heb. 2:14).

"Deliver my soul from the wicked, which is Thy sword" — The Psalmist recognises that the wicked unwittingly serve God's purposes, as Assyria was the rod of His anger to chasten Israel (Isa. 10:5). The margin, however, has "by Thy sword", and the Hebrew is susceptible of both renditions.

VERSE 14

"From men which are Thy hand, O Yahweh" — Here, again, the margin has "by Thy hand," and the same comments as above are applicable. The word "men" is *methim*, and signifies *adults* in contrast to children. It relates to those who are of full maturity, and should know better than to persecute Yahweh's anointed.

"From men of the world which have their portion in this life" — Though full-grown adults, they are "men of the world", that is, of this temporal and passing world: men whose aims and objectives belong to the "world that passes away", and who have no thought for the eternal purposes of Yahweh. Note Christ's comment on such men (John 15:19). Contrast the attitude of a man of God (Psalm 16:5). Unfortunately, the "children of this world" are sometimes wiser in the pursuit of their ambitions than "the children of light" are in their's (Luke 16:8).

"And whose belly Thou fillest with Thy hid treasure" — Though they do not know it, such men are completely dependent on Yahweh for that which makes up the life they desire. He "maketh the sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just, and on the unjust" (Matt. 5:45). But men of the world do not understand, or recognise, that the things

they enjoy are from the hand of God. To them, they are "hid treasures" which come their way, though they do not know the process whereby it is brought about. Their bellies are filled, and their god is their belly (Phil. 3:19). True servants of Yahweh will recognise Him as the Giver of every good and perfect gift, and will express themselves accordingly (James 1:17).

"They are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes" — The expression does not necessarily mean that they have large personal families, but that such men have a numerous offspring in that there are always plenty of people who follow their example. Such seem to prosper, and frequently do so in this life; and this caused the Psalmist some concern until he "considered their end" (Psa. 73:2-17). Then he learned that they walk in "slippery places". The prosperity of the wicked should not delude us; let our minds be centred upon present blessings, and ultimate glory, and we will see beyond the appeal of the flesh. The confidence of "men of the world" is in numbers; that of men of God is in faith and hope. Men of the world are compelled to "leave their substance to their babies" for they have no hope; whereas men of God can enrich their children with a future hope which they hope to share with them.

Destiny — v. 15

The Psalmist concludes his prayer by contrasting his glorious and eternal hope with the temporary successes of the men of the world previously considered.

VERSE 15

"As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness" — Here is a note of triumph contrasting with the immediate problems that depressed the Psalmist. He looks forward to the time when he will see the manifestation of Yahweh in the one appointed for that purpose as described in Matt. 13:43; 16:27. Thus David sees beyond his present troubles to the "joy set before him", as also did the Lord (see also Heb. 11:2-3).

"I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness" — He expresses

himself in confidence because of his integrity (v.3), even though he is dependent upon the loving-kindness or grace of God at that moment (v.7). He is convinced of the help of Yahweh to that end, and sees his destiny as one of glory when he shall be clothed upon with divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4). His ardent ambition, the ultimate destiny he has set before him, is to be a son of God, and not a man of the world (Matt. 5:45). And with the utterance of that expression, he leaves the outcome of his present trials to Yahweh.

We know the sequel. In a wonderful way David is delivered out of his trials. The Philistines invade the land, and Saul has to leave off his pursuit of David in order to attend to the greater crisis that faces him.

And Christ?

"In the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save him out of death, and was heard in that he feared; though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:7-9).

"To The Chief Musician"

This direction for the use of this Psalm appears in the AV at the head of Psalm 18, but it should appear, as in *The Companion Bible* at the conclusion of the Psalm before us. It provides the direction for singing the Psalm. The chief musician was the one in charge of the musical arrangements of the Temple, and who, therefore, led the Levites in their prophetic singing before Yahweh. The singers and the musicians "prophesied with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals" (1 Chron. 25:1).

They sung and played to teach, and not merely to perform. Their object

was to bring out the prophetic significance of the songs and music, so as to emphasise the purpose of Yahweh.

The title of *Chief Musician* points forward to the Messiah, who, indeed, shall reveal the true significance of these songs of Zion, and bring to pass all that is recorded therein of Yahweh's glorious purpose. The Jewish commentators saw the reference as applying to the Messiah, though they did not view him as the Lord Jesus. As Thirtle notes in *The Titles Of The Psalms*:

"There can be little doubt that the word means the precentor or conductor of the Temple choir, who trained the choir and led the music, and that it refers to the use of the psalm in the Temple services."

This direction for singing, therefore, relates to Psalm 17 and not Psalm 18 as in the AV. The Psalm has both a title and a sub-scripture; and both are important features of it, assisting greatly in its better understanding.

Analysis

The Psalm is a prayer divided in the following way.

An Appeal

- That he be heard.....vv. 1,6
- That he be helped.....v. 5
- That he be favoured.....vv. 7,8
- That he be delivered.....vv. 13,14

The Basis of the Appeal

- His unfeigned lips.....v. 1
- His consistency.....vv. 2,4
- His righteousness.....v. 3

His Oppressors

- Seek his life.....v. 9
- Are proud and powerful.....v. 10
- Are unheeding of God.....v. 11
- Are fierce and un placable.....v. 12
- Are numerous and fleshly.....v. 14

His Desire

- The future glory.....v. 15

HPM

EXPOSITION OF THE PSALMS: We recommenced our exposition of the Psalms at the request of numerous readers. However, since doing so, we have been advised by readers that we have already expounded Psalm 17 in the previous series! In fact, we completed up to Psalm 19, and therefore we treat with Psalm 20 next issue (God willing). We apologise for this duplication, but decided to complete Psalm 17 for the satisfaction of those who may not have the earlier volumes of *Logos*. It is our intention, later, of re-issuing a revised exposition of the Psalms in book form. All this, however, "if the Lord will . . ." Ed.

dence, we can accept without doubt the certainty of the Lord's coming, plus the realisation that his coming is imminent, even at

the door. Let us be ready and waiting for him when he does appear.

— O. Tunnell (USA)

“He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen, even so come, Lord Jesus” (Rev. 22:20).



Bible Marking Project
PSALM 20

Intercession To The Giver Of Victory

Psalm 20 is an intercessory Psalm (cp. v. 9) composed at a time of crisis, and in view of subsequent success, first used for liturgical purposes on a notable occasion, probably during the celebrations that followed the victory gained.

Title and Subscription

The title is given as *A psalm of David*. The word “psalm” is from the Hebrew *mizmowr*, derived from the root *zamar*, and signifying *a striking*, and hence to touch the strings, or parts of a musical instrument. A Psalm of this nature, comprises a poem set to music. A hymn well calculated to pluck the strings of the heart.

The subscription, given at the top of Psalm 21, is dedicated *To the chief musician*. From this, we understand, the Psalm was used in the public service of the temple. The chief musician was the one in charge of the musical arrangements of the Temple, and

who, by his very position and status, foreshadowed the Lord Jesus Christ in the age to come.

Historical Background

It is obvious that this intercessory Psalm is based upon a notable victory that has been won, and, in consequence, confidence in Yahweh is expressed. A victory that gave assurance to true Israelites that help and strength are derivable from their God.

To what victory does the Psalm allude? The reference to chariots in v. 7 provides a clue:

“Some trust in chariots, and some in horses:

But we will remember the name of Yahweh our God!"

This statement, we suggest, draws attention to the notable victory recorded in 2 Samuel 8, through which "David gat him a name when he returned from smiting the Edomites" (v. 13). As our treatment of the Psalm first takes into consideration the circumstances in which it was composed, it is necessary to treat with this occasion.

David's position in Israel was assured. He was firmly entrenched as king, and had rest from "all his enemies" (2 Sam. 7:1). Moreover, he had received from Yahweh the great covenant of promise that guaranteed the eternal future of himself and his house. And now the time had come when the Kingdom should be converted into an Empire. To that end, he gave himself to the work of conquest, establishing and extending his borders around the area promised Israel by Yahweh.

This involved him in seven campaigns: 1. The invasion of Philistia (2 Sam. 8:1); 2. The smiting of Moab (v.2); 3. The conquest of Zobah (vv. 3-8); 4. The occupation of Edom (vv. 13-14); 5. The war with Ammon (2 Sam. 10); 6. The overthrow of Syria (2 Sam. 10:15-19); 7. The domination of Rabbah (2 Sam. 12:26-31).

These seven campaigns of David firmly established his power, and changed the Kingdom into an Empire.

They typify the "seven trumpets" of Revelation 10 which, similarly, will develop the Kingdom of God established in the

Land, into an Empire co-extensive with the world. Though the details of the individual campaigns are not given in *The Apocalypse*, the result is shown, for the King, the Lord Jesus Christ in multitudinous manifestation, is displayed with "his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth" in the stance of world conqueror (Rev. 10:2).

Hence our Psalm, if it can be aligned with the period of the seven campaigns of David, has an application to victories won then by David, and yet to be won by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Attack On Hadadezer

During the course of his campaigns, David moved north in order that he might establish his border at the river Euphrates (2 Sam. 8:3).

This brought him against Hadadezer, king of Zobar, north of Damascus (2 Sam. 8:3). This area had been granted Israel by divine decree (Gen. 15:18), and now David was determined to establish himself therein.

But Hadadezer was a formidable antagonist. He commanded a powerful army with a large contingent of chariots, and David had not comparable weapons to match such munitions of war, except his personal courage, skill, confidence and faith in Yahweh.

Armed with these, he moved north against Hadadezer of Zobar. The word Zobar means *Citadel* but its exact location is unknown. We believe that it can be identified with Baalbek which was a temple citadel of tremendous strength in the area. Baal-

bek is an outstanding archaeological site, the known headquarters of the worship of the god Hadad (signifying *glory, pride*) in ancient times. Hadadezer signifies *Hadad is his help*, indicating that the king of Zobah was a worshipper of the god Hadad. Baalbek could well be the centre of his power.

The ruins of the mighty edifices that once were erected there in ancient times excite the



Ruins of Baalbek.

admiration of both archaeologists and tourist today. Whilst some of these go back only to Roman times, other extend back further into the remote past. Baalbek was both a temple and a fortress: a place at which to worship and also one in which to shelter. For if an enemy attacked, there were underground

shelters where the devout could go for protection; so that if the gods failed the walls would not!

The most ancient god worshipped at Baalbek was Hadad. But down the centuries, the name Hadad was changed for Baal Shemaim (*Lord of heaven*), Jupiter, and other names or titles.

Most likely, David's infantry marched north along the plain of Bekaa in which Baalbek is situated. This is a wide, flat, and fertile valley, perhaps five miles across, overshadowed on the west by the Lebanese range of mountains, and on the east by the Anti-Lebanese range. Such a plain provided no cover for David's infantry in the event of attack, but was perfect for chariot warfare in which Hadadezer specialised.

And Hadadezer had at least one thousand chariots to drive against David (v. 4).

The Syrians and Edomites Attack

As if that was not perilous enough, as David advanced north, the Damascenes moved out of their city, down a pass that drives through the Anti-Lebanon Range from Damascus to the Bekaa Valley, and ranged themselves behind David's forces. His retreat was now cut off.

And then, to cap it all, news was received of an invasion of the south of Judah by the Edomites (see introduction to Psalm 60). David, his forces, and his whole kingdom were in deadly peril. In front of him were the extremely powerful forces of Hadadezer; his retreat cut off by the Syrians from Damascus; and

Israel and Jerusalem was in danger from the Edomite invasion. The nation was plunged into fear and lamentation.

The help of Yahweh was needed if David were to extricate himself from the predicament he was in. And that help was sought in the Psalm before us. Prayer arose before Yahweh from the people as they besought Him to assist the King in his battle. And Yahweh, who declares to His people, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," was equal to the occasion.

David's Faith And Courage

But though we may have supreme faith in Yahweh, it is required that we do what we can to help ourselves out of the problems in which we may find ourselves. God will never do for us what we can do for ourselves; He expects us to work on a problem, or a matter, and to seek His blessing on that which we attempt to do. Nehemiah illustrates the attitude in which God finds pleasure. In his diary he recorded the following item: "We made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them" (Neh. 4:9). In his case, prayer and action brought their rewards.

It did so in David's case. The Psalm before us provided the prayer, in which all the people participated, but in addition, David gave himself to action. First he separated a contingent of his own army, and placing them under the control of the resolute and determined Joab, despatched him to Israel in order that he might hold at bay the Edomite

attack. Then with faith matched by courage, he boldly marched against the forces ranged against him in the north. In circumstances not revealed, he won a wonderful victory against the overwhelming forces that the king of Zobah had at his control. That left the Syrians of Damascus; and they must have trembled with fear as they heard that the successful and skilful warrior was now marching to deal with them. Twenty-two thousand of them died in the battle, after which David moved through the mountain pass to occupy Damascus.

Then, returning home, David moved vigorously against the Edomites. He not only expelled the forces that had invaded Israel, but vigorously proceeded to invade their own territory, occupying Petra itself. Petra was a most difficult city to take. It has natural defences of such strength as were easy to hold and difficult to conquer. A mere handful of men was adequate to guard the entrance. Therefore the narrative declares that "David gat him a name when he returned from smiting of the Edomites in the valley of salt" (2 Sam. 8:13 — "Syrians" — *Arameans* — most likely should be rendered *Edomites*. The words are very similar in Hebrew).

Victory Celebrations In Jerusalem

In defeating Hadadezer, David had taken a thousand chariots as well as other spoil. He destroyed all the chariots except one hundred (2 Sam. 8:4), which he reserved to take back to Jer-

salem. What for? Certainly not for war, or else he would have kept the thousand. Evidently to grace the victory celebrations that would have commemorated the wonderful help that Yahweh had extended to His people in time of need.

One can imagine how that David would lead his marching troops along the ascending winding road that leads to Jerusalem above, and how the people would rejoice as they assembled to greet the returning victors. One can understand how that Psalm 20, which had formed the hymn of prayer whilst in trouble, would now be recalled and sung in an excess of thanksgiving and joy. And there, with the marching troops, would be seen the hundred chariots of the defeated Hadadezer: mute testimony to the power of Yahweh to save, and the efficacy of faith and prayer even in the face of apparently insurmountable difficulties. The power of Yahweh was seen as greater than the strength of flesh. Imagine the scene, as the marching troops with the chariots of Hadadezer in their midst, neared Jerusalem, with the assembled Israelites chanting the liturgy (Psalm 20) composed for the occasion:

"Some trust in chariots, and some in horses:

But we will remember the name of Yahweh our God." (v. 7).

The circumstances were com-

memorated in other Psalms (cp. Ps. 60), and illustrate the words of other stirring passages of Scripture (Psa. 33:16):

"There is no king saved by the multitude of an host;

A mighty man is not delivered by much strength.

An horse is a vain thing for safety;

Neither shall he deliver any by his great strength.

Behold, the eye of Yahweh is upon them that fear Him,

Upon them that hope in His mercy."

Again, consider Prov. 21:31:

"The horse is prepared against the day of battle:

But safety is of Yahweh."

On the other hand:

"Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from Yahweh" (Jer. 17:5).

These are sentiments revealed in the Psalm before us, when it is considered on the background of the suggested circumstances that brought it into being. The Psalm itself expresses the prayer of the people in the perilous threat that faced them at the time, and also reveals the response of the King. As such it illustrates the power of faith and of prayer. People and king were united in a mutual prayer that was heard by Yahweh, again illustrating the power of mutual, communal prayer (Matthew 18:19; Rom. 15:30).

The prophetic aspect of the Psalm, and the verse by verse exposition will be considered next issue (God willing).

HPM

To invest at least a portion of this life's exertions in the life to come, is not an extraordinary feat of wisdom, and yet it is what few are equal to; and the result is — the cemetery, which to mankind in general is the ignominious goal, while to the servants of God it is but a temporary resting place, in which their short sleep is over before they are aware of it. (R.R.)

us, making sure that we will pass successfully through the "fire" of judgment at the appearing of our Lord (1 Cor. 3:13). If that examination reveals that we are over-involved with the pleasures or "cares of this life", let us prune our activities therein, and by

applying the counsel of the Lord so "watch and pray that we may be accounted worthy to escape" the terrible judgments coming upon a world of sin and to stand approved before the Son of man (Luke 21:34-36).

W.J.M. (Woodville)



Bible Marking Project

The God Of Jacob Defend Thee

PSALM 20

Each of the Psalms presents Yahweh in a certain relationship which is illustrative of one or the other of the many divine names and titles found in His revelation to man. Psalm 20 introduces us to "the name of the God of Jacob" (v. 1). What is that Name?

A Most Encouraging Title

Basic to the prayer expressed in this Psalm is the appeal to "the name of the God of Jacob". We are not, in this place, told what that Name is, but are merely introduced to the title as such. In fact, this is one of the most expressive and encouraging of the divine titles found in Scripture. Every reference to it, is found in a context of trouble (as in this Psalm) out of which there has been obtained relief. The Name, therefore, speaks of the overshadowing care of God in times of distress, depression, or apparent defeat. Typical examples of its use are found in such

places as Psa. 46:7; 59:13; 94:7; 114:7

The word "God" is *Elohim*, the same plural word as is translated *angels* in Psalm 8:5. The angels are ministering spirits "sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1:14). They "excel in strength, and do Yahweh's commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word" (Psa. 103:20). Though, at present, invisible to the sight of mortal man, they, nevertheless, "encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them" (Psalm 34:7). The experiences of Jacob reveal in what way they do this. The

angels will not save us out of every act of folly that we might commit; nor immediately relieve us of every distress. The life of Jacob reveals that suffering, anxiety, and reverses might be helpful in developing a character fitted for the Kingdom, and, therefore, we might continue to experience such. But the title reminds us that we need never be left to battle our way out of difficulties on our own. The God of Jacob is there to assist us if we seek Him in faith. As the people turned to "the God of Jacob" in that moment of extreme trial and crisis for the nation, and rejoiced in the great victory that ultimately was won, so saints can lean upon Him today, and will not do so in vain. That was Jacob's experience, and his experience has been endorsed by those of other pilgrims throughout the ages.

In his troubled life, Jacob endured many an anxious hour, many a fear, and many a heart-break; so that to Pharaoh he declared: "Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life" (Gen. 47:9). Yet, throughout his life, Jacob was conscious of the ever-present help of Yahweh through the Elohim, moulding his character through the very pressures he experienced. This was dramatised by his wrestling with the angel, at the conclusion of which, he was blessed with the name Israel, a *Prince with El* (God). Jacob became a man remade through reverses, so that, as Paul declared of such, "God is not ashamed to be surnamed their God" (Heb. 11:16).

Towards the end of his life, Jacob gave expression to the

ever-present help he had received from God, for in blessing his grandchildren, he declared: "God (Heb. *ha-elohim*, the God) before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God (*ha-elohim*) which shepherded me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them" (Gen. 48:15-16).

The experiences of Jacob, and his final emergence from trouble to view his son in glory and triumph, are most encouraging to those who go through times of difficulty and depression. They reveal that no matter how dark might be the way, all is not lost whilst one has the help of "the God of Jacob"; for the God of Jacob is He Who appeared at Bethel to encourage the tired, despondent and fearful refugee, who fled from the bitter hatred of his brother. The God of Jacob, therefore, recognises the weakness of humanity, but proclaims His promise to overshadow those who trust Him during the days of their pilgrimage and trial. Though they may experience the bitter hostility of others who hate them, as Jacob found from his brother Esau; or may be subjected to the evil thoughts and attacks of their fellows, as he found himself to be in the household of Laban, they can shelter under the outstretched wings of Yahweh and find help and comfort, for He is the El (Strength) of Bethel (Genesis 31:13).

In Genesis 49:24, He is called "the mighty *God* of Jacob." There is no word for "God" in Hebrew, hence it is printed in

italics. The word "mighty" is from Abyir: so that in this place, God is described as *The Abyir (Mighty One) of Jacob*. The word is derived from a root *abar* "to be strong, to soar". It is rendered *fly* in Job 39:26. The Hebrew word *eber*, signifying "wings" or "pinions" such as provide strength to soar above, is derived from the same root (cp. Psalm 55:6; Isa. 40:31; Ezek. 17:3 — longwinged).

The title draws attention to God as the Lofty One, whose Strength is sufficient for every need. Like the soaring eagle, whose keen vision takes in the panoramic view beneath, so the Abyir of Jacob is able to see the end from the beginning, and to provide for all needs. His wings are outstretched to comfort or protect (cp. Matt. 23:37).

The phrase "the mighty one of Jacob" was first used by Israel himself on his death-bed, in the blessing of his beloved son Joseph: "But his bow abode in strength, and his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob." It is a remarkable testimony to God; and an equally remarkable expression of the simple, unfeigned faith of Jacob in the God who had been with him all the days of his life, in moments of failure and of success. As used by the dying patriarch, the title might well express the thought: "The God whom I have experienced to be mighty, alike in His forbearance, His faithfulness, and His strength to help, in all the vicissitudes of my life; who has also been with my son; and whose Strength I now pray may con-

tinue to be with him throughout his days."

When David desired to build a temple in Jerusalem, it was to the Mighty One of Jacob to whom he appealed, doubtless recognising that there would be something of "Jacob" in all those who would worship there (Psalm 132:2,5). It is suggestive that Isaiah, in using this title, should link it with those of Saviour and Redeemer (Isa. 49:26; 60:16). In Isaiah 1:24 the title is linked with Israel instead of Jacob, perhaps because the context refers to the nation as purged, and its enemies subdued.

In other places, the name of Jacob is linked to other titles of Deity, but it is highly significant, that on his deathbed, Jacob should thus appeal to the Mighty One of Jacob.

This, we believe to be, "the name of the God of Jacob" referred to in the Psalm before us. The One to whom David appealed in that moment of crisis that threatened to overwhelm both him and the nation.

VERSE BY VERSE EXPOSITION

BREAKDOWN OF THE PSALM

In our last issue, we supplied a suggested background to this Psalm; now we outline its contents.

The Psalm is a royal Psalm directed to the king by the people (cp. v. 1). It is a prayer for victory on the eve of war. In the first four verses the people request a blessing for the king. In v. 5, they unitedly express their confidence in his salvation. In v. 6, the king responds; whilst in the final verses, the people praise Yahweh their God.

On this basis, we suggest the following sub-headings:

1. **The People's Prayer For The King.....vv. 1-5**

2. Their United Confidence In
Victoryvv. 6-8
3. The People's Prayer For
Victoryv. 9

**The People's Prayer For The King —
vv. 1-5**

The Psalm opens with the people praying on behalf of the King. But they do so in the realisation that the burden of victory rests on him, and that he, too, is directing his petitions to Yahweh. Not only so, but in view of the crisis, the nation is tendering its offerings whilst praying to Yahweh (v. 3). The Psalm was probably chanted by the Levites as the sacrifices were offered.

VERSE 1

"Yahweh hear thee in the day of trouble" — The R.V. renders "hear" as *answer*. It is a day of trouble, of crisis, for the nation, and the burden of relief from it rests upon the king. He does not meet the crisis in his own strength, but seeks the help of Yahweh. And the people blend their prayers with his, that victory might be won.

We have suggested what the historical background was as far as David is concerned; but as his life typed that of the Lord, we might bear in mind the great battle that Christ won in his conquest of the devil, or sin's flesh (Heb. 2:14). The fruits of that victory are still being won as the Lord mediates on the behalf of all those who approach Yahweh through him. In times of trouble, they blend their prayers with his, that Yahweh might hear and answer him in their need.

"The name of the God of Jacob defend thee" — For the significance of this expressive title, see comments above. The blessing pronounced, "defend thee" in the Hebrew is "set thee on high" (see margin). That is, upon an elevation that would be impervious to attack; hence to lift him up above the trouble that threatened to overwhelm him. In the battle of life, we frequently need such help as that, a help that enables us to get on top of our problems!

VERSE 2

"Send thee help from the sanctuary" — As Yahweh was represented

as being enthroned in the midst of Israel, in the Most Holy, this prayer was appropriate to the circumstances.

"And strengthen thee out of Zion" — The margin gives "strengthen" as *support thee*. The source of that support is said to be from Zion, because at the time that David attacked Hadad-ezer, he had transferred the Ark to Zion (cp. 2 Sam. 6 with 8:3). As our introduction to the Psalm, last month, suggested that its historical background was the military crisis of David's northern campaign, the terms of this appeal were most appropriate. Psalm 132 commemorates the transfer of the Ark to Zion, and reference to "the Mighty One of Jacob" is found therein (vv. 2,5).

VERSE 3

"Remember all thy offerings and accept thy burnt sacrifice" — The people pray that Yahweh may heed the offerings and sacrifice of their king, and so grant him victory in the impending campaign. Their salvation, of course is bound up in the success of the king, and hence they pray the more fervently for the acceptance of his religious services. There is also a typical application to the Lord Jesus Christ, by virtue of whose sacrifice and offering, we can approach the Father.

The word "accept" is from the Hebrew *dashen*, the word for "fat". Hence the margin has "make fat", or to treat the sacrifice as fat, and so completely consume it. The fat was invariably placed on the altar, that the divine fire might consume it (Lev. 9:24). It was considered as the richest, choicest part of the animal. Fat represents stored energy, and hence was given unto Yahweh. As worshippers saw the fat placed on the altar in a sacrifice, they were taught to give the best of their lives, the richest portion of their being, the stored up energy of their bodies, to do the will of God.

"Selah" — This expression signifies *to pause and consider*. It is not merely a musical notation, though it may have been used in that way, but it appears as a thought link, calling upon the reader, or hearer, of the Psalm to pause at that point, and consider what has been said in relation to that which follows.

VERSE 4

"Grant thee according to thine own heart" — The R.V. renders this latter part as *thy heart's desire*. The prayer is that the king might receive his heart's desire. The condition for receiving such a blessing is stated in Psalm 37:4:

*"Delight thyself also in Yahweh;
And He shall give thee the desire of
thine heart."*

David of course, had done his part, as also did the Lord Jesus Christ; for he delighted to do Yahweh's will'. Hence both received their heart's desire in the victory that they each won against overwhelming odds. Psalm 21, a companion Psalm to that before us, and a Psalm of thanksgiving, acknowledges this:

*"Thou hast given him his heart's desire,
And hast not withholden the request
of his lips" (Psa. 21:2).*

His heart's desire, of course, was for victory.

"And fulfil all thy counsel" — David had not only poured out his heart's desire to Yahweh in prayer, but had given himself to wise counsel. He had made adequate preparation for the battle, had done all in his power to gain the victory, and then had sought the blessing of Yahweh on all that had been done. Action, wherever possible, is a necessary adjunct to prayer. We need to be up and doing what we can, whilst seeking the blessing of the Father on the efforts we make. Yahweh will never do for us what we can do for ourselves but He will freely bless those who turn to Him in prayer, if they provide the means for Him to do so.

VERSE 5

"We will rejoice in thy salvation" — The word for "salvation" is *yesuwah*, which word does duty for both salvation and for victory. Both are related terms in the context of the Psalm, for salvation and victory are one. The R.V. renders the word as *victory*. David's victory in the war would be the salvation of his troops and of his nation, for the circumstances were separate. So it is in the battle of life. The alternative is to attain unto everlasting life, or to perish (John 3:16). The very terms of our service are couched in military

terms by Paul (see Rom. 6:13 — mg.; 2 Tim. 2:3-4). As such it requires training and discipline, separation and dedication, to be successful. Well may we rejoice in the victory Christ has won.

"And in the name of our God we will set up our banners" — The people proclaim that they will share in the triumph of their king, rejoicing in his victory. To take the primary, historical application first. The Psalm would suggest that following the war, there was held a victory celebration. David's triumph, was a triumph on behalf of all the tribes, hence, this line in the Psalm suggests the setting up of the tribal standards in the name of Yahweh, as a cause of rejoicing. The Hebrew word rendered "banners" is a cognate word to that translated "standards" in Num. 2. One can imagine, therefore, that when David returned with his troops, and his spoils of war (including the one hundred chariots — see p. 343-347), that the standards of the tribes would be held aloft before each contingent of troops indicating that each tribe shared in the victory thus won. The standards were elevated in the name of Yahweh, the Covenant Name of God, as the Giver of victory.

Figuratively, the standards of the tribes are elevated to commemorate Christ's victory; for those who accept him are represented as being of the twelve tribes of the Israel of God (Gal. 6:16; Eph. 2:11-12). Revelation 7 illustrates the thought, for the redeemed among men, those "sealed in the foreheads" with the Truth, are represented as being of the twelve tribes of Israel.

"Yahweh fulfil all thy petitions" — In this line, the people merge their prayers with the petitions of the king. How true of Christ in the victory he won. Our prayers are joined with his in petitioning the Father.

Confidence in Yahweh — vv. 6-8

The victory granted the king in the moment of supreme crisis that faced him, provides the assurance that further help will be received. So with Christ's victory at Calvary. It provides the basis whereby we can approach the Father in every need, with every assurance of divine help (Acts 17:31).

VERSE 6

"Now know I that Yahweh saveth

His anointed — The "now" marks a new point in the development of the prayer. It expresses the conviction that as success has been achieved in the past through divine aid, so it will continue in the future. But it will be noted that the term is expressed in the singular number, so that the "I" of this verse is contrasted with the "we" in the previous verse. This suggests that this verse expresses the king's response to the prayer of the people. His victory provides the basis for his conviction that future help will be obtained for His anointed, or Christ. Now David was the anointed of Yahweh, and the nation also became "the anointed" by virtue of its being one with him. So also with Christ. His victory, as expressed in Heb. 2:14, provides assurance of further victories on behalf of those "in him". Hence he was able to proclaim: "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). In contemplating the tragedy of Calvary, let us also observe the manner in which the Father was with the Son in the warfare in which he was engaged against the forces of sin. "I am not alone, because the Father is with me," he declared (John 16:32); even though "ye shall leave me". That witnesses to the fact, that the Father will also help us in times of loneliness and despondency, when, perhaps, we look in vain for help from others. In such times, the beautiful words of Isaiah 50:10 may well be borne in mind: "Who is among you that feareth Yahweh, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of Yahweh, and stay upon his God".

The victory of David was a token to the people that Yahweh saveth His anointed; the victory of Christ, proclaims the same message to his followers.

"He will hear him from His holy heaven" — The word "hear" is given as *answer* in the R.V., whereas the margin renders the latter portion of the statement as "from the heaven of His holiness". Yahweh answered the petition of David and the pleading prayer of the people by granting an outstanding victory. He hearkens and answers

the Lord as he pleads as advocate on the behalf of his followers (1 John 2:1).

"With the saving strength of His right hand" — See the use of this expression in Psalms such as 17:7; 18:35, and note that that is the position now occupied by the Lord, through whom victory comes for the saints (Psalm 110:1).

VERSE 7

"Some trust in chariots and some in horses" — Hadadezer did so (see p. 347), and unfortunately, when problems arise, even some of the elect are seduced in seeking forbidden help (see Isa. 30:1-2). Let us beware of doing so when the pressures of life are strong. In our introduction, we have suggested how this Psalm may have been used in a victory celebration. David had captured 1000 chariots, and destroying 900 of them, he had reserved one hundred which may well have been displayed to the people to illustrate the extent of the victory granted by Yahweh. One can imagine these lines of the Psalm being chanted as the hundred chariots were drawn towards Jerusalem. The flesh is very strong in our lives, and the tendency is to place confidence in its strength to succeed, but the forces available to us from heaven are adequate for all needs (Phil. 4:13).

"But we will remember the name of Yahweh our God" — The covenant name of Deity was proclaimed to Moses at the bush, but its full significance was not revealed until Israel celebrated the great victory over Pharaoh at the crossing of the Red Sea (see Exod. 15:2). It was then recognised that the manifestation of His glory (whether mental, moral or physical) is only possible through warfare and victory (e.g. Rom. 8:7). David learned that lesson when he matched his faith against the muscles of Goliath (Psalm 8). Indeed, throughout Scripture, the covenant name is constantly proclaimed in moments of victory over the forces of darkness (see 2 Chron. 13:10-12; 14:11; 20:15; Psa. 32:7-8). That name guarantees victory in the battle of life, if those separated from the Gentiles for the name (Acts 15:14), do their part. There is no foe that will snatch our crown from us, if we place our confidence in Yahweh,

and march behind the Lord Jesus Christ, the "leader and commander of his people" (Isa. 55:4). Warlike equipment is what the flesh rests in. Not so the man of God. He takes a higher and safer ground of confidence, seeking to succeed through divine help. Hence he makes his boast, or he remembers, the name of Yahweh his God. Notice in this line, the reversion to the plural *we*. The people are responding to the words of the king.

VERSE 8

"They are brought down and fallen" — The forces of darkness had been overthrown. The people could see an illustration of that, as the captured chariots of Hadadezer were displayed before them.

"But we are risen, and stand upright" — Victory is complete. The words express the triumph of those who, cast down the prospect of defeat, are caused to stand upright in rejoicing, in the knowledge, and relief, of victory.

Prayer for the future — v. 9

The knowledge of past victories, strengthens the conviction of faith in future conquests.

VERSE 9

"Save, Yahweh" — He is the Source

(We regret the length of this article, but desired to complete this Psalm within the compass of this volume which is completed with this issue).

of strength in every moment of weakness; and of victory in the face of certain defeat. The name Jesus, Yahshua (*Yah will save*) proclaims that fact.

"Let the king hear us when we call"

— To what King is this petition addressed? Not to David on earth, but to Yahweh in the heavens, who is a "great King above all the Elohim" (Psa. 95:3). To Him the prayer is addressed, and addressed in confidence, recognising His power to save.

"To the chief musician" — This subscription belongs to Psalm 20 though it is attached in the A.V. at the beginning of Psa. 21. It signifies that this Psalm was direct to be used in public, or for liturgical (devotional), use. As such, it is Messianic in its ultimate application seeing in the victory of Christ, and the authority of the King Eternal, the Source of the triumph of all who place their trust in the Father and the Son. See the comments of Paul in Rom. 8:31-39, with its concluding note of triumph: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us . . ."

HPM

THE BIBLE: STILL A BEST-SELLER

THE Bible, or portions of it, can now be read in 1,660 different languages, according to the annual 'Scripture Language Report' of the United Bible Societies.

The entire Bible can now be read in 268 different languages. The complete New Testament is available in 453 languages, and individual books of the Bible have been translated into a further 939 different tongues.

The Bible appeared for the first time in two new languages last year — Kate, which is spoken in Papua New Guinea, and Mofa which is used in Cameroun.

The New Testament was published in 36 languages, ranging from Abuan (Nigeria) to Zoque (Mexico).

During 1978, 28 languages got a translation of a biblical book for the first time. Now the Apma speakers of the New Hebrides can read their first-ever book of Holy Scripture — the Gospel of Mark. So can the Karachay of Russia, the Rengao of Vietnam and the Uspanteco of Guatemala. Other languages that already had translations of parts of the Bible got new portions in 1978.

Thanksgiving For Victory Won — Psalm 21



In this Psalm, David records words of thanksgiving and praise for benefits received from Yahweh. It is a companion Psalm to the one that precedes it, containing expressions similar to those found therein. We believe that it is based on the great covenant made with David recorded in 2 Samuel 7.

Companion Psalms

Our treatment of Psalm 20 suggests that it is based upon the notable victory granted David in response to prayer in the face of seeming impossible odds (see *Logos*, vol. 45, p. 343; 2 Sam. 8:3-14).

The Psalm now before us is similar in construction, and seems related to the great covenant of 2 Samuel 7 that Yahweh made with David. In it, the king gives expression to praise and thanksgiving to Yahweh, for all that He had done for him.

In the light of the benefits granted in the Davidic covenant, consider the following statement of v. 6:

"For Thou hast made him most blessed for ever;

Thou hast made him exceeding glad with Thy countenance."

Notice that the concluding petitions of both prayers are related:

"Save Yahweh!

Let the king hear us when we call" (Psa. 20:9).

"Be Thou exalted, Yahweh, in Thy own strength:

So will we sing and praise Thy power" (Psa. 21:13).

Historical Background

The title of the both Psalms is the same: *A Psalm of David*. The significance of this is explained in our treatment of Psalm 20 (see *Logos*, vol. 45, p. 343). The historical background of the Psalm before us is suggested by the statement of v. 2:

"Thou hast given him (the king) his heart's desire,

And hast not withholden the request of his lips. Selah!"

The heart's desire of King David was the attainment of the Kingdom of God (Psalm 27:4, 13), and this was granted him in promise by the unconditional covenant outlined in 2 Samuel 7, styled by Isaiah: "The sure mercies of David" (Isa. 55:3).

The circumstances wherein the covenant was made with David were significant. The king is first described in kingly dignity, seated in his palace in peace, with his enemies subdued before him. Meditating upon the luxury of his abode, and comparing it with the comparative humble dwelling place of God, he confers with Nathan the prophet regarding the building of a Temple suitable for the Ark to dwell therein.

The prophet, convinced that Yahweh would approve the scheme, urged the king to proceed with his project.

But Yahweh did not permit it, and Nathan was instructed to inform the king that the project must not go ahead, even though God approved the motives that dictated the suggestion (cp. 1 Kings 8:18). Instead, Yahweh gave to David the glorious covenant of promise, with its seven principles:

1. David's name to be great (v. 9).
2. David's nation to be restored and redeemed (v. 10).
3. A Davidic "house" or posterity guaranteed (v. 11).
4. A Davidic seed — or Head of state to be set up (v. 12).
5. A Davidic throne — or royal authority to be established (v. 13).
6. A Davidic Saviour — or one to redeem to be provided (vv. 14-15).
7. A Davidic resurrection — that all might be "for ever" (v. 16).

David recognised that the promise made to him would be fulfilled in the Christ, the Anointed, to come (Acts 2:30). His Psalms are steeped in the theme.

This covenant of promise had a great effect upon David. It humbled him before his God. He left the palace and all its glory, to seek out the ark in its humility,

and there, "seated before Yahweh" (ct. 2 Sam. 7:1,18), he humbly prayed: "Who am I, O Lord Yahweh? and what is my house, that Thou hast brought me hitherto?" Though he is introduced in the chapter as a King; he appears before Yahweh as a servant (v. 5). But though lowered in position, he actually is elevated in status, for he is made to realise the great privilege that had been granted him.

We, too, need recognise our great privilege that we have also been granted "the sure mercies of David" (Isa. 55:3).

Analysis of the Psalm

In thought, the Psalm is divided into three parts:

1. Thanksgiving for past benefits — vv. 1-7
2. Expression of confidence for future victories — vv. 8-12.
3. Final petition for Yahweh's exaltation — v. 13.

The Psalm expresses eight past blessings that Yahweh has granted; and eight future blessings that He will bestow.

The past blessings are:

1. The king given his heart's desire — v. 2.
2. The petitions of prayer not withheld — v. 2.
3. Given the blessings of goodness — v. 3.
4. Crowned with a crown of faith — v. 3.
5. Given promise of eternal life — v. 4.
6. Provided glory and honour — v. 5.
7. Promised blessings forever — v. 6.
8. Made him glad by Yahweh's acceptance of him — v. 6.

The future blessings are:

1. Shall take hold of his enemies — v. 8.
2. Shall control those who hate him — v. 8.
3. Shall consume them in anger — v. 9.
4. Shall swallow them up in wrath — v. 9.

5. Shall consume them with fire — v.
9.
6. Shall destroy their progeny — v. 10.
7. Shall bring their seed to an end — v.
10.

It will be seen that the great victories that David won following the granting of this covenant of promise to him foreshadowed the future victories of Christ as symbolised in Revelation 10. These we have considered in our treatment of Psalm 20.

The key verses of the Psalm before us are vv. 2,13.

The Subscription

The subscription of the Psalm is given at the head of Psalm 22: *To the chief Musician upon Aijeleth Shahar.*

Psalms given into the charge of the Chief Musician were used for purposes of public worship in the Temple service. The Chief Musician supervised the musical arrangements, both as regards instrumental and choral participation. In type, he represented the Lord Jesus Christ, who will fulfil the terms of the Psalms so frequently sung, or chanted, in the divine worship in relation to the Temple.

The term *Aijeleth Shahar* is rendered in the margin as "the hind of the morning". Others give it as *The day dawn*, as looking forward to the dawning of the day that will witness the coronation of Messiah. This was the Day that David anticipated:

*"The Spirit of Yahweh spake by me,
And His word was in my tongue.
The God of Israel said,
The Rock of Israel spake to me,
He that ruleth over men must be just,
Ruling in the fear of God.
And he shall be as the light of the morning,
when the sun riseth,
Even a morning without clouds;*

As the tender grass springing out of the earth

By clear shining after rain.

*For is not my house so through God?
For hath He not made with me an everlasting covenant?*

Ordered in all things, and sure?

For this is all my salvation, and all my desire,

For shall He not cause it to prosper?"

These were among the "last words of David" (2 Sam. 23:1-5), and stemmed from his constant thought and meditation upon the grand covenant of promise he had received. The fulfilment of it in the Messiah who was and is to come was the "pleasantest theme of Israel's songs", as Brother Thomas renders portion of v. 1. It is certainly the theme of the Psalm before us.

The Psalm Is Messianic

As the subscription to the Psalm looks forward to the coming manifestation of Christ in glory, it is obvious that the terms of it are Messianic in character. David, of course, was a type of Christ. His name is also a title: *the Beloved*. It is a title bestowed upon the Lord by his Father: "This is My Son, *the Beloved*, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17 — see *Diaglott*). Accordingly, such statements as: "David My servant shall be king over them" (Ezek. 37:24), apply directly to the Lord Jesus Christ in his future kingly glory.

Hence there is a double application to the sixteen past and future blessings expressed in our analysis above. They applied to David in the days of his flesh; they apply to the Messiah to an even greater degree.

The past blessings were blessings acknowledged by David

consequent upon the Covenant of Promise being granted him; the future blessings related to victories that he won following the giving of the Covenant (see 2 Samuel 8,9,10). David extended his kingdom into an empire by seven campaigns as expressed in the succeeding chapters of 2 Samuel following the blessing conferred. The Lord, after establishing his power in Jerusalem, will extend the Kingdom into a world-wide Empire by the seven campaigns suggested by the "seven thunders" uttered by the Rainbowed Angel of Revelation 10:1-3.

Hence the Psalm before us had

application to David, and also to the Messiah, and in expounding it, both aspects need to be borne in mind. The life of David foreshadowed that of the Lord, so that the temporary and partial glory that rested upon the King shall be manifested in greater measure by the Lord. We can thus thrill to the terms of this Psalm, applying them personally as we are associated with the Lord in anticipation of his glory yet to be manifested in the earth.

We plan to provide a verse by verse exposition next month, God willing.

HPM

The Monster In The Living Room

"Just Lot was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: for that righteous man, dwelling among them, in SEEING and HEARING, vexed his righteous souls from day to day with their unlawful deed" (2 Pet. 2:7-8). Lot could escape that which vexed him by closing his doors upon the world, but today, many bring the world into the home in the form of television.

It Helps Destroy The Ability to Think

He can pronounce "Battlestar Galactica" more easily than "Jesus Christ". He learned to spell "Mickey Mouse" before his own name. He refuses fresh fruit

and milk but goes into fits if he can't have "Cap'n Crunch" and "Coca-Cola". His nursery school teacher reports that he is uncommunicative, noncreative, and sometimes violent; that he cannot solve the simplest problems;

A Psalm Of Thanksgiving — Psalm 21



Our previous article (pp. 9-12) claimed that this is a Messianic Psalm, based on the background of the covenant to David (2 Samuel 7). In it the King prophetically anticipates the coming of his greater Son, and gives expression to the joy of the people at that time. It describes the conquest of the world by the Lord, and concludes with a prayer for his coming.

Thanksgiving For Past Benefits — vv. 1-7

Yahweh has greatly blessed Israel's king. The nation is aware of it; the people are vitally interested in it. On their behalf, the king expresses thanksgiving to Yahweh.

VERSE 1

"The king shall joy in thy strength, O Yahweh" — Yahweh has blessed the king in a remarkable degree. The whole nation knows of it, and joys with him in it. Such an occasion is that when the great Davidic covenant was granted the king by Yahweh. See the circumstances as a cause of joy — 2 Sam. 7:1,9,19.

"And in Thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!" — How greatly indeed! David said regarding the great covenant of promise: "This is all my salvation, and all my desire" (2 Sam. 23:5).

VERSE 2

"Thou hast given him his heart's desire" — The desire of David's heart was to "dwell in the house of Yahweh" for eternity, "to behold the beauty of Yahweh, and to inquire in His temple" (Psa. 27:4,13). So strong was his desire, that he would have built the

temple of Yahweh, but was ordered to desist therefrom (2 Sam. 7:5-7). However, he obtained the desire of his heart in the promise granted him of a seed who would accomplish that which he desired to do. The thanksgiving expressed in this line of the Psalm is in answer to the appeal of Psa. 20:4.

"And hast not withholden the request of his lips" — The desire of David's heart found expression in the prayer of his lips, and was granted the king. Prayer should always be a blend of heart and lips, and not merely the latter. The Hebrews spoke of the heart as the seat of intellect and not merely that of emotion. Hence David's pondering on the purpose of Yahweh, had found its fruit in the petitions that flowed from his lips.

"Selah!" — Pause and consider. The word is used throughout the Psalms as a thought-link, bidding the reader to pause and consider the effect of that which has been stated with that which follows.

VERSE 3

"For Thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness" — The verb, *preventest*, is better rendered "dost meet" (RSV). It implies one coming

forth to meet another as a friend to give him a gift. There is excitement and joy on the part of both giver and receiver.

The great boon that David has been granted is "the blessings of goodness". That is a term that Paul uses to describe the great privileges of the Gospel (Rom. 11:22). The same expression is found frequently throughout Scripture as descriptive of the benefits of the Truth. The goodness that Yahweh has reserved for the people of His choice was:

- Explained to Jethro — Exod. 18:9.
- Made known to Moses — Exod. 33:19.
- Promised to Hobab — Num. 10:29.
- Hoped for by David — Psalms 27:13.
- Described as the heritage of the elect — Psalms 65:4.
- Will be granted to the meek — Psalms 68:10.
- Is the subject of song and praise — Psalms 145:7.
- Will be manifested through Israel — Isaiah 63:7.
- Will satiate the saints — Jeremiah 31:14.
- Will be evident to the whole world — Jeremiah 33:9.
- Will be the subject of millennial songs of victory — Zechariah 9:17.

The goodness of Yahweh is something saints can revel and rejoice in always.

"Thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head" — In the covenant of promise, David received confirmation of his kingly authority in the Age to come (see 2 Sam. 7:16 in contrast to v. 15). The "crown of gold" is the crown of faith, for gold is the symbol of a tried faith (1 Pet. 1:7). It is the crown of life promised the faithful (Rev. 2:10; 14:14; cp. Zechariah 6:14).

VERSE 4

"He asked life of Thee, and Thou gavest it him" — This is true of both David (2 Sam. 7:19; Psalms 61:6), and of Christ (Heb. 5:7). In all the expressions of this Psalm, we see not merely David, but also, and as a first principle: Christ the King.

"Even length of days for ever and ever" — See confirmation of this: Psalms 89:29,36,37; 2 Sam. 7:13,16. "For ever and ever" is *olam and ad* in the Hebrew, or, as Brother Thomas renders it:

"for the hidden period (the millennium) and beyond".

VERSE 5

"His glory is great in Thy salvation" — David did glory in this. See 2 Sam. 7:18,29; 23:1-7.

"Honour and majesty has thou laid upon him" — These are terms relating to Yahweh's divine glory in the heavens (Psalms 96:6; 104:1, 111:3; 145:5). David as the earthly representative of the heavenly King, shared that glory and honour, even as the great Davidic king of the future will do so to a greater extent (Psalms 45:3). For the coming kingdom will be noted for divine honour and glory then revealed throughout the earth (Psalms 145:12), and shared by the saints (Psalms 149:9), for they will reign with Christ (Rev. 5:9-10; 20:4-6).

VERSE 6

"For Thou hast made him most blessed for ever" — The margin renders the Hebrew as expressing: "Thou hast set him to be blessings for ever", and quotes Gen. 12:2 as being expressive of the idea. Abraham was not only granted great blessings, but set as the channel of blessings to the faithful who walk in his steps (Gal. 3:26-28). So with David. In 2 Sam. 7:9, Yahweh is represented as saying to him: "I have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth". But in the Hebrew, this is in the future tense: "I will make thee a great name . . ." Today, in the world, David is known more for his sin than for his covenant. But that will not be the case in the future. His name, like that of Abraham, will be great in the earth, and mankind shall be "blessed in him" in that they will respond to the rule of the Davidic King to be established upon the restored throne of David (Psalms 72:17-20; Acts 15:14-18). Yahweh hath "set on David blessings for evermore" because He is the channel of "the sure mercies of David" that are promised those who seek Yahweh on the basis of the Davidic covenant (Isaiah 55:3).

And those blessings are endless in their duration. The word "ever" in this line of the Psalm is the word *ad*, and speaks of *duration* beyond the limits of the millennium.

"Thou hast made him glad with Thy countenance" — The RV renders "countenance" as *presence*. The Hebrew word is *panim* "faces". The faces of Yahweh are the Elohim. David describes how that they "encampeth round about them that fear Him" (Psa. 34:7). Hence, when the servant of Elisha had "his eyes opened", his confidence was restored in the vision of the Elohim he was privileged to see (2 Kings 6:17). So, also, faithful king Hezekiah encouraged the people with the same truth. In the face of the threat by Sennacherib, he declared: "Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him; for there *be more with us than with him*; with him is an arm of flesh, but with us is Yahweh our Elohim to help us, and to fight our battles . . ." (2 Chron. 32:7-8). And Sennacherib was overthrown.

David experienced a similar victory in defeating the numerically more powerful forces of Hadadezer (2 Sam. 8:3-6) as commemorated by Psalm 20 (according to our interpretation of it), and could see in that great victory, a token of Yahweh's presence, a realisation that Yahweh was with him (2 Sam. 7:9; Psa. 16:11; 89:15; 140:13).

VERSE 7

"For the king trusteth in Yahweh" — True of David, true of Christ. Is it true of us?

"And through the mercy of the most High he shall not be moved" — The word *mercy* does not relate to the forgiveness of sins, but to the loving-kindness of Yahweh: what is described by Paul as His favour. The word is *chesed*, and is expressive of the favour, or loving-kindness, that is reserved of Yahweh for those of His choice, that is, those who seek to follow in His way. David sought the favour of the "most High". The word is *Elyon*, and is first used as a title of Deity in Gen. 14 when Abram won his great victory over the combined forces of the confederacy from the north. The word signifies *elevation, lofty, supreme*, and hence relates to the One on high. In Genesis 14:14, He is described as the "Possessor of heaven and earth". Hence it is a title associated with dominion (see Psa. 83:18; 93:4; 95:3). In

Psa. 91:1 it is linked with *El Shaddai*. Thus one title (*Elyon*) expresses His lofty dominion; the other (*El Shaddai*) relates to the dispensing of His grace in sustaining His subjects, or destroying their enemies. The Lord Jesus is described as being "the son of the Highest" in Luke 1:35, a title that is appropriate to the context of this place, for Gabriel had earlier spoken of the extent of dominion over which he will reign "on the throne of his father David" (Luke 1:32-33). How appropriate is the use of this divine title, in a Psalm which reaches forth prophetically to the "dominion and glory" to be exercised by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Expression Of Confidence For Future Victories — vv. 8-12

On the background of the promises found within the great covenant made with him, David gives expression to the future glory of Christ's dominion over the earth.

VERSE 8

"Thine hand shall find out all Thine enemies" — The "hand" of Yahweh by which He accomplished His work in the earth in the past, was the Elohim. In the future, it will be the multitudinous Christ, then made equal unto the angels" (Luke 20:36). Hence, Isaiah prophesied: "Behold Adonai Yahweh (*the rulers of He Who will be*) will come with strong *hand*, and His arm shall rule for him" (Isa. 40:10). In the line before us, the word hand is *yad* expressive of the *open hand*, and as such, a symbol of power stretched out open to help. This open hand of power shall "find out all Yahweh's enemies" and overthrow them. See Psa. 2:9; 45:3-4; 72:9; Isa. 60:12; 1 Cor. 15:15; Rev. 19:15 — passages which speak of how the hand of the multitudinous Christ will be extended in power to wrest authority from the Gentiles.

"Thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee" — The right hand, is the hand of greater strength. In Psa. 110:5 it is given as a title of Christ, and, of course, all those "in him" in the coming day of his glory in the earth. He will be as the right hand of Yahweh, to execute the judgments written, an honour that all the saints will enjoy with him (Psa. 149).

VERSE 9

"Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of Thine anger" — The RV has *furnace* instead of "oven". The expression relates to the coming "time of trouble such as never was", when the wicked will be burned up (Mal. 4:4; Matt. 13:42,50; 2 Thess. 1:8), or destroyed in the fierceness of the Divine anger then made manifest in the earth (Rev. 11:18). The political heavens and earth, together with the elements therefore, shall "melt with the fervent heat" of divine judgment (2 Pet. 3:12).

However, instead of "anger" the Hebrew has *panim*, "faces" or "presence". Hence the RSV has: *when you appear*; another rendition has: *at the season of thy presence* (see *Hebrew Students Manual*). Here is a reference to the coming of the Lord, and the fiery judgments that shall overtake the world at that time.

"Yahweh shall swallow them up in His wrath" — See Rev. 11:18; Psa. 2:5,12; 1 Thess. 2:16.

"And the fire shall devour them" — It shall "leave neither root nor branch" (Mal. 4:1).

VERSE 10

"Their fruit shalt Thou destroy from the earth" — The "fruit" of the wicked comprise the religious, political and social orders that they have set up upon the earth, all of which will be destroyed by the Lord at his coming.

"And their seed from among the children of men" — The seed of wicked men are those who endorse, or condone, the evil of their elders (see v. 11: John 8:44).

VERSE 11

"For they intended evil against Thee" — They have been quite deliberate in their wickedness. Evidence of this we see today. Consider how morality has declined; and how governments are busy legalising associations (such as sodomy) against which Yahweh has legislated. In all avenues of life, there has been a deliberate repudiation of the divine rule and way of life. The verb of this line has the implications of something plotted, or devised, against another: a deliberate reject of God's way.

"They imagined a mischievous device, which they are not able to perform" — There will be an attempt, at the coming of the Lord, to overthrow his power, but it will not be successful (see Psalm 2; Rev. 17:14). Note the "mischievous device" of Gog — Ezek. 38:10.

VERSE 12

"Therefore shalt thou make them turn their back" — They will be completely overthrown. The line has been rendered: *For thou will drive them away in flight*.

"When Thou shalt make ready thine arrows upon Thy strings against the face of them" — Christ is described as the "polished shaft" of Yahweh (Isa. 49:2), with which he "shot at" the adversaries of the truth at his first advent (Psa. 64:7). At his second coming, he will gather to him any other arrows (the saints), and with them, he will overthrow the forces of the enemy. The "strings" of the bow is a reference to the Holy Spirit which the saints shall manifest in the day of their glory.

Final Petition For Yahweh's Exaltation — v. 13

This final prayer of the Psalm is similar in purpose to the final prayer by which the divine revelation closes (Rev. 22:20-21).

VERSE 13

"Be Thou exalted, Yahweh, in Thine own strength" — Note this constant prayer: Psa. 18:46; 46:10; 57:11; 72:18-19; Luke 1:48-55, 68-79; 2:14.

"So we will sing and praise Thy power" — A reference to the Alleluia chorus of Rev. 19:1-7.

Sub-scription

This is appropriate to the theme of the Psalm.

"To the chief Musician upon Aijeleth Shahar" — The chief Musician who presided over the Temple music was a type of the Lord, who will preside over the joyful choruses of the Millennium (Rev. 19:1-7). *Aijeleth Shahar* can signify *the Day-dawn*: hence a looking forward to the Day that is yet to dawn. David anticipated the coming of their dawn consequent

upon the great covenant of promise he was granted. His "last words" spake of that coming millennial day: "He (the Just One) shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by

clear shining after rain . . ." (2 Sam. 23:4; Mal. 4:1-2). In like anticipation of that glorious future, we echo the last petition of this Psalm in the terms of Rev. 22:10: "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus".

HPM

Prophecy



Armageddon: Divine Judgment On A Godless World

The widespread preparations for war, the mutual antagonism of the USSR and USA, and the frightening possibilities of world-conflict with the destructive weapons that are being stock-piled by all nations whether large or small, strong or weak, arouse speculation as to how extensive will be the judgment of Yahweh on this world of disobedience and violence. The following article shows how that the judgment of Armageddon is the theme of discussion in both Old and New Testaments.

The Name "Armageddon"

AN interesting illustration of the wonderful unity of the Scriptures in matters concealed beneath the surface, and not visible to the casual reader, is to be found in connection with the meaning of the symbolic expression "Armageddon". Harmony is almost a matter of course where two or more writers are treating of the same subject, and if the Bible failed in this, it would be a serious defect. The Bible is, however, not only harmonious throughout on the surface, but in regard to matters

apparently having no connection, investigation reveals the same consistency and unity. "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing," and when we find the concealed things of the Bible are in such complete harmony with its plain revelations, we have an additional assurance that the Scriptures are of God, and that though many writers have been used in their production, they are but mere instruments conveying to us the mind of the Deity.

In the great future gathering of the kings of the earth to "the war of the great day of God Almighty," the name of the place

Psalm 22: The Suffering And Victory of Messiah



This Psalm draws us close to the shadow of the cross, and makes us more conscious of the sufferings of the Lord, and the glory that followed. Thus it is a Psalm of sadness and of joy; one to be considered both academically and emotionally, enabling us to both understand and appreciate better all that the Lord has done for us.

Its Title

PSALM 22 is described as *A Psalm of David*. The word Psalm is *mizmowr* in the Hebrew, and denotes a poem set to music. The word is derived from the Hebrew *zamar*, "striking", and hence signifies a poem accompanied by the music of a stringed instrument: a psalm calculated to pluck the strings of the heart.

The Psalm is Messianic, and therefore prophetic. This is beyond doubt, for the first line was appropriated by the Lord to himself when he hung upon the cross. The Gospel writers record that during the three hours' darkness that Yahweh enshrouded Jerusalem at that time, the Lord cried with a loud voice: *Eli Eli lama sabachthani?* which is interpreted as "My God, my God why hast Thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34).

In this Psalm, therefore, David spake as a prophet. As such, he had a sound understanding of what his greater Son would accomplish in his death, resurrection, ascension and return. Peter made that abundantly clear, when, on the Day of Pentecost, he declared concerning David:

"Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption . . . David is not ascended into the heavens; but he said himself, Yahweh said unto my Lord, Sit thou on My right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool . . ." (Acts 2:30-34).

As a prophet, therefore, David foresaw that his promised seed would die as a sacrifice, be raised from the dead, ascend into heaven, and return to earth to consummate the great purpose of Yahweh initiated at his first coming.

But did David only speak as a prophet? Or did he personally experience some of the sufferings referred to in the Psalm? A careful examination of the expressions therein used implies that in some way, he, likewise, went through similar experiences. They are described so personally and vividly, as to suggest this. Even the statement, "they pierced my hands and my feet" (v. 16) could have applied metaphorically to him in that the opposition of Saul could be represented as restricting his work and activity, whilst prophetically anticipating what the Lord experienced literally. In our mind, therefore, it seems that some of the experiences related in the Psalm prophetically of Christ, were duplicated in the life of David, as they are in the lives of other saints. After all, Christ was a representative offering, and his followers are called upon to share his humiliation, as they hope to share his glory. Paul wrote, "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with him . . ." (2 Tim. 2:11-12). He explained his own purpose in life as follows:

" . . . That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death: if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (Phil. 3:10-11).

In type, David represented Christ, and in measure shared his sufferings and humiliation. Hence, though speaking prophetically, he could do so with an intensity of feeling that suggests a very personal involvement with the things he described.

Its Setting And Construction

Psalm 22 is the first of a trilogy. In it we are introduced to Christ as a *Sacrifice*. It follows with Psalm 23 (Christ as *Shepherd*), and Psalm 24 (Christ as *Sovereign*). Or, to put it another way, the three Psalms present in order: the *Cross*, the *Crook*, and the *Crown*. These are three stages that all must pass through in order to obtain eternal life. All who would be saved are called upon to identify themselves with Christ at the cross; to follow him, and to lead others, as a shepherd; and, finally, to share with him the glory of the Sovereignty of the Age to come.

The Psalm is divided into two main parts. *Part one*: (vv. 1-21), describes the Lord's trials; *Part two* (vv. 22-31), predicts his triumph.

Each part is divisible into further subsections. *Part One* answers the question, why Christ had to die? (vv. 1-6); describes the opposition he received (vv. 7-8); reveals his dependence upon Yahweh (vv. 9-11), and concludes by describing the extent of his sufferings (vv. 12-21). *Part Two* describes his glory following his sufferings: the joy of his resurrection (vv. 22-24); his future glory (vv. 25-31).

As the Psalm is considered verse by verse, the skeleton above becomes clothed with some of the most profound and touching expressions found in Scripture.

VERSE BY VERSE EXPOSITION

Why Christ Had To Die — vv. 1-6

A rhetorical question is asked, Why

did God withdraw His power from Christ on the cross? The contrast between the abandonment to death he experienced, and the way deliverance afforded others who sought the help of Yahweh is clearly outlined. The reason why they were delivered, but he was given over to death is plainly revealed.

VERSE 1

"My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" — These words are generally misunderstood. Yahweh never forsook His son in the manner imagined by some. A few hours before the Lord was led to the cross, he told his disciples: "Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me" (John 16:32). What, then, does the Psalm mean? This is better understood when the language used is examined. The word "why" is a translation of *lamah*, and, as in Isaiah 1:11, it signifies, to *what purpose?* It is derived from the same root as *mawn* rendere *J manna*, and signifying, *What is it?* The question of the Psalm, therefore, enquired as to the purpose Yahweh had in view in giving His son over to death. It is to be considered as rhetorical, and not as though Christ lacked the answer in himself. It is publicly stated and answered so that everybody can understand clearly the purpose of Christ's death. It is really a note of triumph and not of despair. On the cross, Christ recited the first line of this poem at least (most likely he repeated the whole Psalm as expressive of his state and confidence at the time), and he did so with "a loud voice" (Matt. 27:46). Why a *loud* voice. Evidently so that it would witness to all adjacent to the cross, as to the true significance of what was taking place at that time.

The word "forsaken" also can give a wrong impression. The Lord was not forsaken in the sense of being abandoned or betrayed, but by the very necessary withdrawal of the Holy Spirit which he possessed "without measure". The Hebrew word is *'azab* and signifies to *loosen, leave or withdraw*. The Holy Spirit was withdrawn from the Lord, for otherwise its

strength would have sustained him, and prevented his death. Therefore it was taken away that he might expire, in accordance with the will of the Father. The word "God" in the statement is *EI*, denoting *strength*. It defines Yahweh as the Source of all power including the Holy Spirit, and it was that which the Father withdrew. The very nature of the question, therefore, does not suggest abandonment in the sense of betrayal, or of anger, and certainly Christ did not view his experiences in that light. He referred to God as "*My God*" still! The Lord had not lost faith, nor felt himself completely abandoned of God whilst on the cross.

But, if that were the case, why express himself in the form of interrogation? Does not the very question suggest a moment of doubt, or a misunderstanding of God's intention?

By no means. The question is stated rhetorically. A similar usage of language is expressed in Psalm 2: "Why do the nations rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?" That question is asked, not because the answer is in doubt, but from the point of emphasis, to clearly bring home the fact that the nations have no cause to rage. The question of the Psalm before us therefore, does not denote an expression of doubt or reproach, but a statement emphasising the sinlessness of the Lord. All other members of the human race sin and justify the death they suffer. Not so the Lord. Why was he given over to death? The subsequent verses of the Psalm provide the answer.

"Why art Thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring" — In withdrawing the Holy Spirit from the Lord, the Father, in effect, removed Himself "far off", in order to accomplish His purpose, which required the Lord's death (cp. Acts 2:23). The word "roaring" is better rendered *groaning* as in the RSV.

VERSE 2

"O my God, I cry in the daytime, but Thou hearest not" — The RV renders this: "Thou answerest not". There was no way out of death: the Father's will was accomplished through putting to death of the flesh.

“And in the night season, and am not silent” — The RV renders: “But find no rest”. Even though the Lord was in constant prayerful communion with the Father, it did not entirely lift the strain and burden that pressed so heavily upon him. He told his disciples: “I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished” (Luke 12:50).

VERSE 3

“But Thou art holy” — The Lord never doubted the righteousness of Yahweh in spite of all his sufferings (Rom. 3:25-26). He willingly offered himself as the sin-bearer for humanity, and in doing so himself benefited in the redemption he wrought for others. He was brought again from the dead to eternal life, by his own blood (Heb. 13:20). As the altar of sacrifice was atoned for under the Law, so his offering provided atonement for himself, ensuring the “covering” (the word *atonement* signifies *covering*) he received of eternal life (2 Cor. 5:2-4). God is holy. The word denotes that which is clean, pure, right, and perfect. The atonement reveals that in every way.

“O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel” — The word “inhabitest” signifies *enthroned*. The reference is to the Most Holy where Yahweh was enthroned in glory, and towards which the praises of the people were directed, as His dwelling place in Israel.

VERSE 4

“Our father trusted in Thee” — The reference is to the patriarchs.

“They trusted, and Thou didst deliver them” — Whereas the patriarchs were delivered out of trouble, and death, God allowed the Lord to be put to death. This fact demonstrated that Yahweh’s mission with the Lord was different to that with the patriarchs. They inherited the promises, and provided a seed leading to “the seed of the woman”. It was essential, therefore, that they should live, and be delivered out of trouble. Not so with the Lord. As Paul taught: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Tim. 1:15). Therefore, he was born to die; death was an essential element in the salvation of the

human race, which included himself (Phil. 2:5-9). His was a unique mission, and the statement of this verse contrasts it with that of Yahweh’s purpose with other men.

VERSE 5

“They cried unto Thee, and were delivered” — Because their death was not essential to save the human race.

“They trusted in Thee, and were not confounded” — “Confounded” is perhaps better rendered *disappointed*, as in other versions.

VERSE 6

“But I am a worm, and no man” — The Hebrew word for “worm” is *tola*. This describes an insect like the cochineal insect of Mexico today, from whence there was derived the scarlet dye that was used in the Tabernacle. The word scarlet in Exod. 25:4 (and elsewhere) is *tola’ath-shani*, literally *worm-scarlet*. The *tola* is a small insect about the size of a pea, and it is from the feminine species that the dye is obtained. The word in Exodus is feminine in gender, and is appropriate to describe the dye. The females called *croccus illicis*, are collected and dried, and the dye described as scarlet obtained therefrom.

The statement of the Psalm, therefore, prophetically explains why the Lord had to die, whereas the patriarchs were delivered. It was because he was provided to supply the scarlet for the antitypical “Tabernacle” (Heb. 8:2; 9:11): his sacrificial blood. He “humbled himself (like the *tola* insect), and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:8), thereby answering to the requirements of the Psalm: “I am a worm and no man”. Here the word is *ish* which relates to a high man; instead, the Lord took the lowest place.

The scarlet dye as used in the Tabernacle, was also used for the cleansing of the leper (Lev. 14:4), and for purification from defilement caused by contact with death (Num. 19:6), all of which is effected in the offering of the Lord. The line of the Psalm, therefore, is appropriate to his service of sacrifice.

“A reproach of men, and despised of the people” — In this line, the word

"men" is *adam*, and here relates to the common man. Its fulfilment found the Lord mocked by the lowest of the people.

However it was not only individuals who repudiated him, but the nation as a whole. It did this through its leaders, and that fact is expressed in the Psalm. The term "people" in this place denotes the nation. He was rejected both by individuals on their own account, and by the nation as a whole. "He came unto his own, and his own

received him not" (John 1:11). Such was the tragedy of his first advent, but in it Yahweh's purpose was served (Acts 2:22-24), and the means laid down for the salvation of "whosoever will" come unto him. It was because of that purpose that the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from the Lord, and he was left to die upon the cross. It provided an answer to the rhetorical question: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" HPM

(To be continued).

Prophecy Fulfilling



Europe And The Beast

"Be not deceived, then, by the siren-voices of the peace-prophets. Ere long, the last and most terrible of wars will break out. The Beast and the False Prophet will be plagued, and the Lord will come as a thief in the night. Let this conviction work out its intended results. The blessing is not simply to him that watcheth; but to him that watcheth and keepeth his garments. Simply to believe that the Lord is near, and to be able to discern the signs of the times, will not entitle a man to the blessing. He must 'buy gold tried in the fire; and white raiment, that he may be clothed, and that the shame of his nakedness do not appear; and anoint his eyes with eye-salve, that he may see' (Rev. 3:18)." — Elpis Israel p. 387.

Our Heritage

BROTHER Thomas' understanding of Bible prophecy permitted him to write with clarity concerning coming events, as evinced above. At the time he wrote, one of the greatest movements for world peace was being launched. Indeed, du-

ring the time that he was writing *Elpis Israel*, large meetings were being held in London sponsoring peace. Brother Thomas attended one of these, and to the great indignation of its sponsors, he addressed the meeting, pointing out the Bible teaching concerning peace. He basically proclaimed the same

Bible Marking Project

Psalm 22: The Suffering And Victory Of Messiah



Our previous article provided an outline of this prophetic, Messianic Psalm. It is divisible into two parts (1) Christ's trials — vv. 1-21; (2) Christ's triumphs — vv. 22-32. We expounded the first six verses, answering the question, Why did Christ have to die?

The Bitter Opposition Received By The Lord — vv. 7-8

The Psalm anticipates the hatred of the Jewish leaders towards the Lord as he hung upon the cross.

VERSE 7

"All they that see me laugh me to scorn" — These prophetic words were so literally fulfilled as to be cited in Luke 23:35.

"They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying" — These are gestures, partly of contempt, partly of abhorrence. See Matt. 27:24. The margin renders the word *shoot* as *open*. The Lord's enemies opened their mouths against him as he hung from the cross.

VERSE 8

"He trusted on Yahweh that He would deliver him" — The Hebrew *galal* signifies to "roll upon" as in the margin. The *Cambridge Bible* gives the statement in the present tense, and represents it as the mocking invitation of the Lord's enemies: "Roll it upon Yahweh." The onlookers ironically call upon him to seek Yahweh's aid now, implying that he was beyond all help. These prophetic words were literally fulfilled. See Matt. 27:43.

"Let Him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him" — The margin renders this as "if he delight in him". The sarcastic words of the onlookers express doubt as to whether there existed that affinity between Yahweh and His son that the latter had claimed in his teaching. They put the matter to the test. If Yahweh will deliver him now, they will believe in him!

The Lord's Rely To His Enemies — vv. 9-11

In reply to the mocking unbelief of the onlookers, the Lord turns to Yahweh, and expresses his utmost dependence upon Him. His faith is unimpaired by his sufferings.

VERSE 9

"But Thou art He that took me out of the womb" — The *Cambridge Bible* transfers "but" into *yea*, and so represents the Lord as turning the mocking words of the onlookers into a plea for help. His very birth illustrated the divine purpose in his existence, and was a matter of divine contrivance. It demonstrated that Yahweh had a purpose with him from his very beginning; and with that thought in mind the Lord turned to his Father for help.

"Thou didst make me hope when I

was upon my mother's breasts" — The Hebrew *batah* signifies "to trust" or "confide". The statement teaches that the Father overshadowed the development of the Son from his earliest days (Luke 2:47,52). The Lord, like others, who give themselves to God, "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52). The Lord was not born with a ready-made knowledge of the things, of God, but had to develop this through the means provided him. Of course, his potential to that end was greater than that of all others before or since (Psa. 80:17; John 7:46).

VERSE 10

"I was cast upon Thee from the womb" — From birth (and even before birth — see Psa. 139:15-16), the Lord was under the careful supervision of his Father. The word "God" is *EI*, denoting divine power. Yahweh strengthened the Son of Man to overcome (Psa. 80:17). He was born with the potential to succeed in the work designed of him to accomplish, but he had to develop the latent powers granted him to that end. He relied not upon the flesh, but upon God, Who was his Strength, or *EI*.

VERSE 11

"Be not far from me; for trouble is near" — The Lord sought the communion of the Father at a time when all others forsook him. He did not seek in vain. See John 16:32.

"For there is none to help" — See Matt. 26:43; Mark 14:50. The margin renders the Hebrew as "there is not a helper". If he failed, who could redeem? Not one!

The Extent Of His Sufferings — vv. 12-21

As he feels the agony of approaching death, the Lord's strength and endurance are stretched to the utmost limits. He is assailed by consuming thirst; he is racked and tortured by pain which he feels in every bone and muscle. But the greater his trials, the more intensive became his prayers, as he seeks the aid of God.

VERSE 12

"Many bulls have compassed me"

— National leaders are likened to bulls in charge of the herd. It is a characteristic of such to encircle an object which they do not understand with threatening intent, and, if it makes a suspicious move, to attack and gore it. The Lord felt as though he was encircled with such "bulls". His opponents did not understand who he was, nor the doctrine he proclaimed. They surrounded him with hostile intent, awaiting a suspicious move on his part, whereby they might attack him. The psalm portrays Christ's sufferings very graphically.

"Strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round" — Bashan was noted for its rich pastures, and its outstanding herds of cattle. Hence the figure speaks of well-fed leaders among Jewry.

VERSE 13

"They gaped upon me with their mouths" — The Hebrew expresses it as "They opened their mouths". The leaders used their influence to speak against him to Pilate, and to publicly and loudly mock at him whilst he hung upon the cross (Matt. 27:41).

"As a ravening and a roaring lion" — The lion is noted for its fierceness, and is an apt figure for the Roman leaders in the day of Christ. Like as the lion would leap upon its prey, so Christ came under the power of his adversaries. Paul uses the figure of the lion to represent the fierce, rapacity of Rome (2 Tim. 4:17; cp. also 2 Pet. 2:9).

VERSE 14

"I am poured out like water" — As his sufferings intensified he was consumed with thirst. The vital sap and moisture of his body seemed as though it would dry up.

"And all my bones are out of joint" — This refers to the effect of crucifixion upon his physical body.

"My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels" — The *Amplified Bible* renders "bowels" as *within me*. The Lord died of a broken heart (Psa. 69:20), and these lines describe his feelings, as death approached, and he looked down upon the scene before him. He saw his disciples filled with doubts, the Jewish leaders dom-

inated by hate, and the women tortured with pity. These things were perhaps greater for him to bear than the actual pain he went through.

VERSE 15

"My strength is dried up like a potsherd" — He is consumed with a burning thirst, both natural and spiritual (See John 19:28). The latter "thirst" was to appear before Yahweh (Psa. 42:1-2).

"And my tongue cleaveth to my jaws" — The Psalm describes the physical deterioration of the Lord upon the cross.

"And Thou hast brought me into the dust of death" — In spite of the opposition of the Jewish leaders, the Lord, on the cross, recognised the divine purpose in his death (Acts 2:23). It was Yahweh who had pre-determined his sacrificial death (Acts 2:23).

VERSE 16

"For dogs have compassed me" — He describes those gathered against him as "dogs". The dog of ancient times was not like the domesticated animal of today. It was a cowardly, slinking, worrying animal, defined as "unclean" under the law. The Jews described the Gentiles as "dogs" being outside the scope of the redemptive work of Yahweh (Gal. 5:15), and it was a term used by the Lord Jesus in a similar context (Matt. 15:26-27). Paul described the enemies of the truth as dogs (Phil. 3:2). The term, therefore, denotes a Gentile outside the covenant of promise, or a Jew who acts like one. Those who opposed Christ at his first advent acted as "dogs". They attacked him like troops of hungry, half-savage dogs such as which frequented the villages of the east in those times.

"The assembly of the wicked have enclosed me" — He describes his Jewish captors as the "assembly of the wicked". The word denotes a gathering, such as the synagogue of satan (Rev. 2:9), in contrast to the "congregation" of vv. 22,25.

"They pierced my hands and my feet" — See Isa. 53:7; John 19:37. Could such words relate to David personally? They could, in the sense that the opposition he experienced hinder-

ed him in his walk and work. It is remarkable that these words are not cited in the N.T.

VERSE 17

"I may tell all my bones" — He felt the agony of approaching death in every bone of his body.

"They look and stare upon me" — Those who did not actively abuse him, stood and gaped on him in idle curiosity.

VERSE 18

"They part my garments among them" — Historically, David represents his enemies as awaiting his death that they might divide his possessions. Prophetically, this points to Christ (John 19:23-24; Matt. 27:35).

"And cast lots upon my vesture" — This prophecy was literally fulfilled by the soldiers in front of the cross. They stripped the Lord, and then divided up his possessions.

VERSE 19

"But be not Thou far from me, O Yahweh" — He turned for strength to his God.

"O my strength, haste Thee to help me" — As his adversaries gaped upon him in morbid curiosity, he turned from his tormentors to fix his mind upon his God.

VERSE 20

"Deliver my soul from the sword" — The "sword" is a figure for violence. The Lord pleaded in prayer that he would be delivered out of such, and "was heard" (Heb. 5:7).

"My darling from the power of the dog" — The Hebrew word expresses an "only one" (see mg.), one who is isolated, thrust upon his own resources. It is rendered "solitary" in Psalm 68:6. That was the state of the Lord on the cross. For the significance of the term "dog", see note on v.16.

VERSE 21

"Save me from the lion's mouth" — See note above (v. 13). In relation to the Lord this would be from the power of Rome.

"For Thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorn" — This state-

ment expresses his confidence that God would bring him again from the dead. The horns of an animal represents its power. "Unicorn" is a translation for the Hebrew *remim*, probably the Rhinoceros. Job mentions its strength and ferocity; and how that it

is beyond the ability of man to tame it (Job 39:9). The Lord's accusers, the seed of the serpent, likewise is beyond the power of man to tame, but the Lord has the ability, and will do so. Hence the next verse of this Psalm expresses a note of triumph. HPM

Book Review

The following review of the book: "Remote Control: Television and the manipulation of American Life" by F. Mankiewicz and J. Swerdlow, has been forwarded to us for publication. We understand that it has already appeared in a Canadian periodical, but we reproduce it here to underline the dangers and pitfalls of television.



Manipulating The Mind

PERHAPS the scope of this enlightening book can best be discerned by quoting immediately from the last chapter, the Conclusion:

"Nearly every aspect of American life is now shaped, in one way or another, by television. Television sells a view of the world and that view helps change our image of ourselves. Television programs increasingly — and at an alarming rate of increase — now provide the background, rhythms, and assumptions by which Americans live. In doing so, they enter our lives in ways so deep as often to be unrecognizable. From the television image — and the difference between it and reality — comes much of our attitudes and behaviour.

"Most Americans now regard television as a basic necessity of life. Hotel and motel rooms are far more likely to have inadequate plumbing than they are to lack a functioning television set. The

law has come to recognize this status. The television set is now included, along with pots and pans, etc., among those necessities of life beyond the reach of creditors.

"We believe that the impact of television can be seen by simply looking at the world about us — a world filled with television, touching and informing our lives and our ideas, influencing the things we eat, the way we raise our children, and the songs we sing. We have attempted to draw attention to the impact of television and to do so within the context of accepting it as the most powerful external factor in American life."

What each brother and sister must ask is this: In my home, is the source of my system of values, the shaper of my life, the food for my mind — is it television or the Word of the Living God, the Bible? Is the time spent around the Word greater or less

Psalm 23:

Yahweh As The Good Shepherd



If a vote were to be taken as to what is the most favourite Psalm, there is little doubt that Psalm 23 would receive the honour. It is, perhaps, the best known of all the Psalms, and certainly, in its beautiful expressions of Divine protection and care, it draws in response the greatest feelings of love towards Almighty God. Its words are warm from the heart, witnessing that it was composed by a man who understood the relation of sheep and shepherd, and who knew Yahweh as one related to him.

Its Title

THE Psalm is described as *A Psalm of David*, and as “David” signifies *Beloved*, the title given by the Father to the Lord Jesus (Matt. 3:17), it is a Messianic Psalm. Its expressions are appropriate to the shepherd boy who became the Shepherd King, and so typed the Lord who described himself as the Good Shepherd.

In a previous article (see p. 87) we discussed the meaning of the word *Psalm* given in the title. It is to be noted that the same heading occurs above Psalms 22, 23, 24 which form a developing trilogy as we noted on p. 88. Hence these three Messianic Psalms depict the Lord as the sacrifice (Psa. 22), the shepherd (Psa. 23), and the sovereign (Psa. 24).

Background To The Psalm

One can imagine David, the shepherd boy, with mind alerted to the spiritual principles of Divine revelation, seeing in his own experiences with the sheep, a type of the relationship of Yahweh with His people. One of the divine titles is that of “the *Shepherd of Israel* Who leadest Joseph like a flock” (Psa. 80:1). David’s own experiences would make manifest to him what that title signifies. Though but a teenager, he was conscious of the overriding Divine influence in his life. To Saul, David expressed himself in this way:

“Thy servant kept his father’s sheep, and there came a lion and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock; and I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth; and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and

slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. Yahweh that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine" (1 Sam. 17:34-37).

Experiences such as that, drew from David the expressions of this Psalm, as he saw himself as one of the sheep under the care of the heavenly Shepherd.

Construction Of The Psalm

The Psalm is divided into two parts. Part One (vv. 1-4) relate to *The Shepherd and the Sheep*; Part Two (vv. 5-6) concern *The King and his Guests*.

It may seem incongruous that Shepherd and King should be thus shown in conjunction with each other, but, in fact, the King of Israel was also its Shepherd. Hence of David it is recorded:

"He (Yahweh) chose David also His servant, and took him from the sheepfolds; from following the ewes great with young, he brought him to shepherd (see the Hebrew) Jacob His people, and Israel His inheritance. So he fed (shepherded) them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands" (Psa. 78:70-72).



As Shepherd of his people, in times of both peace and war, the King in Israel led the people, treating them as his flock. In that respect, the kings of Israel differed from modern rulers today.

The status of shepherd was not despised by a pastoral people; it was considered as a most important and responsible occupation.

Prophetical Import

The Psalm is obviously Messianic. It commences with a divine title which finds its manifestation in the Lord Jesus. The name *Yahweh-Ra'ah* is rendered: "Yahweh is my Shepherd", but there is no word for "is" in the original which presents this as a Name of God. There are many such names and titles expressed throughout the Psalm.

Therefore David, in using the Name with which the Psalm commences, had Yahweh in mind. However, the name Yahweh when used in conjunction with other titles is prophetic of the Divine purpose in relation thereto, and finds its fulfilment in the office and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is interesting to list the various names and titles of Deity that find expression in the Psalm, thus:

Yahweh-Ra'ah — He who will become Shepherd — v. 1.

Yahweh-Yirah (Gen. 22:14) — He who will provide, for "I shall not want" (v. 1).

Yahweh-Shalom (Jud. 6:24) — He who will give peace: "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures."

Yahweh Maqor Mayim Hach-ayim (Jer. 2:13) — He who will

be a fountain of waters of the lives: "He leadeth me beside the still waters."

Yahweh-Ropheka (Exod. 15:26) — He who will heal: "He restoreth my soul" (v. 3).

Yahweh-Tzidkenu (Jer. 23:6) — He who will justify: "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness" (v.3).

Yahweh-Shammah (Ezek. 48:35) — He who will be present: "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me."

Yahweh-Nissi (Exod. 17:15) — He who will give victory. "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies."

Yahweh M'qaddishim (Exod. 31:13) — He who will sanctify: "Thou anointest my head with oil."

Yahweh Yasha (Isa. 49:26) — "He who will be saviour: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life."

Yahweh Gaal (Isa. 49:7) — He who will redeem to Himself: "I will dwell in the house of Yahweh for ever."

This list is not exhaustive, but merely illustrative of the manner in which Divine names and titles are incorporated into every line of this Psalm, revealing that it is prophetic of the manifestation of Yahweh in His son the Lord Jesus.

VERSE BY VERSE EXPOSITION

**The Shepherd And The Sheep —
vv. 1-4**

Because Yahweh is his Shepherd, the Psalmist will not want. He lists seven sufficiencies in that regard: green pastures, still waters, healing,

leading, courage in danger, consciousness of the divine presence, comfort in adversity. The use of seven is suggestive of the covenant, and certainly these blessings are revealed through the covenant.

VERSE 1

"Yahweh is my Shepherd" — The shepherding characteristics of Yahweh are frequently referred to in Scripture, though sometimes they are hidden beneath the rendition of the A.V. For example, Jacob referred to "the God which fed me all my life long unto this day" (Gen. 48:15), but the word in the Hebrew is "the God which *shepherded* me . . ." See also Psa. 77:20; 78:52; 80:1; Jer. 31:10; Mic. 7:14. David, as king, acted as a shepherd to his people, thereby foreshadowing the status of his greater son (2 Sam. 5:2; 7:7, where "feed" is *shepherd* in the Hebrew; 1 Chron. 11:2; Psa. 78:70). Predictions concerning Christ as the Good Shepherd are numerous in Scripture. See Gen. 49:24; Isa. 40:11; Jer. 49:19; Ezek. 34:23; Mic. 5:4; Zech. 11:10. The Lord laid claim to the title (See John 10:11; Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 2:25; Rev. 7:17).

Consider what the title taught, as regards the Lord. The shepherd had to endure much for the sheep: living frugally, accustoming himself to hardship, braving all variations of weather; giving first care to the flock. He knew little of the joys of companionship except the animals about him which he guarded resolutely in time of danger. Shepherds who typed Christ include Abel, Moses, David and others. On the other hand, the sheep was noted for its affection, docility, meekness and submissiveness (2 Sam. 12:3; Isa. 53:7; Jer. 11:19), its helplessness when left to itself (Mic. 5:8; Matt. 10:16), and its need of guidance (Num. 27:17; Ezek. 34:5; Matt. 9:36; 26:3,10). The sheep is very dependent upon the shepherd, not merely for guidance, but for other things. It is not noted for good eyesight, and hence must listen to the shepherd's voice. The quality of the sheep must be maintained by careful breeding, otherwise it will quickly revert to its original state; it has a tendency to follow the leader and therefore needs the constant voice and direction of the

shepherd (see Psa. 77:20; Isa. 63:11-12; Psa. 80:7; Isa. 40:1-11).

Many other lessons can be derived from this interesting analogy by thought and research. Above all else, the shepherd of ancient times, led the flock; he did not drive the animals, a feature in which old-time shepherding differed so much from that of today.

Saints are called to the position of shepherds (see Jer. 3:17; John 21:16; 1 Pet. 5:2), though disciples are warned against false shepherds (Jer. 23:1; Isa. 56:11; Ezek. 34). Spiritual shepherds of the flock administer the food of the Word (Ecc. 12:11; Prov. 10:31).

"I shall not want" — There was a sense of complete dependence and trust instilled in the sheep towards the shepherd; a union and identification with the flock on the part of the Shepherd. Isolated together, beneath the burning sun of a Palestine sky, or the starry canopy of night, the lonely shepherd developed an affection for his flock, so that he tended to their every care. His vigilance ensured that they did not go without the necessities of life. See Yahweh's care for Israel — Deut. 8:9; consider His care for us — Psa. 84:11-12.

(To be continued).

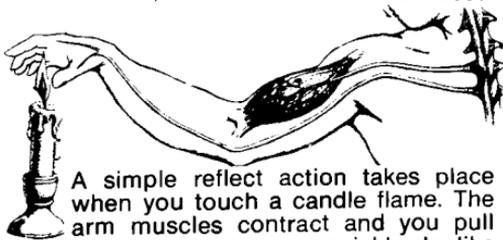
The Marvellous Mechanism Of The Body

How Necessary Are You To The Ecclesia?

"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ" (1 Cor. 12:12).

The Body's Reflexes — A Healthy Conscience

A healthy body has automatic reflexes which cause it to react instantly to stimuli, and so save its members



A simple reflect action takes place when you touch a candle flame. The arm muscles contract and you pull your arm away very quickly. In like manner, a healthy Ecclesia will automatically react when a hurtful situation develops.

from injury. An example of this is the instant, unconscious withdrawal of the hand when it touches a hot object. The command to the hand to withdraw from danger, comes not from the brain, but is inbuilt into the spinal cord, and is short-circuited through the nearest portion of the spinal cord back to the hand muscles, which issue a command to the hand to withdraw instantly — a much faster, safer, and truly ingenious protective system.

This is analogous to our inbuilt moral protective mechanism: the conscience! When governed by the word, members of the ec-



Psalm 23: Yahweh As The Good Shepherd

Our article, last issue, divided the Psalm into two parts: (1) The Shepherd and the Sheep; (2) The King and his Guests. After providing the background to the Psalm, we commenced our verse by verse exposition of it, and this we continue this issue.

VERSE 2

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures" — In this verse, David begins to describe the sevenfold activity of Yahweh in his life: He *maketh*, He *leadeth*, He *restoreth*, He *guideth*; Thou art *with me*, Thou *preparest a table*, Thou *anointest my head*. Seven is the covenant number, and it is interesting and significant that these sevenfold blessings are framed within the covenant Name of Yahweh with which the Psalm begins and ends.

The word "pastures" is *binoth* in the Hebrew from *na'ath*, "a home," with emphasis upon its pleasantness. It therefore could relate to the enclosures which good shepherds provided for the sheep in the wilderness to give them security and rest. Such enclosures would be erected at carefully selected spots where the fresh, green grass would provide ample food as well. So the "homes" or enclosures ensured security, comfort and food. It is said that sheep never lie down until they are satisfied with their grazing. Hence, the picture presented is one of rest, contentment, and security through the means provided by the watchful care of the shepherd; vastly contrasting with the restless, dissatisfied attitude of worldlings who have neither security nor satisfaction.

"He leadeth me beside the still waters" — Unlike Australian shepherds, the Eastern shepherd does not

drive the flock, but leads them, quietening the restlessness of its members with his voice. See Exod. 15:13; Psa. 31:3; Isa. 40:11; 49:10. The thought of this verse is taken up in *The Apocalypse*, for there the Lamb, as the good Shepherd is described as leading the flock "unto living fountains of waters" (Rev. 7:17). The type of the shepherd in leading the flock has been fittingly described by Thompson in *The Land And The Book*:

"The shepherd goes before, not merely to point the way, but to see that it is practicable and safe. He is armed in order to defend his charges; and in this he is very courageous. Some sheep always keep near the shepherd, and are his special favourites. Each of them has a name to which it answers joyfully; and the kind shepherd is ever distributing to such, choice portions which he gathers for that purpose. These are the contented and happy ones. They are in no danger of getting lost or into mischief, nor do wild beasts nor thieves come near them. Some of the flock, however, are more worldlings, intent upon their own pleasure or selfish interests. They run from bush to bush, searching for varieties or delicacies, and only now or then lift their heads to see where the shepherd is, or, rather, where the general flock is, lest they get so far away as to occasion remark in their little community, or rebuke from their keeper.

Others, again, are restless or discontented, jumping into everybody's field, climbing into bushes. These cost the good shepherd incessant trouble. Then there are others, incurably reckless, who stray far away and are utterly lost. I have repeatedly seen a silly goat or sheep running hither and thither, and bleating piteously after the lost flock, only to call forth from their dens the beasts of prey, or to bring up the lurking thief, who quickly quietens its cries in death."

See Christ's comments concerning the good shepherd, in John 10. We must hearken to the voice of the shepherd, and follow where he leads if we would be safe. He can provide us with "waters of rest" as he told the woman of Samaria (John 4:10). The Truth can provide for rest and contentment in spite of the turmoil of life (see Phil. 4:11; Heb. 13:5).

The word rendered "still" is *menuchah* in the Hebrew. It is a very interesting word. It speaks of rest and refreshment in a very special sense. It is a word used several times by Naomi when she spake to her daughters in law of the rest and security that a bride discovers in the home of her husband (see Ruth 1:9; 3:1). She told Ruth, "Shall I not seek rest for thee?" and she sought the help of Boaz to restore to Ruth her marital state and material prosperity. See notes in *The Book of Ruth* Ch. 3:1.

The expression in the Psalm, therefore, can be rendered "waters of rest", and denotes the well of truth that leads to marriage with the bridegroom (John 4:10).

VERSE 3

"He restoreth my soul" — This statement of the Psalm suggests the work of redemption, which, in Christ, provides for newness of life (Rom. 6:4). A believer is required to turn from his old way of life, and embrace a new way. That is a restoration of life or soul. But the renewal is constant. By the motivation of the word, "the inward man is renewed day by day" (2 Cor. 4:16; Cp. Eph. 4:23; Col. 3:10).

"He leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake" — The Hebrew word *magalah*, "paths", is from the root signifying "to revolve". The expression has been rendered by

Adam Clarke as *orbits of righteousness*, with the suggestion that as the orbits of the earth and other planets are held into position by the mysterious "hold" of gravity exercised by the pull of the sun, so the sheep are held to the shepherd by the mysterious, invisible warmth of fellowship that holds the flock to him. The application to the believer and Christ is a beautiful one. He is likened to the Sun of righteousness (Mal. 4:2), and they are "held" to him, as the planets are to the mighty sun in the heavens. The truth draws believers into the "orbits of righteousness," even though they may attempt to stray therefrom. One of the names given to the Lord is that of Yahweh our Righteousness (Jer. 23:6). His character is the ideal to which they aspire. Believers are drawn by him to develop in their lives the divine qualities of life that he exhibited. By the power of example they are drawn into the paths of righteousness "for his name's sake."

VERSE 4

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death" — Having expressed what the Shepherd means to him, the Psalmist now expresses his complete confidence in him. The gloomy valley to which he makes reference suggests the extreme trials and dangers of life that threaten with death. Paul went through such experiences, and learned of the comfort of Yahweh by so doing (2 Cor. 1:3-5). He explained it thus: "For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life. But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver; in Whom we trust that He will yet deliver us" (2 Cor. 1:8-10).

This is dramatised in the Psalm. The picture presented is that of sheep trustingly following the shepherd through a dismal and deep valley, shut in by grim, precipitous cliffs whose rugged heights shut out any light. In its deathly gloom are hidden perils, the dens of wild beasts which might threaten the sheep.

"I will fear no evil for Thou art with me" — There is consolation, comfort and communion in the knowledge of Yahweh's presence in times of trouble. The sheep place implicit trust in the shepherd, and believers should also in Yahweh. In times of gloomy darkness, He provides light and hope (see Isa. 50:10). Of Christ, the good shepherd, it is recorded: "The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up" (Matt. 4:16). The promise of Yahweh is that He will not leave nor forsake His own (Exod. 33:14; Deut. 31:6-8; Josh. 1:5-9; Heb. 13:5). It is to be noted at this significant point in the psalm, that as the Psalmist speaks of his implicit trust in the divine Shepherd, he drops his use of the third person of the earlier verses (the *he* of vv. 2-3), and takes up the more personal second person *Thou*, as though as to emphasise the close union between the Psalmist and the Shepherd. Let us also draw closer to our God!

"Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me" — The word "rod" is from the Hebrew *shebet*, used for *rod, ensign of a tribe, or staff of office*. The shepherd's rod, was not only his staff of office, but had multiple purposes. It was used as a rod to count (cp. Ezek. 20:37), as a weapon to protect, and as a staff upon which to lean. Curved at one end, it was useful to catch straying sheep, and draw them back to the flock, or to lay hold of their legs to pull them out of thickets, bogs or pits. Recognition, protection and correction are suggested by the figure before us. As the sheep placed implicit confidence in the shepherd, and were calmed by his presence; so was the Psalmist in recognising the constant presence of the invisible Shepherd of the heavens.

The King And His Guests — vv. 5-6

At this point the figure changes from shepherd to king. This is appropriate as we have seen in our preface, for the King of Israel was also its Shepherd. The idea is expressed in Psalm 78: "He took David from the sheepfolds . . . to shepherd Israel His inheritance" (vv. 70-71). Christ is both Shepherd and King. As the Shepherd ruled the flock, so the King ruled the nation.

VERSE 5

"Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies" — Christ has promised this to those whom he would honour. See Matthew 26:29; Luke 12:37. The reference to this being done "in the presence of my enemies" takes one to Psalm 110:2 which describes Christ as "ruling in the midst of his enemies". This promise is passed on to the elect in Rev. 3:9. It speaks of the Lord as the manifestation of Yahweh-Nissi (Exod. 17:15), *He who will give victory*.

And notice how the figures change. Instead of "pasture" by the wayside, there is a table prepared; instead of enduring the dangers and threats of the hidden valley; there is public honour and triumph acknowledged even by enemies. That is to be the lot of those who faithfully follow the shepherd.

"Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over" — The reference is not to the anointing oil by which a king or a priest was inducted into office; a different Hebrew term is used for that. This was the perfumed oil that was used in the east as a mark of hospitality and favour. "My head with oil thou didst not anoint", declared the Lord to the Pharisee (Luke 7:46). There was no real hospitality or favour shown him. In contrast, the guests at the table of the king are highly honoured before all (see Luke 12:8).

The reference to the cup speaks of the superabundance of good that will be bestowed upon his guests by the king, as a reward for their faithful ministrations in his things. See Luke 6:38.

VERSE 6

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life" — The word "surely" in the Hebrew denotes limitation, and can express the idea of "only". So the Psalmist, looking back over his life, finds that all experiences can be categorised as being of "goodness and mercy". There have been times of difficulty and darkness, as, for example, when the "valley of the shadow of death" has had to be traversed; but such trials have helped to mould character, and therefore are

part of the overshadowing care of the good Shepherd. Paul calls upon his readers to "behold the goodness of God" in the blessings received from Him in the Gospel (Rom. 11:22). The word "mercy" does not denote forgiveness for sins committed merely, but is a translation of the Hebrew *chesed*, signifying loving-kindness. Whereas the "goodness of Yahweh" is summed up in the Gospel benefits, His mercy, or loving-kindness, is manifested in the present blessings of life.



Goodness and loving-kindness therefore, are experienced now, and will continue to be so in the age to come.

"And I will dwell in the house of Yahweh for ever" — It was the prospect of so doing that sustained David in times of great difficulty (see Psa. 27:4,13). His eyes were centred upon the "great hope of his calling", and despite every failing he rose to greater heights of spiritual awareness.

The last line of the Psalm expresses that. It brings to light a new blessing. Not merely eternal life in the age to come, but also priesthood in the house of prayer to be erected at Jerusalem for all nations. And this suggests eternal fellowship with the Father. That is the climax of the Psalm. The evils of the valley of the shadow of death are gone; the "fears" of the past are no more. Instead, honoured and elevated by the divine Shepherd-King of the future, the Psalmist anticipates the apex of his joy in the Temple, where he will experience the joy of complete communion and fellowship with Yahweh, freed from the disabilities and weaknesses of the flesh that hinder the attainment of such a state at present.

HPM.

THE TABERNACLE IN THE WILDERNESS

The Laver

"The Washing of Water by the Word" Eph. 5:26



Little is recorded concerning this piece of furniture, yet it was extremely important. At the laver washed the priests before attending on the altar or entering the tabernacle. Yet its shape or size is not given, nor are we told what happened to it when it was conveyed from place to place. Paul aligns the Laver with the Word, writing:

1900 years ago. In command of an indomitable company of princes then made immortal and powerful, with warriors like Joshua, Gideon, David and others among his host, each one wielding divine power, Russia will have no hope, and will be easily broken as like a potter's vessel. The latter-day forces of the little-horn-of-the-goat will be completely vanquished, "broken without hand".

Meanwhile Yahweh has provided the saints contemporary with these events, tremendous

signs enabling them to "lift up their heads" with the realisation that "their redemption draweth nigh." We are convinced that the vision is almost at an end, that the Lord Jesus Christ will soon be in the earth, to bring Daniel from the dead, to stand in his lot, and to witness the consummation of his visions. Today is our day of opportunity to make our calling and election sure, that we might stand alongside Daniel among the "princes" of Messiah, and so enter into our lot "at the end of the days".

— W. McAllister (Woodville)

Bible Marking Project



Psalm 24: The Victorious King In Glory

Psalm 24 is the third of a trilogy that sets forth Messiah as Sacrifice (Psa. 22), Shepherd (Psa. 23), and Sovereign (Psa. 24). As will be noted, each appointment builds upon its predecessor: the sacrifice becomes the shepherd (the example to follow), and the shepherd becomes the sovereign (the attainment of hope). The order presented teaches that the cross must come before the crown; and that sacrifice is only valid when the example of the Lord is followed. As in the case of other Psalms, Psalm 24 is both historical in its setting, and prophetic in its application.

Historical Setting

The title describes it as *A Psalm of David*. The word *psalm* is from *mizmor* which Dr. Strong derives from *zamar*, "to touch, or strike, with the fingers", and which, therefore, suggests the playing of an instrument. Hence he gives the meaning of the word as a psalm set to music, one calculated to set the heart singing unto Yahweh. Bullinger, however, in *The Companion Bible*, claims that the title indicates a meditative psalm. Both ideas may well be right.

The background is obviously Davidic. It takes us to the great day in David's life, when, in an excess of joy, he witnessed the culmination of labour in the installation of the Ark on Mount Zion. He would have built for it a resplendent Temple if he had been permitted so to do, but denied that privilege, he accomplished what he could by arranging for the transport of the throne of Yahweh (for that is what the Ark was) to a place of honour on Mount Zion.

Detailed preparations were made for this. The war with the Jebusites had seen impregnable Zion captured by David's forces. The king was now master of the future capital of his greater Son. But in the names given to the city, Israel was reminded that success had not come in David's strength alone, but through divine aid. Accordingly, Zion was not only given the title of the "city of David (the Beloved)", but also the city that Yahweh had chosen (1 Kings 8:1,44), the "place of His rest" (Psa. 132:13), the "city of the great king"

(Matt. 5:35), and so on.

As appropriate to these titles, the Throne of Yahweh in Israel, the Ark of the Covenant, was brought in triumph to the city, entering its gates in glory and with praise. It was a memorable day of greatest significance to David (see 2 Sam. 6:12-19). In an excess of zeal, he "danced before Yahweh with all his might, girded with a linen ephod", thus appearing as king-priest. The Ark was conducted to its resting place by a procession of priests and levites praising Yahweh in voice and with music, to the rejoicing of the Elohim (1 Chron. 15:26). And it is suggested that this Psalm formed part of the ceremony on that day of greatest triumph. As the procession slowly moved up the winding road that traversed the valley and mountains "round about Jerusalem", to ultimately come to the eastern gate of the city, special rejoicings climaxed the occasion. Even the gates of the city were called upon to "lift up themselves" to receive the emblem of divine glory.

Dominant Divine Title

The Psalms reveal Yahweh in various particulars as epitomised by the Names or Titles used. This Psalm praises God as *Yahweh of hosts* (v. 10), or *Yahweh Sabaoth*. This is the militant title of Deity, a name expressive of His ability in war (Isa. 51:15). As such it has special relationship to Israel in its conquests. At the very beginning of Israel's national existence, it is recorded of the people that "... all the hosts of Yahweh went out from the land of Egypt" (Exod. 12:41).

The people were separated from Egypt unto Yahweh in a special relationship. From a rabble of slaves, they were disciplined and organised into the hosts (*sabaoth*) of Yahweh. The title *sabaoth*, however, is also applied to the angels of heaven in military array (Josh. 5:14). Hence, as the term is frequently applied to both the heavenly and the earthly armies of Yahweh, both are included in the name *Yahweh-Sabaoth*. The principle expressed by this fact is the union of the heavenly forces with the earthly people of God; so reminding the latter of the divine power that is ever ready to help.

The name *Yahweh-Sabaoth* first occurs in the Book of Samuel. It is significant that it should do so. At that time, Israel was spiritually decadent and nationally weak. The people had been brought into bondage as punishment for their self-indulgence and apostasy. Yet Yahweh was still ready to respond with irresistible might to the aid of those whose faith, loyalty and integrity had remained unshaken in the face of trial. Such a one was Elkanah. At a time when the very priesthood was evil, and the national worship of Yahweh had declined in consequence, the record states that the faithful Elkanah, who later fathered Samuel, "went . . . yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto *Yahweh-Sabaoth* in Shiloh" (1 Sam. 1:3). Though the nation was politically weak, he recognised Yahweh as the source of strength.

This is Scripture's first introduction to the militant title of

Deity. Its use in such a context implied that there was no real need for such weakness, that there was a Reservoir of strength which the people of Israel could tap if they were prepared to follow the path of reform. The God whom the nation neglected was capable of easily overthrowing their enemies and restoring the nation. This was illustrated when the Ark was taken into captivity by the Philistines. The strength of Yahweh was brought home to that uncircumcised race when Dagon its god was found broken in humility before the Ark of Yahweh, and when many Philistines suffered because of their impiety towards it.

We cannot stop here to expound this title of Deity, and so refer the reader to *Phanerosis* and *Eureka* for further exposition upon it. One detail, however we mention. Though *sabaoth* forms part of the militant title of Deity, it is a plural noun, and in the feminine gender. This is significant when joined with Yahweh, which name is prophetic of God's purpose to manifest Himself in power and glory. The Name or Title *Yahweh-Sabaoth*, therefore, denotes that He will be manifested as armies; and inasmuch as the word *sabaoth* is in the feminine gender, the armies will constitute the glorified Bride of Christ "terrible as an army with banners" (Song 6:4; 3:7; 6:13). This refers to the time when Yahweh will be manifested in a glorious divine army (Rev. 19:14), of which the Lord Jesus Christ is Commander in chief (Isa. 55:4). Every member of that army will be clothed upon

with divine nature, glorious and powerful. Meanwhile, the call of the Gospel is a recruiting call for participation therein. So Paul exhorted Timothy:

“Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier” (2 Tim. 2:3-4).

The hosts of Yahweh are Israelitish as to identity, separated from the world as to character, and militant against the forces of darkness as to aspect. The Ark and Cherubim were their symbols, and when this throne of Yahweh was transported to Zion, it seemed as through Yahweh-Sabaoth Himself had entered the city. Out of the weakness of the past, strength was at last manifested to the glory of God and the wellbeing of the faithful.

Prophetical Aspect

There is no doubt about the Messianic character of the Psalm. The glory of David's day when he danced before the Ark, and led the way in triumph to the city of Jerusalem, and to Mount Zion, will be repeated and exceeded when the Lord shall enter “his city”. Jerusalem was described as “David's city” when the Jebusite fortress on Mount Zion had fallen to his hosts; but it will be described as “the city of

the great King” when the Lord, in triumph, and surrounded by his armies, the glorified elect, will enter the city in the age to come.

That is the greatest theme of the Psalm as we shall see on examination.

Sectionising The Psalm

Those who have studied the construction of the Psalm suggest that it was sung in parts. Hence vv. 1-2 would be sung by a section of singers; v. 3 by a solo voice, or perhaps voices; vv. 4-6 by the full chorus. A similar order to be repeated in vv. 7-8, and again in vv. 9-10.

This would, in any case, be an impressive rendition of the sentiments expressed in the Psalm.

We suggest, therefore, the following sectionising of the Psalm.

The King's universal power — vv. 1-2.

Those who shall ascend into his presence — vv. 3-6.

The ceremonial entrance of the King in glory — vv. 7-10.

HPM

(To be continued)



ACCEPTABLE PRAYER

Singleness of heart is the foundation of acceptable prayer. If a man's petitions are to be heard, his actions must accord with the spirit of his petitions. God abominates all forms of double-mindedness. It is double-minded to pray “Hallowed be Thy name,” whilst pursuing courses which bring reproach and dishonour upon it, or for protection from besetting sins whilst running in the way of temptation, or for faith whilst keeping and courting the company of the unfaithful, or for wisdom whilst wilfully neglecting the reading of the Word of Wisdom. If prayer is to have power, our actions must aim to be consistent with our petitions.

occurred between A.D. 300 and 1900, whilst the rest of the sixth vial continues on to our time.

Thus there is a continuing record of prophecy, answering to the course of history, as testified by the unbeliever Gibbon and others.

The Revelation fully covers history from John to Christ's return.

W.J.L. (Canada)

(There is a sevenfold blessing pronounced on those who read the Revelation with correct understanding (Rev. 1:3), whilst a curse is pronounced upon those who take away from its true meaning (Rev. 22:19). Hence, the greatest care should be observed in the study and exposition of this wonderful book. *Eureka* has stood the test of time, and the challenge of critics, and we commend it to readers as a sound exposition of the Apocalypse. In view of the importance of the study of this section of Inspiration, we have again issued the book *Apocalypse Epitomised* — See cover for advertisement . . . Ed.).

Bible Marking Project



Psalm 24: Worshipping Before The King Of Glory

As suggested in our last issue, this Psalm was probably composed for the occasion when the ark of Yahweh was brought to the tent prepared for it on Mount Zion (2 Sam. 6:1-15); but its ultimate application is in the future when the Lord Jesus Christ shall triumphantly enter the Temple of the future age, and representatives of all mankind shall gather there for worship.

The King's Universal Power — vv. 1-2

The Psalm commences by describing the universal influence and sovereignty of the King of glory. The words are cited by Paul in 1 Cor. 10:26 to teach the universality of Yahweh's influence.

VERSE 1

"The earth is Yahweh's, and the fulness thereof" — The Hebrew places Yahweh's name first: "To Yahweh (is) the earth and its fulness". Hence attention is first directed to Him, and only afterwards to the earth. He should

be in the forefront of all our considerations. The design of creation, is that it should reflect to His glory (Num. 14:21). Even today, the wonder of creation reflects to the glory of the Creator; how much more when the curse is removed, and God is "all in all". In the age to come, the political "heavens shall declare the glory of God; and the firmament shall show forth His handiwork" (Psa. 19:1). In 1 Cor. 10:26, Paul cites this Psalm to illustrate the universality of Yahweh's influence; how much more will this be acknowledged in the future age.

"The world, and they that dwell therein" — This points to a time when the inhabitants of the earth shall respect and honour Yahweh, and render Him submissive obedience.

VERSE 2

"For He hath founded it upon the seas" — The preposition *'al* not only signifies *upon*, but also, according to Leupold, *by or by the side of*. It also can denote *above, or higher than* (see Strong). Originally the globe was empty of life, and covered in water. The decree went forth that the waters were to be gathered together in order that the dry land appear: "and it was so". This was necessary for the development of life thereon, and so man was formed of the dust of the ground. Symbolically, "earth" represents Israel; whilst "seas" relate to the Gentiles: hence "the wicked are like a troubled sea" (Isa. 57:20). Symbolically, the earth (Israel) "abideth for ever", but there will be a time when "there shall be no sea" (Rev. 21:1), for Gentilism, as we know it today, will be no more. Meanwhile, the "earth", or Israel, has been so established in relation to the "sea" or Gentiles, that despite the raging of political storms, the former will never be overcome of the latter. In nature, the sea might dash upon the shores, but eventually it recedes and there is a calm. To Job, Yahweh advanced His decree in relation to the sea as evidence of His sovereignty over creation: "Who shut up the sea with doors . . . and brake up for it My decreed place, and set bars and doors, and said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?" (Job 38:8-11). The highest tidal waves

are governed by laws, so that whilst water is kept circulating throughout the globe, the earth is not destroyed, for the tides and storms are governed by divine laws that limit their power. In these facts of nature there is evidence of divine sovereignty, and they symbolise Yahweh's purpose with the nations. Hence, elsewhere (Hag. 2:6), Yahweh declares: "Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth," (Hag. 2:6), which Paul interprets as applying to the nation of Israel (Heb. 12:26-28).

Accordingly, we can apply the facts of Yahweh's sovereignty in nature to political issues. The Gentiles have stormed against Israel, and in the terms of the symbol before us, have lifted up their waves against the "earth", but after a time, in obedience to divine law those waves have receded, the storm has subsided, and the earth has remained. In literal fact, Israel will never be destroyed, for Yahweh has decreed: "Though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee; I will not make a full end of thee . . ." (Jer. 30:11). The sovereignty of Yahweh is witnessed in the fact that today Israel is a nation once again in the earth.

"And established it upon the floods"

— The word "floods" is from *naharith*, "rivers". It is a word that is particularly applied in Scripture to the rivers Nile and Euphrates. For example, in Isa. 11:15, the Nile is designated by the title *the river*; and elsewhere the Euphrates is similarly described. Isaiah, in this place, uses both rivers symbolically for the nations of the north and south, and he shows that their future course will be governed by Yahweh's intentions with His people. Rivers are used in Scripture for nations. In Isaiah 8:7, the prophet describes the extension of Assyrian power as a flood of water that "shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks" swamping the land of Israel as it does so. In Rev. 9:14, the Turkish power is likened to the "great river Euphrates" flooding over its banks, whilst, in Ch. 16:12 there is the familiar reference to the drying up of the river Euphrates.

Now the course of these political "rivers" has been governed by the purpose of Yahweh with His people.

Daniel, in vision, saw the multiple man of the one (representative of the saints in glory) standing above the river Hiddekel (Daniel 10:5-6; 12:6) as to control the course of its waters. Paul taught, "all things (including the course of history, the rise and fall of nations) are for your sakes" (2 Cor. 4:15). With these thoughts in mind, the Psalm teaches, not merely that nature is governed by divine laws, but on the same principle, the Israelitish earth will never be overcome of the tides of Gentile seas, nor the raging of their storms. Moreover, the flowing of political rivers, or the policies of nations, are governed by His purpose with Israel spiritual and natural.

The second line of the verse before us is in the future tense in the Hebrew: "He will establish it" (see *Hebrew Students Manual*). The Psalmist, therefore, is represented as saying that even as the earth has been founded above the seas so that the latter cannot destroy it, so also Yahweh governs the course of political rivers according to His purpose with the earth, or Israel. The shape of this "earth" controls the course that national rivers will take. A river may be most powerful when flowing at its full, and may tear down some of its banks with a fury that can be terrifying but though it may even flood its banks, ultimately it will be brought back to the course governed by the land through which it flows. As the tides and storms of the sea; the melting snows or downpouring rain that fill the rivers, are all governed by laws of nature that witness to the sovereignty of Yahweh; so also do political issues. The raging of nations, or the flooding course of political rivers, are governed by the Most High Who "ruleth in the kingdom of men" (Dan. 4:17). The nations are all limited to their power and influence by the contour of the "earth" that rises above them — figuratively God's purpose with Israel. Hence Isaiah declares: "Woe to the multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters! The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters; but God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and

like a rolling thing before the whirlwind. And behold at eveningtide trouble; and before the morning he (Gog) is not. This is the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us" (Isa. 17:12-14).

Those Who Shall Ascend Into The Presence Of The King — vv. 3-6

In view of the sovereignty of Yahweh, what are the spiritual and moral requirements made of those who would worship Him "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24)? These are now set forth for the guidance of those who acknowledge His position.

VERSE 3

"Who shall ascend into the hill of Yahweh" — This is a very relevant question from the lips of David. Previously he had endeavoured to ascend into the "hill of Yahweh" with the Ark of the covenant, and the attempt had been marked by failure. Uzzah had put forth his hand to steady the ark, and had been struck down. The attempt had been abandoned at that time, whilst proper investigation had gone into the procedure for removing the ark. David asked the question: "How shall the ark of Yahweh come to me?" He received his answer and then acknowledged: "We sought Him not after the due order" (1 Chronicles 15:13). David learned a fundamental lesson in regard to divine worship. Christ told the woman of Samaria, that Yahweh seeks the worship of those who "worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). The *desire* to worship must be followed by the way to worship. Cain *desired* to worship God, but went about it his own way, and his offering was rejected. The bringing of the ark to Zion taught a tremendous and fundamental lesson to all true Israelites: it was that Yahweh is a sovereign Power who must be respected and obeyed. As nature is governed by His laws, so also must those be who would worship Him aright. In that regard, we cannot just please ourselves; we must seek to please Yahweh. It will be only those who do that who will ultimately "ascend into the hill of Yahweh".

Reference, of course, is to "My holy hill of Zion" (Psa. 2:6). In the past, when the Temple was erected there by Solomon, this was the particular pre-

serve of the priests and levites, and people ascended there only for worship. If any were ceremonially, or otherwise, defiled, they were excluded therefrom: they could not worship. How much more so in the Age to come. At that time, the "mountain of Yahweh's house" (Isaiah 2:2), shall be "most holy" (Ezek. 43:12). This, Ezekiel was told, "is the law of the house". As only the priests could enter the Holy Place of Solomon's Temple, so only the "priests the levites that be of the seed of Zadok" will be permitted into the precincts of the Holy Place of the Temple of the age to come (Ezek. 43:19). They will constitute the priests of that age, appointed thereto because they "kept the charge of My sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from Me" (Ezek. 44:15). These are true Israelites, drawn out of all nations as a "people for the Name" (Acts 15:14), and they shall constitute the royal priesthood of the age to come (Rev. 5:9-10). Hence they shall ascend into the "hill of God".

"Or who shall stand in His holy place" — The word for "stand" in this place signifies to stand erect and approved as in Psalm 1:5 (contrast Josh. 7:12). In Nehemiah 9:5 the word is used for those Levites who stood erect in worship with Ezra. This, of course, will be the status of the immortal priests of the future, in relation to Christ.

VERSE 4

"He that hath clean hands and a pure heart" — The Hebrews used the term "heart" as we would "mind". In view of that fact, the answer denotes those who work in righteousness before Yahweh, and whose minds are given to the Truth. See also Psa. 15:2; Isa. 33:14-15. The word for "hands" is *kaphim*, and it denotes the hollow of curved hands, extended in readiness to take hold of something. Hence hands ready and willing to work. It denotes "a doer" of the Word as well as a hearer; a practical man who applies the principles of the truth in action.

"Clean hands" are hands of righteousness. Pilate washed his hands to get rid of the guilt of condemning the Lord, but that kind of water could not cleanse his sin. Hands

that labour in the things of God are "clean hands", and such work will be the external manifestation of a pure heart, which cannot be seen. The hands stand for what a person does, but the heart stands for his motivation, what he is (see Psa. 51:7-10; James 4:8).

"Who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully" — To "lift up the soul" is to direct the mind towards an object (cp. Psa. 25:1; Deut. 24:15), and hence to earnestly desire (Hos. 4:8). The word "vanity" is from a Hebrew word, the root of which signifies to rush over such as a tempest, and therefore denotes something that may draw attention, but which, in fact is only temporary. As a mighty storm may sweep the land, and for a moment, draw the attention of all, it soon passes away with its noise and tumult and is no more. There are many things that may draw the wandering mind for a time, but which, when compared to the eternal things of Yahweh are but temporary. The opportunities of this life today are in that category, and we may be attracted to them, and be tempted to be drawn to them; but the spiritual man knows that they are but temporary. Yet they are brought prominently before us, and represented to us as most desirous and permanent. The Godly man will not be taken in by their speciousness; he will not desire the things of vanity. He will bear in mind the exhortation of Ecclesiastes that sees the vanity of all such mundane strivings, and sets before its readers the whole man: he that feareth God and keepeth His commandments (Ecc. 12:13).

Vanity expresses that which is transitory. The word itself, in its Hebrew form, has the idea of desolation and evil. It relates to that which in fact is false and unreal, but does not give that appearance (Psa. 12:2), to that which is sinful (Isa. 5:18), to false gods or false doctrine (Psa. 31:6). Hence to all that is unlike or opposed to Yahweh Who is from everlasting to everlasting. Anything outside of the truth is transitory, and therefore should be recognised as such. We should not "lift up our soul" to these temporary matters, whatever they may be, to the exclusion of that dedication we owe to Yahweh. As sovereign over all, He can prosper

our way if we give ourselves to Him.

"Nor sworn deceitfully" — This we might do to others, to our neighbours. Thus the phrase before us comprehends the very foundation of the whole Law: love to God and love to one's neighbour. On this, reasoned Christ, rests all the law and the pro-

phets (Mark 12:28-31; Matt. 22:40). The Law reveals God's will, and the prophets outline the destiny of those who make this will the law of their conduct. Let the principles of these verses govern our lives, and we can look to the future with the greatest confidence. HPM



The Time Of The End

The Maccabean Epoch And The Time Of The End

This (Maccabean) epoch is particularly interesting as the end of Ezekiel's 430 years (Ezek. 4:1-8). The house of Israel and the house of Judah had been great transgressors of the Covenant of the Holy, from the foundation of the temple, in the fourth year of Solomon, to the sack of the city and temple in the 19th of Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 52:12). This was a period of 430 years, which was divided into two unequal periods; namely, one of forty years, from the foundation of the temple to the apostasy of Rehoboam and Judah; the other of three hundred and ninety from this apostasy to the destruction of the temple. The God of Israel determined that this long national transgression should be punished by as long a retribution. He, therefore, gave Israel "a sign" of what was coming upon them. This sign consisted in Ezekiel's lying on his left side 390 days, and then upon his right for 40 days more. By this was represented the prostrate condition of Judah and his companions from the other tribes, for 430 years. The 430 years of transgression had not quite ended when the sign was appointed, in the fifth of Jehoiachin's captivity. The thing signified began to take effect in the sacking of Jerusalem. Judah then began to "eat their defiled bread among the Gentiles"; so that the 430 years would end B.C. 160. These four centuries of punishment were a very calamitous period of Judah's history. They endured a captivity in Babylon for 70 years; for several years longer their times were "troublesome"; they were vassals to the Ram dynasty of the kingdom of Babylon till it was superseded by Alexander the Great, the Notable Horn of the Macedonian Goat: afterwards, as we have seen, they were alternately subject to the Greek kings of Egypt and Assyria, and "the holy" became a field of battle for the hosts of these contending powers, who defiled the temple, and finally converted it into a house for the worship of the Olympian Jupiter. At length, and after all these terrible vicissitudes, and about seven years before the 430 years were about to expire, Judas Maccabaeus, as the chieftain of a weak, but patriotic, intelligent, and devout,



Psalm 24: Who Shall Ascend The Hill of Yahweh?

We continue our exposition of Psalm 24 which outlines the characteristics of those who will share Christ's glory in the age to come. Historically based on the occasion when the Ark was taken to Zion by David, it anticipates the entrance of the antitypical Ark into Jerusalem at the Lord's return. The Psalm is sectionised into three parts (1) The King's universal power — vv. 1-2; (2) Those who shall ascend into his presence — vv. 3-6 (3) The ceremonial entrance of the King of glory — vv. 7-10.

VERSE 5

"Who shall receive the blessing from Yahweh?" — Who indeed? An answer was given to this question in the days of David, for there was one man who had received a blessing from Yahweh — Obed-edom (1 Chron. 13:14). Obed-edom signifies *A servant, or worshipper of Edom*. Why he should be given that name is hard to say, for he is designated a Levite of the Kohathites. He is also called a Gittite, suggesting that he was from Gath Rimmon of the tribe of Dan. It was to his house that the Ark was taken after the first unsuccessful attempt to convey it to Zion. Originally the Ark had been in the "house of Abinadab" in Kirjath-jearim, and the first attempt by David to convey it to Zion had ended in tragedy with the death of Uzzah the son of Abinadab. (1 Chron. 13:9). It

was then placed in the care of Obed-edom where it remained until David's second, and successful, attempt to bring it to Zion. The record states: "And the ark of God remained with the family of Obed-edom in his house three months. And *Yahweh blessed the house of Obed-edom*, and all that he had" (1 Chron. 13:14). Therefore, the answer to the question of the verse before us is, Those who act as did Obed-edom.

How did Obed-edom act? Obed-edom was blessed because of the manner in which he cared for the Ark. The Ark had remained in the houses of both Abinadab and Obed-edom, but in regard to the latter the additional comment is made that it "remained *with the family* of Obed-edom in his house" (1 Chron. 13:14). No such description is given of the sojourn of

the Ark in the house of Abinadab. Its presence was tolerated there, but not treated in the manner that it was when it dwelt with Obed-edom. Obed-edom considered its presence in his house as a great privilege, and encouraged his family to view it similarly. Consequently, the whole family was united together in guarding and caring for the Ark, rejoicing in the privilege that was their's. "And Yahweh blessed the house of Obed-edom." David learned of this, and thereby was encouraged in another attempt to bring the Ark to Zion. On this occasion it was successful because it was conducted according to the instructions of the Word.

The type and the lesson are remarkable. The name Obed-edom is Gentile in origin, but he was an Israelite indeed. After the first attempt to bring the Ark to Zion, which can be likened to Christ's first advent, its presence was found in a household bearing a Gentile name, but which claimed to be of the Israel of God (Gal. 6:16). Surely in this there is a foreshadowing of Gentiles called to the hope of Israel, and of the description of Ezekiel 44:15 relating to those who shall receive the blessing from Yahweh in the age to come, and who in consequence, shall be permitted to ascend into His hill. They are described as those who "kept the charge of Yahweh's sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from Him". They, Ezekiel declares, shall receive the "blessing from Yahweh".

"And righteousness from the God of his salvation" — Righteousness is justification, and in the context of this verse, justification unto life eternal (see Psa. 18:20,24). The action of Obed-edom was justified in the sight of Israel and of David, by the blessing he received from Yahweh. This foreshadowed that which will be granted all those who keep the charge committed unto them in the Gospel (1 Tim. 1:18). Whatever men might think of them now, they will receive from the Lord Jesus Christ, and the angels of his presence, justification unto eternal life at his second coming.

"This is the generation of them that seek Him" — The term "generation" denotes an order of mankind. Here it relates to the saints, a peculiar, or

purchased people or generation. They are described as "the generation of the righteous" (Psa. 14:5), the "generation of the Lord" (Psa. 22:30), the "generation of the upright" (Psa. 112:2), and so forth. The word "seek" is from the Hebrew *darash*, and signifies to frequent, or follow, thus to pursue or to search out. Such a "generation" are keen students of the Word, seeking to understand the will of Yahweh.

"That seek thy face, O Jacob" — Here the word "seek" is from an entirely different Hebrew word, *baqash*. It denotes to seek out, especially through worship and by prayer. The first word in this verse, therefore, implies to learn, the second to apply. This generation of worshippers are doers of the word and not hearers only. Of that type of person, the Lord, in speaking to the woman of Samaria declared that "God seeketh such to worship Him" (John 4:23). Thus the seekers become the sought, and both worshipped and worshippers are drawn together in fellowship. That comprises the basic characteristic of those who are and shall be "blessed of Yahweh".

What are we to make of the exclamation: *O Jacob*? The margin inserts the word "God", but there is no such word in the Hebrew, and it seems most unlikely that such an important word should be overlooked by scribes who copied the text. H. Leupold renders the phrase: "They that seek Thy face are Jacob". This makes very good sense. Those who seek the face of Yahweh, that is, those who seek His approval, are as Jacob. They are conscious of their imperfections, but are like Jacob in that they submit to the moulding influence of Yahweh. That great man, as a young shepherd in the house of Isaac, an employer of the scheming Laban, and as a returning exile facing Esau his brother, never lost sight of the hope of his calling, always had before him the high and lofty vision of the future. Jacob was pliable to the moulding of Yahweh, and became a man remade, justifying the change of name granted him: Israel. The supplanter (Jacob) becomes the Prince with God (Israel). He sought and found the face and favour of the "God of his salvation". All who will

ascend into the hill of Yahweh, therefore, will be "as Jacob". Because of that, the Temple of the Age to come is given the title of *The House of the God of Jacob*. All those who find a place there, will have been re-made under the moulding pressure of Yahweh.

"Selah" — How important is this exclamation after such a verse! The word is more than a musical notation; it is a thought-link, bidding the reader to pause and consider what has already been stated with that which follows. This, of course, brings us to the third section of the Psalm:

The Ceremonial Entrance Of the King in Glory — vv. 7-10

The grand consummation of the Psalm is now reached. Based upon the triumphant entrance of the Ark through the gates of Jerusalem, to mount Zion, with the rejoicing David preceding it, there is foreshadowed an epoch of greater joy, glory and celebration when the Lord Jesus Christ with his faithful redeemed shall enter that same city in majesty to the rejoicing plaudits of all who will witness it. The successful conveyance of the Ark to Jerusalem by David was the greatest moment of his life; but it will be superceded by his joy in participating in the greater glory of the future, such as his meditative mind took hold of as he composed this Psalm.

VERSE 7

"Life up your heads, O ye gates" — The gates of Zion are represented as drooping, as downcast because of defeat. In David's day this would have been the case when he returned despondent from his first attempt to convey the ark to Zion, when Uzzah was destroyed. But a few months later, the despondency of David was exchanged for the greatest joy when he danced before the ark as it was conducted triumphantly to its resting place. In similar manner, the gates of Jerusalem will be downcast when the nation of Israel experiences the full bitterness of defeat at the invasion of Russia. All the hopes of its people will be crushed, and great anguish will swamp the people (Jer. 30:4-8). But that time of mourning will give place to the greatest of joy in the rebuilding of the city "unto Yahweh". In a literal sense the

gates of the Temple city will be "lifted up", and its entrances widened, to provide ample space for the crowds of worshippers who shall throng its courts. Never has Jerusalem witnessed the great glory that awaits it when the Temple city is erected according to the measurements defined in Jer. 31:38-40. And note, again, that that city is to be built "to Yahweh": the centre of His rule in the earth: "The place of My throne, and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and My holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile" (Ezek. 43:7).

When the Temple was built during Solomon's reign, the king had a special gate (1 Chron. 9:18), which was elevated to his glory, and hence called "the high gate" (2 Chron. 23:20; 2 Kings 11:19), and which Jotham made even higher to add to his glory (2 Kings 15:35).

The phrase "to lift up" suggests to rebuild in a greater way, appropriate to the majesty and dignity of the King who has to use it (cp. Prov. 17:19). The eastern gate in the Temple of the Age to come is to be reserved exclusively for the King, and no mortal will be permitted into it (Ezek. 44:1-3). That gate will be viewed with awe by the mortals who shall assemble for worship, for its glory will add to the majesty of those who will be permitted through its way.

"And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors" — Here, again, the reference is to the Temple city of Jerusalem in the Age to come. The entrance thereto is described as "the everlasting doors", or the doorways into the Millennium, the "hidden period" or *olam* of the future. The whole world will be united in divine worship at that time, and by such means will find entrance to the enjoyment of the millennial blessings (see Isa. 2:2-4).

"And the King of glory shall come in" — The Ark was the symbol of the presence of the King of glory in the past (2 Sam. 6:2), so that when it was not present it was said that "the glory has departed" from Israel (1 Sam. 4:21). But that glory is to return; not as it was in the past, but as the anti-typical Ark and Cherubim: the Lord Jesus Christ with the elect. When the

Temple is built, there will be a grand day of inaugural services, and with ceremonial glory, the Lord Jesus Christ will enter surrounded by his retinue of saints. Ezekiel, who witnessed this in vision, declared: "And the glory of Yahweh came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east . . . and behold, the glory of Yahweh filled the house" (Ezek. 43:4-5). It will be then that the prophetic words of Paul will be fulfilled: "At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:10-11).

Those words will have a literal fulfilment. Imagine the scene. The mortal worshippers, representatives of mankind from all nations are gathered into the Temple courts. There is a hush of expectancy. Then, suddenly the eastern gate opens, and the majestic figure of the Lord Jesus Christ is seen surrounded by his retinue of specially selected saints moving through the court. He takes his place at the appointed position. The Voice of heaven is heard proclaiming him king (Psalm 2:6-7), and then, at the name of Jesus, every knee in that great concourse will bow in humble submission, and every tongue shall loudly proclaim with joy and exultation that he is Lord (the manifestation of Yahweh) to the glory of God the Father! A wonderful, thrilling moment, that David anticipated in hope.

VERSE 8

"Who is this King of glory?" — Who indeed! Israelites after the flesh will have to recognise His true identity. And what is that? Zechariah declares that the question will be asked: "What are these wounds in thine hands?" And the answer: "Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends" (Zech. 13:6). The prophet likewise declares: "They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son" (Zech. 13:10). Two principles are involved in the statement. The first, the Jewish people must recognise the true identity of the Lord: that he is Yahweh manifest in flesh (1 Tim. 3:16), and hence, in cruci-

fying him, they had virtually crucified their God, on the same principle that Christ declared that any who rejected his disciples, rejected him (Matt. 10:40). Therefore the Jewish people will first have to comprehend the truth of God manifestation. In ignoring the doctrine of God manifestation they have "profaned the name of Yahweh" (Ezek. 36:21), even through with superstitious ignorance they have refused to pronounce the name. This they must first understand, and then they will mourn for Israel's firstborn son, recognising that they crucified him 1900 years ago. All their sufferings since that time, stem from their rejection of the King of glory. The nation was brought to political death because it "did not understand", even as Uzzah died when he tried in his fleshly zeal to steady the ark, whereas he should have hearkened to the voice of Yahweh in His word.

"Yahweh strong and mighty" —

They will see in the Lord Jesus Christ the manifestation of Yahweh. It is He who will fight against the nations as when He fought in the day of battle (Zech. 14:3). At present He is taking out of the Gentiles "a people for His name" (Acts 15:14). Those who are thus called out and who build into their lives the divine characteristics manifested in the Son will ultimately reflect the "glory of God" (Rom. 5:1-2), the nature of God (2 Pet. 1:4), and will have named upon them, the name of Yahweh (Rev. 3:12). They will comprise the army of heaven whose strength and might will be manifested at Armageddon (Zech. 14:4).

"Yahweh mighty in battle" — In the days of David, Zion had been wrested from the Jebusites, and great victories had been won by the king. But he disclaimed personal merit for this. He saw in Yahweh Sabaoth, the great deliverer and sustainer of Israel (Rom. 9:29). So it will be at the return of the Lord, when he will go forth with the armies of his power. He will assume the status of Commander of the people (Isa. 55:4) whilst they will form the members of his army (Rev. 17:14; 19:11-16). Meanwhile, the Gospel is a call for recruits into his army, and the present duty of such is to "please him who hath chosen them to be soldiers"

(2 Tim. 2:4). That demands discipline, courage, faith.

VERSE 9

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates" — Again, with enthusiasm, the call is made that the divine purpose may be consummated in the earth.

"Even lift them up, ye everlasting doors" — There is a great desire in David for the consummation of his hope (see Psa. 27:4,13-14).

"And the King of glory shall come in" — This is David's greater son, whom he styled Lord (see Matt. 22:43-45).

VERSE 22

"Who is this King of glory?" — In the Hebrew there is a slight variation from the question as stated in v. 9. It can be rendered: "Who is he then, the King of glory?" And the answer is now given in slightly different form.

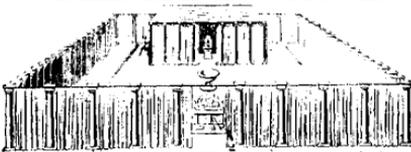
"Yahweh of hosts, He is the King of glory" — The word "hosts" denotes

armies. So the answer describes Yahweh as manifested in the glorious company of the redeemed who shall be organised into armies to overthrow the forces of darkness, and establish the glory of the Kingdom in the earth. Every saint is recruited as a soldier in the potential army of the future, and therefore is in training for a glorious future. The training is often hard and rigorous as Hebrews 11 shows, but the rewards will transcend anything the human mind can conceive.

"Selah" — Pause and consider! Consider what is required of those who shall share Christ's glory: Cleanliness of hands (an outward manifestation of a changed life); Purity of heart (an inward manifestation unseen by man); truthfulness of tongue (or fearlessness in confessing Christ before men). These characteristics shall ensure that we will be with Christ in the day of his glory, and will ascend the hill of Yahweh to wait upon Him as He has promised (see Ezek. 44:15-16).

HPM.

THE TABERNACLE



IN THE WILDERNESS

The Golden Bars

"Joined together and compacted" (Eph. 4:16)

The North, South and West walls of the Sanctuary were provided with five shittim wood, gold covered bars which traversed the entire length of each wall. Four of the bars were apparently visible being fastened to the pillars forming each wall by golden rings (v. 34). The middle bar (v. 33) was invisible, being made to transversely "shoot through" the boards forming each wall. Exod. 40:18 describes the assembly of the walls when these bars were "put in".

This assembly arrangement ensured that each wall was securely held together so that the whole structure was strong and stood firmly erect. The bars held each member of the wall in place and prevented any from being in the wrong position or even absent. The centre bar particularly kept each in its true alignment with the remainder of the assembly.



Bible Marking Project

Psalm 22: The Suffering And Victory of Messiah

A number of readers have pointed out that we did not complete our exposition of Psalm 22 in the last volume of Logos. In fact, at the time, being overseas and unable to check on previous copy of "Logos", we overlooked that we had omitted to do so, and moved on to Psalm 23. When the omission was pointed out to us, we intended to complete our exposition, but in the meantime we received further suggestions regarding the Psalm from respected readers in England and elsewhere, to which we may make reference later. We were in the process of considering these, when the following was received from another beloved reader who desired to relieve our work by completing the exposition. He prefaced his article by the following comments: "Pages 147-150 of Volume 46 concluded the outline of Psalm 22 as far as verse 21. The prophetic details of Christ's sufferings on the cross are concluded there. From v. 22 onwards the Psalm speaks of the joy set before him."

(see "Communications").

The Joy Set Before The Lord — vv. 22-23

Having pleaded with full assurance of faith for deliverance from death (vv. 19-21), the Lord blots out the suffering as he contemplates the future glory flowing from his victory over sin and death.

VERSE 22

"I will declare Thy name unto my brethren" — The Lord had done this through the 3½ years of his ministry (John 17:6). But in the prayer of the Father he affirmed in the final hours before betrayal, trial and death that he would continue to declare the Father's name to the disciples (John 17:26). This he continued to do, working through the apostles (Luke 10:16).

"In the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee" — Heb. 2:12 is an inspired commentary upon this. The congregation is the ecclesia established by the Lord and his apostles, and the ecclesia wherever it has existed in the intervening 1,900 years. Thus as the Lord suffered upon the cross, he thought upon the multitude of the redeemed whose status as "called-out ones" would be the result of his sacrifice. This lifted him beyond the suffering.

VERSE 23

"Ye that fear Yahweh, praise Him" — From the cross he speaks a word of exhortation to those who would become his ecclesia. How wonderful to realise that as he hung upon the cross,

he thought of his ecclesia in every age and by his own example showed that none of the sufferings of life should stop us from rendering praise to the Father.

"All ye the seed of Jacob, glorify Him" — Jacob's life was filled with trial and much bitterness. This will be the experience of life we encounter. It should not deter us from glorifying God in our life, even as did Jacob.

"And fear Him, all ye seed of Israel" — Jacob became a Prince with El. The Lord has become "the Prince of the Kings of the earth" (Rev. 1:5) and all the overcomers in the wrestling of life, will share his throne (Rev. 3:21).

Messiah Praises Yahweh's Faithfulness — v. 24

VERSE 24

"For He hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him;"

— The nation had rejected its King, despised and afflicted him, and hid their face from him (cp. Isaiah 53). But Yahweh was with him. Between the Father and the Son there was a bond which no power on earth could break, and no suffering would weaken. This is the example the Lord leaves for us to ponder.

"But when he cried unto Him, He heard" — Jesus had absolute assurance that he had been heard. He declared it from the cross. He thus praised the Father's faithfulness, and set us the example of praise.

Messiah Contemplates The Future Throne — Vv. 25-28

VERSE 25

"My praise shall be of Thee in the great congregation" — This is not repetition of v. 22. The congregation in the Lord's mind in that utterance is the ecclesia in the days of its weakness, from apostolic times to our own. The congregation he now speaks of is "the great congregation." There is a progression of thought from the period of his absence in heaven, right into the Kingdom in the fulness of its power and glory. The progression is this — Christ praises Yahweh in the congregation (v. 22); the congregation

praises Yahweh (v. 23); for Yahweh is faithful (v. 24). Christ praises Yahweh in the great congregation (v. 25); the great congregation praises Yahweh (v. 26); the nations join in in praise to Yahweh (v. 27); for Yahweh is King! (v. 28). Thus the work of redemption at the 1st and 2nd. advents is united in this prayer of the Lord upon the cross.

"I will pay my vows before them that fear Him." — It was an honour reserved for the prophet Ezekiel to reveal the wonderful ceremonies in the Temple of the Millennial Age at which the Lord Jesus will fulfil these words (Ezek. chps. 45,46). Ezekiel 45:22 shows that the sacrifices of that coming day will memorialise the offering of the Lord upon the cross. Thus the Lord drew comfort and strength as he thought upon the Temple of the Future Age, even that Sanctuary which Moses had predicted (Exodus 15:17-18) Yahweh would establish in the day when He shall reign for ever and ever.

VERSE 26

"The meek shall eat and be satisfied" — As the disciples had earlier gathered around the Lord he had promised them that "the meek shall inherit the earth" (Matt 5:5). In the upper room he also promised them that "ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom" (Luke 22:30). Upon the cross, the Lord drew together the promises of those two occasions. As he gazed at them from the cross, and beheld their sorrow, it was part of the joy to realise that their sorrow would one day give place to the glory of his table in the Kingdom.

"Your heart shall live for ever" — Because his heart "was like wax, melted within him" (v. 14), as he faithfully endured the cross, nothing could prevent the ultimate dawning of that day which would bring immortal life for the disciples.

VERSE 27

"And the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto Yahweh: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee" — As it is "all" nations which are involved in this blessing, it is proof positive that the day will have dawned when the Abrahamic covenant is fulfilled (Gen. 12:3).

VERSE 28

"For the Kingdom is Yahweh's: and He is the governor among the nations" — The Davidic Kingdom, in the powerful hands of his immortal greater son (2 Sam. 7:12), prevails over all the sin-powers of the world. From the cross, the Lord spoke of the certain triumph over the power of Rome which crucified him. In his later message to John in Patmos, the Lord elaborated the details.

Messiah's Exhortation As To True Wisdom — v. 29

In view of the reality of death, the existence of Yahweh's purpose, the certainty of its fulfilment, the Lord encourages us from the cross to realise that in the Kingdoms of decay, trust in Yahweh is the true wisdom. The dying man was the victor because of his trust in Yahweh. "None can keep alive his own soul," but Yahweh can bring again from the dead!

Messiah's Work Completed and the Father's Name Exalted — vv. 30-31

VERSE 30

"A seed shall serve Him;" — This is the multitude developed as the Yahweh-Name. This is "the generation" of the righteous developed by the Truth. This is elaborated in Psalm 72:17 where the great work of the Son is shown to be: "His name shall endure for ever: he shall be as a son to continue his Father's name for the age." Zion shall be peopled with the immortal redeemed, serving Yahweh day and night in the beauty of holiness.

VERSE 31

"They shall come, and shall declare His righteousness" — The declaration of the righteousness of God in the system of means developed for the redemption of mankind was the heart of the apostolic teaching (Romans 1:16-17). It testified to that which the Lord had illustrated in his life amongst them. In the Millennial Age the saints in power will continue this great work of the declaration of the righteousness of God. This will be the basis of all things in the Kingdom.

"Unto a people that shall be born, that He hath done this" — So the nations of the Millennial Age will understand, and in loving obedience render praise to the King in Zion, and through Him, to his Father in the Heavens.

In conclusion, as we bow in reverence before our Lord, realising our blessed privilege of being permitted to enter upon the very thoughts of his mind as he hung upon the cross, let us realise that the experiences of the Head of the Body, must also be the experiences of the members of the Body.

And what is the lesson to us? Jesus was able to draw upon his knowledge of the Divine purpose to sustain him in the darkest hour of trial. Are we greater than our Lord? Dare we neglect the study of the Word, and allow the joy of the Kingdom to be vague and shadowy in our minds? The questions have only to be asked to be answered.

— B. Philp (Tas.)

REIGNING WITH CHRIST

If we wish to help Christ rule the world, on his return, we must now cultivate the characteristics of kindness and love to the afflicted, as did Christ. If we have been too engrossed with ourselves and our friends to pay attention to those in need, Christ will tell us he has no use for us. There is always so much scope in this direction that we cannot plead lack of opportunity. Let us not plead excuses for hardening our hearts — that the troubled brother or sister has done a very foolish thing and deserves to bear the consequences, or, is not very nice and we prefer to keep at a distance. God could answer us with these very same arguments and leave us to our pitiful fate, so let us not judge the afflicted instead of rendering them help and comfort.

Expounding The Psalms (Psa. 27)

Yahweh: My Light And Salvation

We interrupted our exposition of the Psalms some time back to expound other pressing subjects of importance; and many readers have requested that we resume the series. We do so now with an introduction to Psalm 27.

Method

We suggest that the Psalms will disclose their treasures more completely if the student seeks the answers to four questions in regard to any one of them:

1. Who wrote the Psalm under consideration?

2. What is the historical background to it?

3. In what way does it predict or foreshadow the work of Messiah?

4. What is its inherent teaching, message and exhortation?

It is interesting and exciting to search out the answers. Whereas a casual reading of the Psalms may leave an impression of monotonous repetitiveness, the answers to these questions will make each Psalm unique, greatly adding to the interest of the book as a whole. They will provide the basis for a sound verse by verse consideration of any one of them, will give greater insight into historical incidents of the past to which they are related, or great details of prophecies which they may foreshadow.

Who Is The Author?

We are in no doubt as to the author of Psalm 27. It is listed as *A Psalm of David*. With that clue we must search his life to discover the possible circumstances in which it was written, and the subject to which it is related.

What Is The Background?

A superficial reading of the Psalm will reveal that it was composed at a time of great stress, when the overshadowing influence of Yahweh in protecting and delivering David had been experienced. Under those circumstances, delivered out of the depths of trouble and anguish that had afflicted him, David turned to Yahweh in thankfulness and praise.

We identify this Psalm at the time of David's sojourn in the Cave of Adullam, when Saul was intent upon his destruction. Why? It is clear, from v. 4, that he

was in exile at the time it was written; whilst other verses reveal that he was not only in fear of extreme danger, but that he also experienced isolation and loneliness, and was denied the comfort of those close to him:

"When my father and my mother forsake me, then Yahweh will take me up" (v. 10).

Is there any occasion in David's life when he was suddenly bereft of his parents? There was: when he took refuge in the Cave of Adullam, and he feared the vengeance of Saul. Earlier, he had sought escape by seeking refuge among the Philistines who recognised him, reminded Achish of his previous exploits against them after slaying Goliath (1 Sam. 21:11). In extreme danger, he fled from the Philistines and sought refuge in the Cave.

At the same time, fearing reprisals against his parents, he "brought them before the king of Moab: and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold" (1 Sam. 22:4). To us that seems the basis for the Psalmist's reference to his parents quoted above.

It will, of course, be objected that such an action on the part of David does not constitute a "forsaking" of him by his parents. But the word rendered "forsake" also can signify *to leave*. When his parents left him to sojourn in Moab, David was bereft of the companionship and comfort that they would have afforded him. There was none among his companions who could have adequately substituted for them in that regard; but there was One in heaven Who could do so. And to Him David turned in his time of need. And turned not in vain.

Hence the Psalm can become a comfort and a help to all who might find themselves in the same state as David. His example directs them to where they, too, can find help in time of need.

(To be continued).

HPM

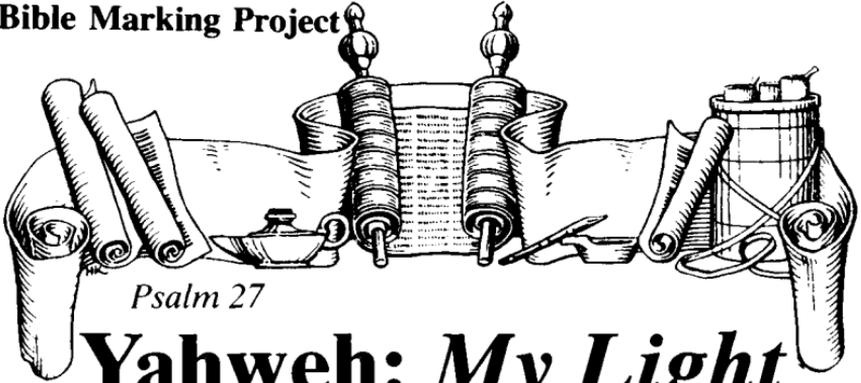
Unfortunately, many, in the day of judgment, will live to regret that during this life they behaved so unresponsibly that they have been spued out.

Let us not be guilty of such folly, and we shall find that we

have not placed our confidence in Christ in vain. We shall find in him comfort to sustain us in the trials and tribulations of this life, and in that which is to come, we shall have a reward beyond all our expectations.

J.H.B.

Bible Marking Project



Psalm 27

Yahweh: My Light And Salvation

In the darkness of the cave of Adullam, with fierce and bitter enemies on all sides intent upon his destruction, bereft even of parental consolation, David seeks encouragement from Yahweh. A key verse in the Psalm expresses his dependence upon his God: "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of Yahweh, in the land of the living. Wait on Yahweh; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart" (vv. 13-14).

Setting Out The Psalm

The Psalm first expresses confidence in Yahweh. With His help, the bitter opposition of the Psalmist's enemies and foes will come to nothing (v. 2); in the face of war he will remain confident (v. 3). He has the faith to anticipate ultimate deliverance from every anxiety (v. 6). Therefore, the first section of the Psalm is given over to *Praise* (vv. 1-6).

In v. 7, David turns directly to Yahweh, and pleads his cause. He does that because of the severity of trouble pressing upon him. Bereft of his parents, and the bitter opposition of Saul putting his life at daily risk, he seeks divine comfort and help. Whilst still expressing his confidence in God, he asks for an enlarged understanding (v. 11), and for deliverance from his enemies (v. 12).

Therefore, this second section of the Psalm is given over to *Petition* (vv. 7-12).

But David also knows that endurance is also necessary; he must await Yahweh's time for deliverance. To dwell in a cave with 400 men, most of whom lacked the spiritual mind of David, imposed a great strain on him. His environment was one of tension and anxiety, in which tempers tended to fray, and fleshly motives dominate. The greatest discipline had to be exercised to unite those who had gathered with him, and to elevate them spiritually. For his companions came to him with all their problems:

"Every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them; and there were with him about four hundred men" (1 Sam. 22:2).

To control such a band made heavy demands on David. Much moral strength was needed to lead them; such self-control to mould them; great knowledge of God and His ways to educate them. All these attributes, and more, were necessary to create out of such raw material a group to do service to Yahweh. All of which is summed up in one need *patience* (vv. 13-14).

So we divide the Psalm into three sections:

Praise — vv. 1-6.

Petition — vv. 7-12.

Patience — vv. 13-14.

It Is A Messianic Psalm

The Lord excelled in those qualities. He, too, was surrounded by bitter enemies who would destroy him; he, too, had, and continues to have, a band of

nondescript followers who were, and are, in dire need of guidance and upbringing; but his praise of Yahweh, his reliance upon his heavenly Father, were always in evidence. He constantly sought to be strengthened in prayer, so petitions were daily his comfort and assurance. And he manifested superb patience in every circumstance. David's experiences foreshadowed those of the Lord, and both aid us in our worship of God. The Lord set the ideal; David shows how lesser men can strive towards that ideal in all their weaknesses. We set the perfection of Christ before us, and are encouraged, in our weakness, to mould our lives on the pattern provided by the experiences of lesser men such as David. Whilst the Lord was granted a potential far above our own, and therefore much more was expected of him, that was not the case with David. Whilst we cannot hope to attain unto the excellence of example shown by Christ, we can reach the level of a David.

The prayer of vv. 12-13 can apply equally to David or to Christ:

"False witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty".

Christ endured much opposition throughout his ministry, but it came to a climax when he was brought before the Sanhedrin (see Matthew 26:59-60), and false witnesses were hired to openly accuse him of blasphemy.

VERSE BY VERSE EXPOSITION

Praise — vv. 1-6

David's problems press heavily upon him, and the future appears dark. In spite of that he views Yahweh as the source of

light, salvation and strength, and expresses his conviction that no matter how powerful are his enemies he will surmount them and ultimately dwell in the house of Yahweh. Therefore, whatever intermediate problems arise, he will be enabled to rise above them, and for that he praises Yahweh. David would endorse the words of Paul, "If God be for us, who can be against us!" (Rom. 8:31).

VERSE 1

"Yahweh is my light and my salvation" — Light is one of the great symbols for Yahweh (Psa. 4:6; 18:28; 36:9; 43:3; Mic. 7:8). His presence in Israel was betokened by the *shekinah* light in the Most Holy, and the cloud by day and fire by night over the encampment. Yahweh was to David as a Light shining in a dark place, dispelling the shadows, revealing all things in their true colours; bringing joy and cheer through its bright rays, and driving away the fears that lurk in the night. The Lord Jesus was the manifestation of that light (John 1:4; 8:12), and his true disciples are elevated into sons of light (Phil. 2:12-16; 1 Thess. 4:4-8). True fellowship with Yahweh and His son is dependent upon His followers walking in light (1 John 1:5).

Light destroys darkness, not vice versa, and one walking in light is able to see beyond the darkness that may hem others in.

But Yahweh was not only light to David, but also his salvation. He was proclaimed as such when he delivered Israel from the hands of Pharaoh by dividing the sea (Exod. 15:2). The name Jesus is a combination of *Yah* and *Shua* (salvation) and signifies *He Who shall be Salvation*. Il-

luminated by light through Christ, confident of salvation, one can afford to rejoice and praise Yahweh. See Psa. 118:14.

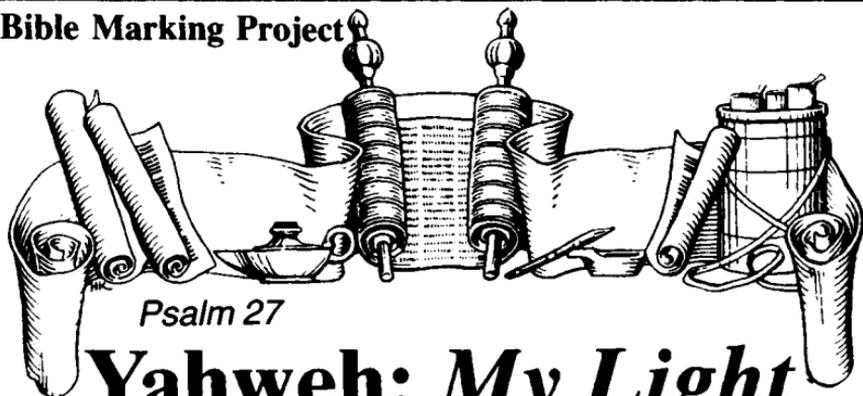
"Whom shall I fear" — This is an echo of Psalm 23:4: "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me". "If God be for us, who can be against us?" asked Paul (Rom. 8:31). The answer is that though we may have enemies, they will prove ineffectual in their attacks or hatred.

"Yahweh is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid" — The RV mg. renders this as "*stronghold*". "The name of Yahweh is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe" (Prov. 18:10). He is a defence against all assaults (Psa. 18:2; 31:2-3). How practically true this is in the issues of life! In times of trouble or dismay, communion with Yahweh will provide relief, lightening the heaviness of the way. The help received is not merely theoretical, but real and tangible. Disciples are sheltered from the full power of the blast, and are strengthened to overcome. And certainly there is the sense of comfort and assurance in sharing our troubles with God through prayer. Through that means and the example of faithful men and women of old, we learn that Yahweh permits trouble and pressure in order that we might develop character. Recognising the purpose of such things, we are more enabled to patiently endure, and in faith recognise that though these things may continue for "a night, joy cometh in the morning." Hence we can respond with David: "Of whom shall I be afraid?" HPM

(To be continued. More benefit will be derived from the above if all references are personally considered.)

OUR HOPE

There is no ground for expecting any good time apart from Christ. We need no other than God has purposed in him. His mission contains every element of rescue from the morass of misery into which the world is slowly sinking. Who can break up and disband the crushing armies of the world, but he? Who can establish a strong and wise and just and kindly government, but he? Who can fuse mankind into one happy family, but he? If he punish the world first, it deserves it; for there must first be righteousness before there can be peace. If he destroy its institutions first, and enforce his own single authority on its unwilling populations, it is because it is good, for it cannot find well-being in its own ways. Six thousand years have tragically proved the inadequacy of every form of human government; it has all been a terrible failure. The divine remedy remains and will come — and that soon!



Psalm 27

Yahweh: My Light And Salvation

We divide the Psalm into three sub-headings: Praise (vv. 1-6); Petition (vv. 7-12); and Patience (vv. 13-14); and continue our verse by verse notes from our last number at v. 2.

VERSE 2

“When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes” — He identified his enemies as the wicked because he was on Yahweh’s side. We have seen that David’s experiences foreshadowed those of the Lord; and it was only the wicked who set themselves against him as his enemies. If we do what is right, if we ever strive to fulfil the will of Yahweh and remain loyal to His word, we will be opposed only by the wicked. That was the case with David in this instance, and with Christ on all occasions.

“Came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell” — He likened the wicked to wild beasts stalking their prey, eager to devour him. But instead of succeeding, they stumbled and fell. Solomon declared: “The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The way of the wicked is as darkness; they *know not at what they stumble*” (Prov. 4:18-19). The world of today “that lieth in wickedness” stumbles its way through the darkness. For its ministers, it is a time of “distress of nations with perplexity”, and they know not how to extricate themselves therefrom. But the just see clearly through to the Kingdom. In times of personal trouble the man of faith is not without hope. David and Christ walked in light, though sur-

rounded by the forces of darkness. That fact gave them confidence when others were overwhelmed with doubt.

VERSE 3

“Though an host should encamp against me” — Saul was intending to do just that, as David knew. In the cave Adullam, in the strength of Yahweh, he prepared for any eventuality (1 Sam. 22:1-2,20-23).

“My heart shall not fear” — His trust was in Yahweh.

“Though war should rise against me” — It was a time of great uncertainty for David, when, at any time, he could be involved in war with Saul.

“In this will I be confident” — This statement was made in the exuberance of a great faith. No matter how deadly the danger, David refused to give way to fear. His light and salvation was in Yahweh (v. 1). He displayed confidence in Yahweh, such as sheep do in the protection and guidance of a true Shepherd (Psa. 80:1).

VERSE 4

“One thing have I desired of Yahweh, that will I seek after” — This verse is expressive of the very roots of David’s faith: his desire for an inheritance in the Kingdom of the future. The RV renders “de-

sired" as *asked*. The Hebrew *sha'al* signifies to *inquire, request, and even demand*. The subject of this demand, which found expression in David's prayers, was an inheritance in the Temple of the age to come. His keen interest in this is expressed in Psalm 132. The desire to see it erected motivated him to suggest to Nathan that he should do so (2 Sam. 7). He not only "desired" or "asked" that Yahweh fulfil His promise in that regard, but also "sought" it by doing what he could in regard to it.

His action is to be emulated. It is not enough to "desire" a place in the Kingdom, nor even to ask for it; we need to seek it by doing all that we can in regard to it. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness," taught Christ (Matt. 6:33). "For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Matt. 7:8). Earnest request, and dedicated search to attain it should be given to such an objective.

"That I may dwell in the house of Yahweh all the days of my life" — The term "house of Yahweh" can relate to both literal or figurative Temples (cp. 1 Pet. 2:5-6). To dwell in such a house is to assume the status of a priest. But both David and Christ were of Judah "of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood" (Heb. 7:14). Hence, in giving expression to this hope, David anticipated a "change of priesthood" (Heb. 7:12) apart from that of Levi. He looked for one "after the similitude of Melchisedec", and "after the power of an endless life" (Heb. 7:15-16). Did David know anything about such a priesthood? He did, indeed! It is the subject of his prophetic and Messianic Psalm on that theme (Psa. 110); and Christ's use of it reveals that David completely understood its implications (see Matt. 22:41-46). What a glorious theme now opens out in the Psalm before us in the expressions used by David to be fulfilled through Christ.

"To behold the beauty of Yahweh, and to enquire in His Temple" — The term "*beauty of Yahweh*" is from the Hebrew *no'am*, and relates not to the external shining forth of glory but to inward beauty. The word itself signifies that which is *pleasant or gracious*, and therefore denotes the divine likeness of character. The word is used again in Psa. 90:17: "Let the beauty of Yahweh our God be upon us"; that is, let us reflect the divine like-

ness. Of the Lord it is written: "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). That is what David desired to behold. The Lord told the Apostles: "Many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them" (Matt. 13:17). What they saw, was what David desired to see, and what he shall yet see: "The beauty of Yahweh".

But he desired to behold it "in His Temple". And there it will be revealed, for, predicted Isaiah: "Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty" (Isa. 33:17). Here, however, a different word is used, one expressive of external glory.

David also desired to "enquire" in His Temple. To do that is to enjoy sweet communion therein. The word rendered "enquire," *baqar*, signifies according to Strong, to *plough, to break forth*, hence to *inspect, admire, care for, consider*. The RV margin renders: "*Consider His temple*". The idea is expressed in Psa. 48:12-13: "Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following." In his Temple prophecy, Ezekiel describes how that regenerated Israel will be invited to "measure the pattern" and consider the house as a whole (Ezek. 43:10-11). Like the Tabernacle and Temple of the past, the Temple of the future will reveal spiritual principles as well as provide a literal place at which to worship. Some of those spiritual principles are expressed in the last two chapters of *The Apocalypse*. David, in the Psalm before us, expressed his desire to see them depicted in the literal Temple of the future.

One Hebrew scholar, *Wellhausen*, claims that with different pointing, the same Hebrew word can be rendered "*in the morning*". This is a very attractive thought, pointing forward to the Millennial dawn when the Sun of Righteousness shall shine forth in full glory (Mal. 4:1-2). The Millennium will not commence before the Temple is ready for service, and at that time, "in the morning", the "beauty of Yahweh" will inhabit it, and the full wonder of its spiritual significance will be apparent.

VERSE 5

"For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in His pavilion" — In this line, David reverted to the confidence he had

already expressed in v. 3. His desire, as stated in v. 4, will be realised. He had felt the hand of Yahweh in his life to that point of time, and was confident of doing so in the future. Figuratively, to be hidden in Yahweh's pavilion, or His shelter (see Psa. 31:20; 57:1; 119:114; Prov. 18:10; John 17:11) is to enjoy the protection of His fellowship.

"In the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me" — His tabernacle, or tent, is a temporary structure awaiting the permanency of the future. There is great comfort and security in the "secret" of Yahweh's fellowship. See Ps. 31:20; 91:2. Christ told the Apostles to "abide in him" (John 15:4-7). To the world there is little security in so doing; but men of faith recognise its strength and value. It is a sure and effective shelter from the storms of life.

"He shall set me up upon a rock" — On a high rock, inaccessible to danger or attack. See Ps. 18:2. We build on such a rock by both hearing and doing the instructions of the Lord; otherwise we build on sand (Matt. 7:24-27). David was confident that he would be elevated out of danger's harm.

VERSE 6

"And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me" — The ultimate outcome of fellowship with Yahweh is depicted: triumph over the forces that sought to destroy David, or would seek to destroy those like him in succeeding ages. The enemies of such (being the "wicked" of v. 2) will be

put down, and faith inevitably vindicated. David's experiences in life illustrated the truth of the words expressed by God (see 2 Sam. 7:9), but the final consolation awaits the future.

"Therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy" — Though, at the time, a refugee in the Cave of Adullam, and beset by powerful enemies that ruthlessly sought his destruction, David had sufficient faith to know that he would be delivered. He vowed to offer his sacrifices with "shouts of joy", as the margin renders the verse. He promised to worship with joyful enthusiasm, that all may recognise what Yahweh had done for him.

"I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto Yahweh" — How well David fulfilled his vow is recorded in the Psalms. He, the sweet Psalmist of Israel, expressed himself unto Yahweh in songs of joy and enthusiasm. They are songs that many since have been able to make their own, and so rejoice before Him (1 Thess. 5:17-18), "in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in their hearts to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19).

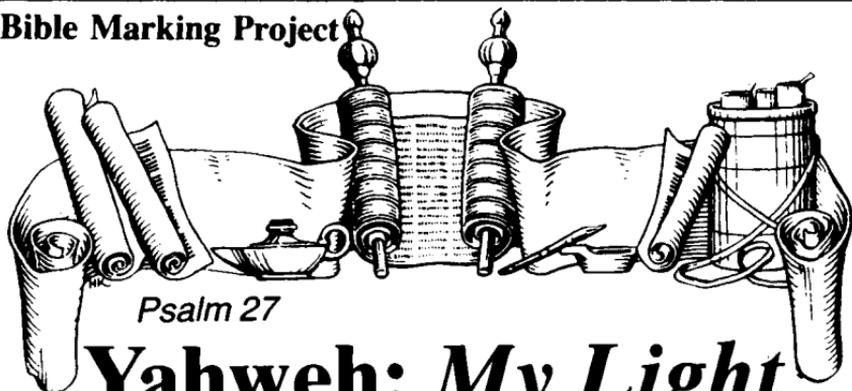
What a wonderful example David set for those who were with him in the Cave of Adullam. Instead of being depressed by his reverses and the problems facing him, he expressed in words of praise his confidence in Yahweh, his hope for the future, and the conviction that he would triumph over his difficulties, and "sing praises unto Yahweh".

On that note, this section of the Psalm concludes.

HPM

The World's Need

It is night, it is dark. All things are out of course. Human life is not what it ought to be, and cannot be what it ought to be, under the conditions that prevail. Who will alter those conditions? Who can give us the conditions that are needed? What are they? We need God to take the world in charge. We need the bungling incapacities of man to be put on one side, and all power and authority vested in one government of his direct appointment — a government that cannot err, and that cannot be resisted, and that cannot be removed. Give us such a government, and you give us the sun, at whose bright presence, darkness will soon fly away. The reign of such a government will change the life of the world in a single generation. Such a government is coming. "God hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained, whereof He hath given assurance unto all men in that He hath raised him from the dead."



Psalm 27

Yahweh: My Light And Salvation

We divide the Psalm into three sub-headings: Praise (vv. 1-6); Petition (vv. 7-12); Patience (vv. 13-14); and continue our verse by verse notes from our last number (p. 28) at v. 7.

Petition — vv. 7-12

Having acknowledged Yahweh as his Source of light and salvation, and expressed complete confidence in Him, David presents his petition, earnestly seeking His help against enemies that were relentlessly and vigorously pursuing him.

VERSE 7

“Hear, O Yahweh, when I cry with my voice” — The confident expressions of faith found in the previous verses now give way to the plaintive cry of the Psalmist as he considers the ruthless power of his enemies, and seeks Yahweh’s help. To be humbled by reverses is a valuable experience, for it causes one to “seek a Rock that is higher than me” (Psa. 61:2). Prayer becomes more persistent in the face of trouble, which emphasises its value.

“Have mercy also upon me, and answer me” — There are various Hebrew words rendered “mercy”. This one is *chanan*, and denotes the action of a superior bending down in condescension to the help of an inferior. The use of the term implies the humility of David. It is a plea for pity, or compassion in view of his problems, rather than that of mercy in the sense of forgiveness. Prayer is made more potent when we recognise our need of God, and approach Him in humility.

VERSE 8

“When Thou saidst, Seek ye My face; my heart said unto Thee” — In this line, David gives reason why his plea should be heeded. He has responded to the appeal of Yahweh, so placing himself within the “generation of those who seek Him” (Psa. 24:6). He did not seek Yahweh only when in need, but on all occasions. He was drawn to God and sought His fellowship, as did Christ his great antitype; so providing an example to emulate. To the Hebrew, the “heart” was figuratively considered the organ of intellect rather than emotion. Therefore, in response to the call of God, David had given his mind to the Father, filling it with thoughts honouring to Him. He succeeded in life’s battle because the victory of faith is won or lost in the mind. David was mentally prepared for his prayer.

“Thy face, Yahweh, will I seek” — This statement implies that Yahweh’s face is turned to him. To avert the face is to show indifference to the state of another, but David was conscious of Yahweh’s presence, and in consequence sought His help. Part of the blessing of Aaron was: “Yahweh make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee” (Num. 6:25). The shining forth of Yahweh’s face is like the glorious shining forth of the morning Sun dispelling the

darkness of the night, and warming the earth with its favour (Psa. 80:1). When Yahweh hides His face from His people they suffer; for His gracious presence is clouded over. David sought the favourable glances of Yahweh, as did Christ.

VERSE 9

“Hide not Thy face far from me” — David, in the cave of Adullam was surrounded by enemies too powerful for him, and was conscious of his need of Yahweh’s help. His perturbation at the time is recorded in 1 Sam. 21:10,12; 22:3. See the use of the expression in Psa. 10:1; 44:24; 69:17; 102:2; Isa. 59:2.

“Put not thy servant away in anger” — Yahweh’s anger is only manifested when His servants fail, and even then, it is shortlived. Did David have any cause to fear Yahweh’s displeasure at that time? He may well have had a feeling of personal failure, for in fear of Saul he fled to the Philistines (1 Sam. 21:10-15). But if the Psalm is a Messianic one, as we have suggested, in what way can that apply to Christ? Personally, he never experienced Yahweh’s wrath, nor had cause to pray as did David on this occasion; but communally he did. In the doctrine of the Atonement, Christ identified himself with those he came to save. He described them as being “one with him”. Because of that, and because they are treated as the multitudinous Christ, the mystical members of his body (Eph. 5:32), he is represented in the Psalms as pleading for his sins (Psa. 18:23; 69:5). The source of sin is in the lusts of the flesh (Mark 7:15), and because he was a bearer of our nature, (though never giving way to it) “his own self bare our sins *in* his own body on the tree” (1 Pet. 2:24). Whilst Christ never incurred the wrath of God, members of “his body” do so, thus illustrating the relevance of the plea of David as a type of Christ.

“Thou hast been my help” — From the first moment that David appears in the narrative of Scripture, he is described as leaning heavily on the help of God (see 1 Sam. 17). So also did Christ (see John 16:32). Let us emulate those examples, and we will never want in time of need. Yahweh has said: “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee” (Heb. 13:5).

“Leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation” — The word “leave” is from the Heb. *natash*, and can signify to *thrust away*. This implies that the

Psalmist had figuratively taken hold of God to such a degree that he could not be ignored. God must thrust him away to be rid of him! Proper prayer is described as “stirring up oneself to take hold of Yahweh” (Isa. 64:7). To do that demands truth and fervency expressed in simple words of power, such as the influence of the Spirit-word will teach us to use (Eph. 2:18). If a person “takes hold of God”, he cannot be ignored, but must be thrust away if help is not to be granted. But because Yahweh has promised that He will never do that to those of faith, the petitioner is invited to freely enter His presence, convinced that he will be helped thereby (Heb. 4:16; 10:19-20).

David addressed Yahweh as “the God (*Elohim*) of my salvation”. The plural term is appropriate, for in Psa. 8:5 it is rendered *angels*. The angels are “ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation” (Heb. 1:14). Collectively, they are the *Elohim* (God) of *salvation*: Yahweh’s emissaries and representatives, the medium through whom He can move to the help of His servants. The term *Elohim* signifies *Mighty Ones*, and denotes the strength available to assist those in need, whether David, Christ (see Luke 22:43), or others.

VERSE 10

“When my father and my mother forsake me” — The word *‘azab* means to *leave* as well as to *forsake*. In this verse, David expresses his confidence that Yahweh is more reliable as a Source of help than the nearest and dearest relations. In fact, because of the dangerous circumstances of his life at that time, David had been bereft of his parents; for fearing reprisals against them, he had sent them to Moab for their safety (1 Sam. 22:3-4). Therefore David addresses Yahweh as an orphan. The Law gave special consideration to such, Yahweh particularly extending Himself to the aid of the “widows and fatherless” (Psa. 68:5-6). Christ, likewise, experienced similar loneliness (Psa. 69:7-9), for “neither did his brethren believe in him” (John 7:5). Many who accept Christ are forced into the position of David or Christ; their acceptance of the requirements of the Truth places them at variance with their families. But God is not unmindful of their state. Christ promised that “every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or

children" for his sake will be compensated an hundredfold both now and in the future (Matt. 19:29). However, faith is necessary to appreciate this.

"Then Yahweh will take me up"— This is a very tender expression of loving confidence in Yahweh as a Father. The Hebrew signifies "to gather me", like a parent gathers up a child to pacify its agitations or fears. Yahweh's consolation is available for all who turn to Him as did David.

VERSE 11

"Teach me thy way, O Yahweh" — Again David addresses Yahweh as his Father, desiring instruction in the way of life. That is the "way of the tree of life" (Gen. 3:24), which was "corrupted" by the antediluvians (Gen. 6:12), but which was kept by Abraham (Gen. 18:19). Moses asked for that way to be clearly shown to him (Exod. 33:13), and now David does the same. In *The Acts*, the Gospel is designated as "that way" (Acts 9:2; 19:9,23; 22:4), and "the way of salvation" (Acts 16:17). Christ, as a shepherd, leads his sheep along that way, proclaiming: "I am the Way the Truth and the Life". David constantly sought a clearer vision of that way. He aligned it with the Truth (Psa. 25:4,5), and stated that a prerequisite to learning it was the meekness to receive it (Psa. 25:9,12,14). In Psa. 86:11, he expressed the beautiful thought that when a person learns the principles of the Way, and walks in the Truth, his heart beats in unison with that of Yahweh (Psa. 86:11). Micah stated what is required to please Yahweh: "What doth Yahweh require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to humble thyself to walk with thy God" (Mic. 6:8 mg.).

"And lead me in a plain path" — In this line, David requests that Yahweh act towards him as a Shepherd, leading him out of the difficulties into which he had strayed. His request was relevant, because Yahweh is a Shepherd (Psa. 80:1). The place David sought was level, open plain, free from pitfalls or the lurking places of enemies who may hide in ambush ready to afflict or destroy him. A similar thought is expressed by Paul in Heb. 12:12-13: "Make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way". David had already expressed his confidence in Yahweh his Shepherd Who would lead him through "the valley of the shadow of death" to ultimate glory (Psa. 23:4).

"Because of mine enemies" — The reference is to David's hostile adversaries. Both the Psalmist and the Lord had many such; and both sought the help of Yahweh to conquer in spite of them. We, too, have many adversaries who are hostile to us, and we need Yahweh's strength to overcome them and grant us the victory. Faith is the means to that end: "This is the victory, that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4).

VERSE 12

"Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies" — The word "will" is *nephesh*, elsewhere rendered "soul". It suggests the insatiable craving of David's enemies for his destruction. David's experiences in that regard (for he was in great peril — 1 Sam. 22:5-8) anticipated and typed those of the Lord. Notice that reference is made to David's enemies no less than four times in this Psalm (vv. 2,6,11,12); but in the Hebrew with three different words. In the verse before us, the word *sarar* signifies to *distress, compress, or besiege*. So here, and in v. 2 the term denotes those who hemmed in the Psalmist or his antitype, Christ. Their enemies beset them round about. The next word (v. 6) is derived from a word signifying to *hate*, and expresses the emotional attitude of those opposed to David and to Christ, for they were "hated without a cause". The third word (v. 11) is from a root signifying bitter hostility. Combine all expressions together, and they describe David as besieged by hating, hostile enemies intent on his destruction. From such, only Yahweh could deliver him. And what was true of David also applied to Christ.

"For false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty" — In Saul's court there were false accusations laid against David (1 Sam. 22:9-10; 24:9); and of Christ it is recorded that his enemies "sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death" (Matt. 26:59). The antagonism and bitter cruelty of Saul and Doeg foreshadowed the bitter hostility experienced by the Lord Jesus Christ. But as Yahweh delivered David, and elevated him to rulership, so he did Christ. And so He will all those who faithfully follow in His way. (The final section will be considered next issue — God willing).

— HPM

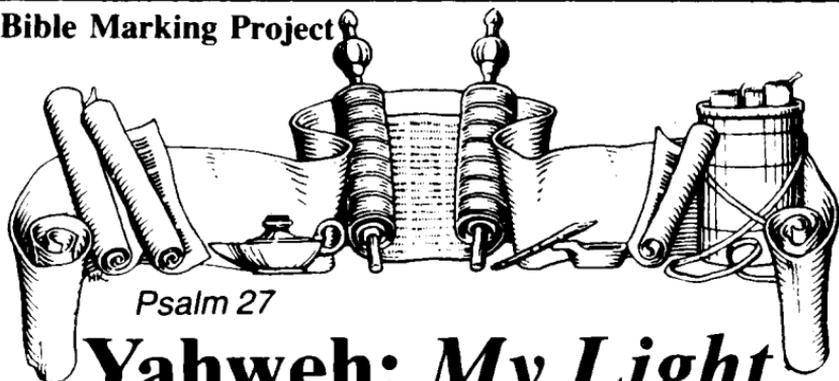
miniscence, by his choice of the word "bring", whose primary sense is "to lead" (Jh. 18:28; Acts 8:32; Rom. 2:4; 8:14) It is the term which Luke used to describe (Acts 9:27) how Barnabas, the *Son of Consolation*, "led" a disconsolate Saul to the apostles at a time when he laboured under the disadvantage that the whole

ecclesia in Jerusalem rejected him, not believing he was a disciple indeed (Acts 9:26).

In a greater act of compassion, God will lead the dead saints out of the grip of death and bring them to His son. There can be no disadvantage in death to anyone who has this assurance.

R.O. (NSW)

Bible Marking Project



Psalm 27

Yahweh: My Light And Salvation

We divide the Psalm into three sub-headings: Praise (vv. 1-6); Petition (vv. 7-12); Patience (vv. 13-14); and continue our verse by verse notes from our last number (p. 110) at v. 13.

Patience — vv. 13-14

David in spite of problems that pressed so heavily upon him, was able to see beyond them by concentrating his spiritual vision upon the "hope set before him". In doing so he typed Christ who "for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame" and in consequence gained the victory. Patience and endurance are necessary virtues to that end.

VERSE 13

"I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of Yahweh" — David had the faith to recognise that present problems are but passing trials leading to a wonderful future. With the writer of Ps. 116, he had the assurance of knowing

that he "will walk before Yahweh in the land of the living" (Ps. 116:9). It was this faith that gave him the victory (1 John 5:4), as it did also the Lord (Heb. 12:2-3). In every circumstance of his life, whether heckled by the Pharisees, or thrashed by Pilate, the Lord kept his mind on "the joy set before him", and strengthened by Yahweh, found the will and the way to endure his trials unto a glorious victory and future.

What is the "goodness of Yahweh" that David desired to see? This is a phrase frequently used in Scripture and expressive of the privileges and benefits of the Gospel. Paul wrote: "Behold the goodness and severity of God; on them which fell severity; but towards thee, goodness, if

thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off (Rom. 11:22). To "continue in His goodness" is to remain in the faith, and so to ultimately *experience* goodness in the Age to come. It is interesting and profitable to trace the use of the term throughout Scripture. It was explained to Jethro (Exod. 18:9), revealed to Moses (Exod. 33:19); offered to Hobab (Num. 10:29); hoped for by David (Ps. 27:13); promised as the heritage of the Elect (Psa. 65:4); prepared for the humble (Ps. 68:10); is the subject of song and praise (Ps. 145:7); is Israelitish in its concept (Isa. 63:7); to be experienced by the nation (Jer. 31:12); the saints are to be satiated with it (Jer. 31:14); the whole world is to witness it (Jer. 33:9); and is the subject of millennial songs of victory (Zech. 9:17). In contrast to this glorious hope, is the punishment to be meted out to the wicked (Ps. 52:5).

VERSE 14

"Wait on Yahweh" — The Psalmist appeals for the exercise of patience as the faithful wait for Yahweh to act. They recognise that He knows best when to do so. Confidence in Him must be displayed by those who desire His help. See Psa. 25:3,21; 31:24. So Christ exhorted that his followers should "always pray and not faint" (Luke 18:1). There is glorious fellowship experienced by those who have the faith to "wait on Yahweh"; for He, in turn, waits the time of blessing. See Isa. 30:17; Ps. 37:34.

"Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart" — The RV renders this: "Be strong and let thine heart take courage". Faith is important, for without it we cannot please God (Heb. 11:6). But faith must not dwell alone; it needs the companionship of courage to be really effective. It is not faith in the abstract, but "faith that works by love" that gains the

victory (Gal. 5:6; James 1:17-20; 1 John 5:4). The men and women listed in Hebrews 11 were not merely of faith, but those who matched their faith with courage, and so manifested it in action. The exhortation of this verse is repeated throughout Scripture. See Josh. 1:6,7,9,18; Deut. 31:6-7; 1 Cor. 16:13. It is significant, and relevant to the verse before us, that in preparing Israel for war, all who were "fearful and fainthearted" were sent away (Deut. 20:8). Men and women of faith may be conscientious objectors, but they are not cowards. Cowardice not only weakens one's resolve to fight, but is discouraging to fellow-warriors. On the other hand, keen enthusiasm influences others, and stimulates them to like attitude and action. It was the grumbling of the faint-hearted that proved the undoing of Israel in its wilderness wanderings; it was the courage and faith of David and others like him, that stimulated his associates to acts of heroism.

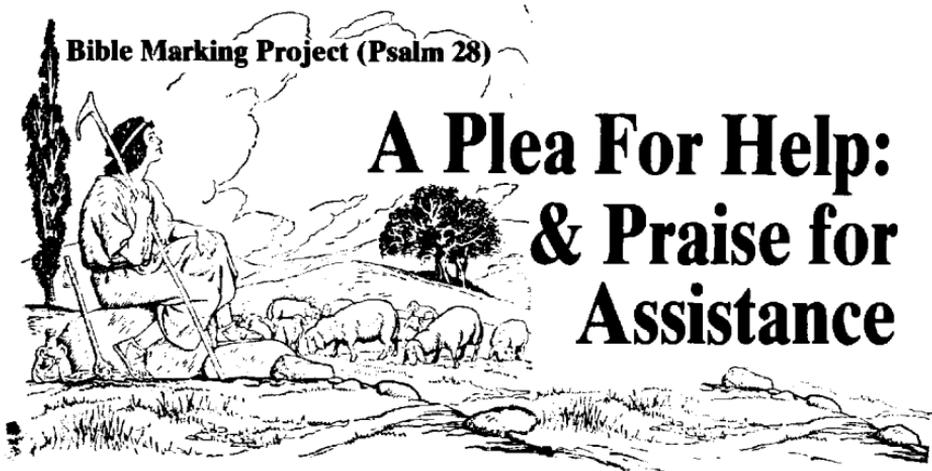
"Wait, I say, on Yahweh" — Any seeming delay on the part of Yahweh in moving to the help of those who have sought His assistance, is a challenge to faith. He has given His assurance: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:15). That is the fact of the matter, even though His temporary silence may suggest otherwise. When tested by such, let those of faith respond by boldly saying: "Yahweh is my Helper, I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (v. 5). It is in the mind that battle of facts is fought. There is need to recognise this, and to strengthen our minds to successfully overcome the problems of life in the strength of God. Therefore the line before us is repeated, so as to impress it on the faint-hearted ones.

On that note the Psalm ends.

— HPM

The Future

Under the "Law from Zion", Jerusalem will be the Mother City of all nations; for "all nations shall flow into it". Rome is now that Mother of Papal-dom; and Mecca of Mohammedon; but in the age, or world, that is coming, Jerusalem will be the Mother of all, both Jews and Gentiles; for "they shall no more walk after the imagination of their evil heart" (Jer. 3:17), "and shall all call upon the Name of Yahweh, to serve Him with one consent" (Zeph. 3:9).



A Plea For Help: & Praise for Assistance

A number of readers have requested that we revive our expositions on the Psalms commenced some years back. We have covered Psalms 1 to 27 in those articles, and so recommence this month with some introductory comments on Psalm 28. As is our custom, we divide the exposition into four parts: Who is the writer? What were the circumstances in which it was written? Has the Psalm any typical or prophetic significance? What personal message has it for the reader today?

The Author

It is a Psalm of David. The title is given and must be accepted. A brief comparison of it shows similarities to Psalm 27 which, also, is of David. That Psalm expresses his reliance upon Yahweh, praising Him for help received. However, it appears as though that Psalm was composed before he was accepted by Israel as the Anointed King; this one afterwards (see v. 8). Psalm 27 was composed upon the background of his sufferings when he was persecuted and pursued by Saul; Psalm 28 was later in his life, when he experienced the treachery and rebellion of his son.

The two Psalms, though similar in expression differ in construction. In Psalm 27, praise is first

expressed (vv. 1-6), and afterwards a plea for help is made (vv. 7-14); in Psalm 28 the same order is found, but in reverse: a plea is first made (vv. 1-5), followed by praise for help received (vv. 6-9).

The Circumstances

When, and under what circumstances was it composed? It was obviously a time of stress within the nation, when party factions were strong, and some were being drawn away from the King by the intrigue of wicked men (v. 3). This was not early in the career of David, when he was a fugitive fleeing from Saul: but when he was accepted as the Anointed of Yahweh (v. 8).

But in spite of the status of David at the time, the strength of

the opposition was such as to be beyond his ability to control or effectively resist. He needed the help of Yahweh, and he sought it in his extremity (v. 4). He was faced with a powerful rebellion on the part of a faction that ignored the work of Yahweh as manifested through him (v. 5). Therefore, in his weakness, David had to resort to the help of Yahweh (v. 7). Indeed, so serious was the rebellion, that the future of the nation as a whole was jeopardised, and the assistance of Yahweh was needed to help it over this difficult time (v. 9).

All of which points to the rebellion of Absalom as the period of the Psalm. David, humbled by the revelation of his own failure in the matter of Bathsheba, also, at that time, suffered from some physical malady (see Psalm 32:3-4). And Absalom, with the vigour of youth, and motivated by the determination to reign, set about ingratiating himself in the hearts of the people. He put on a grand display. He "prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him" (2 Sam. 15:1). This made a great impression. The appearance of the lordly and handsome Absalom, in kingly dignity, slowly travelling in a chariot, preceded by fifty runners became a familiar sight in Israel. His handsome and manly appearance, his cheerful and condescending manner won the hearts of the people, for flesh is ever ready to respond to such public displays of pomp and fleshly glory. Absalom presented a contrast to David whose illness made it difficult for him to carry out the constant round of duties facing him. He found it necessary

to take time off for rest.

This was Absalom's opportunity. Without openly condemning his father, he worked upon the feelings of those who were disappointed that decisions in their cases of litigation were delayed. If only he were king, remarked Absalom in assumed sympathy, attention would be given to these matters without delay:

"See, thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee" (2 Sam. 15:3).

Then followed a hint of the rebellion that afterwards took shape:

"Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!"

And when, in gratitude at such consideration being shown to him, the petitioner made obeisance to the elegant young man, Absalom would put out his hand and lift him to equality, raising him up before him.

By such easy familiarity, he insinuated himself into the good graces of the people. The people loved to be thus honoured by the handsome, regal prince, and already dissatisfied by the delay they experienced from the ailing king, were more disposed towards his son, and made ready to accept him as ruler.

Added to that was the weight of support received by Ahithophel whose counsel was considered as the voice of God; and other powerful men of state who possibly considered the King in his abject weakness on the point of abdicating, and therefore threw in their lot with Absalom.

So the rebellion gained momentum, and David was forc-

ed to flee. Like the Lord later, he ascended the Mount of Olives before going into "a far country", and there wept over Jerusalem, praying that Yahweh would to sustain him in this moment of supreme trial.

In exile the Psalm was composed, and David placed his case in the hands of Yahweh.

Typical Application

As a general rule, the typical life of David falls into two parts: before and after his sin with Bathsheba. Before that time, when fighting Goliath, fleeing from Saul, or winning victories over the surrounding nations, David types the Lord Jesus Christ as an individual. After that time, the type seems to apply more to Christ in relation to the saints.

Certainly this Psalm is Messianic in application: whether considered as applying to Christ personally or communally. Consider the statement of v. 5 and compare it with the words of the Lord.

David declared:

"Because they regard not the works of Yahweh, nor the operation of His hands, He shall destroy them, and not build them up" (v.5).

"Yahweh is their strength and He is the saving strength of His anointed" (v. 8).

Christ declared:

"If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in Him" (John 10:37-38).

"He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do: because I go unto my Father" (John 14:12).

Absalom and Israel ignored the divine appointment of David, and the "works" accomplished through him, and so did the

Jewish people in relation to Christ. As Christ is the Anointed, those "in him" are also of the Anointed: and the title also applies to them (see 2 Cor. 1:21).

Faced with a crisis beyond his ability to handle, David was forced to seek the help of Yahweh. He was greatly privileged to be able to turn to that help with such confidence; as also are those who are of Christ and need Yahweh's help in need. That help is always available (James 4:8).

Therefore, we know the author of this Psalm, and the distressing circumstances that drew from such a man of faith his plea for help, and his praise of Yahweh as the Giver of help. We acknowledge its typical application to Christ; and are able to extract therefrom the comfort and help of its words.

EXPOSITION

An Urgent Plea For A Hearing — vv. 1-2

In his extremity, in his urgent need, David pleads with Yahweh to hearken and heed his prayer. He desires a token of Yahweh's intention to help; as he addresses Him in terms of greatest urgency and pathos.

VERSE 1

"Unto thee I cry, O Yahweh" — David recognises that the forces ranged against him are too great for him to overcome or control. In his weakness he would seek the aid of Yahweh who alone has the ability to assist. Such experiences in life are most helpful. It is good to be so humbled: to be faced with such circumstances as cause us to recognise that the problems are beyond our ability to conquer. By those means we learn how feeble is flesh, and how great is our need of God. We come more fervently to "love the Lord's appearing" (2 Tim. 4:8), and pray more earnestly for it. In the normal circumstances of life, we might express a need for God but when faced with problems that are beyond our power to solve, we see the need as greater. "My strength is made

perfect in weakness", Paul was told by God (2 Cor. 12:9). And so it ever is. Therefore, whatever the conditions we need not despair. In invoking the name of Yahweh, he drew attention to the Covenant that He made with Moses at the bush. The bush was enveloped in flame, but not consumed. In the circumstances to which David was then reduced, he must have felt like that burning bush. So he turned to Yahweh.

"My rock: be not silent to me" — The Hebrew term *Tsur* (Rock) is a wonderful title of God. It was used first by Moses, then by David and Isaiah. Moses saw the vast, silent, eternal mountains of Sinai as a manifestation of their Creation. He saw in their everlasting massiveness a symbol of Yahweh. They suggested strength, endurance and shelter. In their elevation, isolation, and duration they suggested the eternity of things Divine. The use of the title is summarised by Isaiah: "Thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat . . . Trust ye in Yahweh, for ever, for in Yah Yahweh is the Rock (*Tsur*) of ages" (Isa. 25:4; 26:4). In another prayer, uttered in his extremity, David declared:

"From the end of the earth (in exile) will I cry unto Thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the Rock, that is higher than I" (Psa. 61:2).

The term *Tsur* is sometimes rendered "sharp", "edge" and so forth, suggesting the sharp razor-back ridges of hard granite rock. The word is applied to Christ as a hiding place (Isa. 2:10), a rock of offence (Isa. 8:14), and a slaughter rock (Isa. 10:26). In Isaiah 30:29 it is rendered Mighty One.

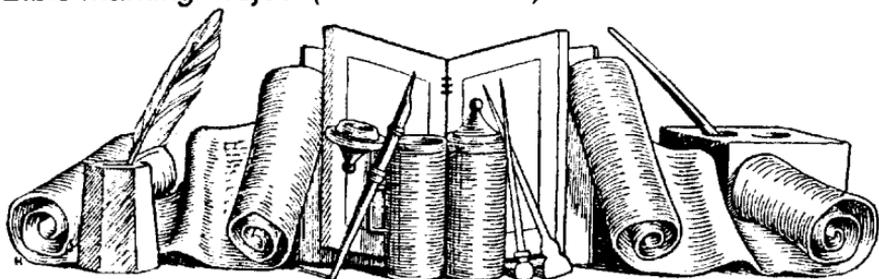
To that Rock, David turned in his need. He pleaded with Yahweh that He be not indifferent to his plight, that He "be not silent". He desired an encouraging "token of good" (Psa. 86:17), some indication that in his weakness, and in the consciousness of his own unworthiness, there may be some reassurance of Yahweh's intention to assist.

"Lest, if thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit" — David in his weakness, conscious of his own failings, and the strength of the opposition that had reared itself up, knew that he is utterly dependant upon the help of this Rock. He needed a refuge, a support, a "shadow from the heat"; for he lacked confidence to handle the problems facing him. Without Yahweh's help, he was as good as dead: "like them that go down into the pit" (see Psa. 88:4). So he "stirred himself up that He might take hold on God" which is Isaiah's description of fervent prayer. HPM

(To be continued).

1986 — A Happy New Year?

Not for the world. It presents many sad sights to those who have eyes to see. Where truth should be exalted for the hope and salvation of perishing man, we see contradictory creeds and bitter conflict. Instead of a generous distribution of the earth's bounties amongst her children, we see millions toiling in hunger; instead of peace and prosperity, we see war preparations and oppressive taxation. Violence is on the increase. Despairing men are rising in rebellion. Is there no prospect of relief? Certainly! From these sad sights we turn to a picture bright and beautiful, drawn by God in His infallible but neglected Word. In this we see Christ once more among us, ruling as King over all the earth (Zech. 14:16-17), no war (Psa. 46:8-10); no miscarriage of justice (Jer. 23:5); no mismanagement (Isa. 11:1-5); no tyranny (Isa. 29:20); no complaining in the streets (Psa. 144:4); the poor and helpless cared for (Psa. 72:4); the earth yielding her increase (Psa. 67:6); grateful hearts everywhere (Psa. 113:2-3). To share in this future blessedness is the hope of the only true gospel: the gospel of the Scriptures. In anticipation of it we pray, Even so come Lord Jesus. Our hope is that 1986 may witness his return.



Plea for Help & Praise for Assistance

Having ascertained the Author, considered the circumstances in which the Psalm was composed, and observed its typical application to the Lord Jesus Christ, we consider from the last issue its personal message verse by verse.

VERSE 2

“Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto Thee” — As the circumstances that caused the Psalm to be written, reveals, David was in dire straits, and desperately in need of help. Only one source is adequate for this: Yahweh, a very present help in time of trouble. That is the benefit of adversity. It humbles flesh, causes one to recognise his need of God, motivates prayer, and induces a greater “love for the Lord’s appearing” (2 Tim. 4:8).

“When I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle” — Uplifted hands are an outward expression of an unseen uplifted heart (Psa. 25:1). Prayer needs to be charged with feeling, to become truly powerful. That demands personal effort. Prayer is Scripturally defined as “stirring up oneself to take hold of God” (Isa. 64:7). To “stir up oneself” is to make a mental effort to “draw nigh unto God” so as to bring Him “nigh unto you” (James 4:8). This is done by turning towards Yahweh’s “holy oracle”. The word in its Hebrew form signifies the words, or revelation of Yahweh. In the Most Holy, or Oracle (see 1 Kings 6:5, 19, 20) was placed the Ark with the Mercy Seat, above which were the Cherubim. This constituted the Palace and Throne of Yahweh in Israel. “There I will meet with thee, and I will commune

with thee”, He declared to Moses (Exod. 25:22). To look towards “the oracle”, therefore, was to attempt to visualise the invisible presence of Yahweh in the midst of Israel; it was to make Him a living reality. An Israelite could not physically enter the Most Holy, but he could do so mentally. In like manner, in prayer believers can “enter into that within the veil” (Heb. 6:19), that is, into heaven itself. By this effort of mind the pray-er approaches into the presence of God, and should exercise his mind in appreciating the awesome privilege of so doing. “Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God, set your affection on things above” (Col. 3:1-2). This requires determined concentration of the mind. “Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you” James exhorts. Because his need was great the Psalmist exercised the willpower to do this. In like manner, Daniel prayed “towards Jerusalem” (Dan. 6:10; 9:3).

Deliverance From Workers of Iniquity Sought — vv. 3-5

Mentally in the Most Holy, David seeks deliverance from those who hypocritically speak peace to their neighbours, but have mischief (ra, stark evil) in their hearts. Despite words which claim to honour Yahweh, they, in fact, ignore His works and will receive the just punishment of their iniquity.

VERSE 3

"Draw me not away from the wicked"

— This appeal is similar to the petition of the Lord's prayer: "Deliver me from evil". The request does not imply that Yahweh would deliberately draw the Psalmist away with the wicked, but there remained the danger that if He did not extend protection to David he may succumb to the plots of the wicked. As that is only possible if Yahweh ignores his petition, it is presented as though it is in the power of Yahweh's hand (as indeed it was) to deliver him or else allow him to be taken by the plots of his adversaries. David places no confidence in his own ability to escape himself out of the evil; and that is precisely what the petitioner urges who uses the Lord's prayer. The term, *rasha* (wicked) denotes one who is prepared to break every law of restraint to gain his ends, not heeding that he injures himself by so doing.

"And with the workers of iniquity"

The "wicked" (those who are prepared to ignore God's restraints) proceed to work iniquity. The word "iniquity" is from a Hebrew expression (*avon*) which is derived from a root signifying "to pant", suggesting the eagerness by which such a person goes about to do his work of evil. Therefore, it describes one who setting aside the law of God, and so earning the title of "the wicked", now is consumed by an urge to carry out his evil designs against the Beloved. This, of course, originally was David; but in its prophetic fulfilment, relates to Christ. His enemies were consumed by a burning desire to destroy him. Having set aside the principles of the Law, nothing would restrain them. But the Lord's thoughts (like those of David) were ever with Yahweh, and in His strength, he ultimately conquered his enemies (Heb. 2:14).

"Which speak peace to their neighbours" — In the case of David, such as Absalom and Ahithophel justified their action by proclaiming that they had the good, or peace, of the nation at heart. That, too, was the attitude of the Lord's enemies. They promised peace to the nation, if only they could rid themselves of the troublesome presence of the Lord. Examples of this hypocritical attitude are frequent in the Gospel accounts, justifying the Lord's description of the Scribes and Pharisees as "hypocrites". Their evil attitude is summed up by the counsel of the chief of the hypocrites, the High Priest

whose doctrine of expediency was a prime factor in bringing the Lord to the cross: "It is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not" (John 11:50). Accordingly, the Lord was given over to death.

"But mischief is in their hearts"

— The word "mischief" does not do justice to the Hebrew *ra*. It signifies stark evil. It is an expression used to describe the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah, and is there translated "wicked" (Gen. 13:13). The expression is derived from a root signifying "to break to pieces", destroy, afflict; and relates to those who in order to fulfil their desires are prepared to break in pieces or destroy the established order of things, and who hurt and destroy themselves and those with them by so doing. Their evil motives were hypocritically hidden in their hearts, whilst externally their voices were heard proclaiming peace. Harken to the hypocrisy of some who were setting a trap to destroy the Lord: "Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us therefore . . ." (Matt. 22:16). The trap was set, and his adversaries waited eagerly for the Lord to be caught. However, such temptations and trials are not limited to the Lord, but are incidental to believers in every age. Paul warns against those who profess to be followers of the Lord Jesus Christ but "by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Rom. 16:18).

VERSE 4

"Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavours"

— This is not a vindictive cry for vengeance, but a solemn prayer that Yahweh will openly manifest Himself in vindication of the righteous by pouring out judgments upon those who violate His principles, and holiness. Such are deserving of such treatment (Exod. 34:7; Psa. 5:10; 59:12-13; 2 Tim. 4:14; Rev. 18:6). In this age of professed humanism but frightful and ruthless personal violence, the so-called "rights of man" are paraded as of greater importance than those of Yahweh. Punishment for sin is deprecated. This is because the world is largely Godless. Men of God recognise that great evils deserve great punishments. A person praying: "Thy kingdom

come that Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven" is petitioning Yahweh to pour out His judgments upon the earth, for apart from so doing such a result cannot follow. When the holiness and righteousness of Yahweh is upheld, it will be acknowledged that judgments are deserving and should be poured out upon those who flagrantly reject the right of God. David and Christ both suffered because their enemies rejected God; and that rejection was more hurtful to them than was the personal opposition. Absalom's rebellion was a rejection of Yahweh's appointed Messiah, and such an act of rebellion is deserving of Divine judgment. Otherwise sin would be unrestrained, and morality would be limited to what the flesh dictates. David's experiences foreshadowed those of Christ and his brethren.

"Give them after the work of their hands" — See Gal. 6:7-8. Sin does not go unpunished, nor righteousness unrewarded. See Psa. 62:12; Rom. 2:6-8. A prayer for the coming of the Lord, is virtually a prayer for the outpouring of judgment, for both are related. No outpouring of Divine Judgment and there will be no restoration of the Kingdom. If we view the wickedness of this Sodomitic age through the eyes of God, we will have no problem in endorsing the plea of David. The world needs Divine judgment. As Isaiah declared: "Let favour be shown to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness". But "when Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. 26:9-10). Divine judgments are remedial in intent. They "render to the wicked the work of their hands", and by so doing demonstrate that sin does not pay, whilst vindicating the righteous.

"Render to them their desert" — That indeed is what Absalom received, and what the world likewise will do.

VERSE 5

"Because they regard not the works of Yahweh" — The wicked refuse to respond to Yahweh's right as Creator. They "hold the truth in unrighteousness" even though the facts of creation demonstrate the reality of God (Rom. 1:18-20). David spake of those who claimed to be Israelites but acted as Gentiles; who were atheists in practice if not in profession (Psa. 14:1). Unbelief, lack of faith, was the

root cause of their sin (Heb. 4:6).

"Nor the operation of His hands" — This expression relates to Yahweh's spiritual creation (Psa. 80:17; Isa. 60:21; Phil. 2:13; Rev. 3:17). David's adversaries rejected his Messiahship, as did the opponents of the Lord.

"He shall destroy them, and not build them up" — What other destiny would be appropriate for those who reject Yahweh's Messiah. On the other hand, the "house of David" will be rebuilt (2 Sam. 7:10,13,27; Jer. 31:4; Amos 9:11).

Praise for Benefits Received — vv. 6-7.

As David turns to Yahweh in faith his confidence is restored; he realises that Yahweh is a very present help in time of trouble, and he prays with the conviction that the Lord advocated when he declared: "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them (lit. that ye do now receive them), and ye shall have them" (Mark 11:24).

VERSE 6

"Blessed be Yahweh" — The Hebrew word is *barak* which signifies to kneel in adoration and thanks.

"Because He hath heard the voice of my supplications" — David had sufficient confidence in Yahweh and in the righteousness of his appeal as to acknowledge that it would be answered. In anticipation thereof he responded in thanksgiving. This should be a constant feature of acceptable prayer (Psa. 34:1; Eph. 5:20; Phil. 4:6; 1 Thess. 5:18; Heb. 13:15).

VERSE 7

"Yahweh is my Strength and my Shield" — The Psalmist's reliance was in Yahweh not in flesh; for the latter, as the Lord declared, "profits nothing". The believer who recognises that Yahweh is "a very present help" is immediately strengthened by the knowledge. In spite of trouble he reveals a resilience to maintain the fight of faith, and though temporarily cast down will rise again. But Yahweh is also his Shield. The Hebrew word is *Magen* (Psa. 3:3). The *Magen* was a small shield designed to be moved from point to point and to protect the vulnerable parts of the body from the thrust of the enemy. Such a symbol was appropriate in the mouth of David the warrior. To him, as to Christ, Yahweh was a Defence and a Protection.

"My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped" — Trust and faith develop confidence, and such are essential to victory. Immediate comfort is derived from turning to Yahweh in prayer, and placing one's burdens upon Him.

"Therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth" — Even the mere sharing of problems with Yahweh brings relief; and as one learns to lean upon Him who is greater than flesh, one's heart can rejoice.

"And with my song will I praise Him" — See Psa. 96:1-3; Heb. 13:15. These are exercises that all should practice. Expression in gratitude should be given in prayer for benefits received.

Intercession For the People — vv. 8-9
The Psalm concludes with a final prayer for those of the people who are dependant upon the Messiah. Yahweh is asked to save, bless, feed and elevate them. The Psalm is therefore a prayer for intercession and redemption.

VERSE 8

"Yahweh is their strength" — The RV mg. has: "A strength unto His people". Yahweh will extend Himself to help all those who turn to Him in faith. His benefits are not limited to those who are in high positions.

"And He is the saving strength of His anointed" — The RV has "a stronghold of salvation", but the Hebrew has the latter word in the plural, speaking of repeated salvations. He is a "strong tower" into which "the righteous runneth, and is safe" (Prov. 18:10). The word "anointed" is Messiah. David was one such; but Christ was *the* Messiah. In overshadowing David and Christ, Yahweh extended His help to those "in" both. Both men represented the many with them as well as themselves personally. The resurrection and glorification of Christ, his personal salvation, guaranteed the resurrection and glorification of those truly in him. Because he lives, they shall live also. Hence the expression of these lines prepares for the final ones of the Psalm.

VERSE 9

"Save Thy people, and bless Thine

inheritance" — Yahweh's people comprises Israel (Psa. 14:7), a term that in Christ is broadened out to embrace all in him (Eph. 2:11-13). They are also His "inheritance" because it is His intention to dwell among them (Deut. 4:20; Zech. 2:12; Rev. 21:3). Here the word bless (*barak*) is used in the sense of Yahweh condescending to help His people. His people humble themselves to worship Him; and He responds by humbling Himself to bend down to help them.

"Feed them also, and lift them up for ever" — The word "feed" can be rendered either *shepherd* or *rule*. The King in Israel was also its Shepherd (Psa. 78:52-55); Yahweh as King of the heavens (Psa. 95:3) was also the great Shepherd of Israel (Psa. 80:1; 23:1-2). As such He provides pasture of a sustaining nature (Isa. 55:1-2). Yahweh not only feeds but manifests compassionate care for His people. The term "lift up" expresses this. It signifies to "bear up" or to lift up and to carry in times of weariness, weakness or want. This was the work of a shepherd as is expressed in Isaiah 40:11. How valuable to recall that Yahweh knows our needs, and in compassion extends Himself to help us in our weakness (Psa. 103:13-14).

And what He does is "for ever". It is not temporary, to remain only for a moment, and then fade away. It is for "the hidden period", the millennium, designed to last. "He shall stand and feed in the strength of Yahweh, in the majesty of the name of Yahweh his God; and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth" (Mic. 5:4; 7:14).

On this note the Psalm concludes. David, in his despondency turned to Yahweh and found immediate encouragement by so doing. This enabled him to lift up his head from his trials, and to fix his attention upon the "joy set before him". In full confidence of Yahweh's purpose in him, and in full assurance of the establishment of the Divine purpose in the earth, he recovered from the depression that previously swamped him, and conquered through his faith, his confidence of the future, and of Yahweh's purpose in the earth. HPM

Distresses and affliction are a necessary part of the training which is to fit us for a place in the perfect and abiding society of the future age. By them, we become wiser and better and richer. The process is painful, but the end is sweetness. R.R.



Yahweh's Majesty In Storm and Thunder

At a first glance, there appears nothing unique about this Psalm; in fact, it seems rather commonplace. Examine it a little more closely, however, and one is moved to exclaim in wonder with Paul: "O the depth and the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11:33). We therefore suggest that before you continue with this article, briefly read the Psalm; see if you agree with our comment above. Then study it closely to discover its hidden and beautiful significance.

The Composer And His Circumstances

It is a Psalm of David. But under what circumstances was it composed? We would suggest early in his life when, as a thoughtful shepherd-boy, he not only pondered the marvellous comfort of Divine guidance and help, as expressed in the Shepherd Psalm (Psa. 23), but now expresses his admiration of Yahweh in this Storm Psalm. He observes the storm-clouds gather; he hears the peals of thunder, he sees the gleaming flashes of lightning; and with the rest of creation crouches in fear at the presence of the God of storm.

For in the face of nature's might all creation is humbled.

But the storm passes; and animals, birds and men emerge from their various shelters. In the heavens above the sun shines forth cheerfully from a blue sky; and joy and happiness reigns as nature smiles.

The Psalm describes a storm, seen and felt by David as it struck inland from the Mediterranean in the north-west, roared its way over the land, figuratively brought shuddering fear to the mighty cedars of Lebanon, and rapidly swept south to expend itself in the wilderness of Kadesh and the Negev (vv. 6,8).

Storms display the majestic might of Yahweh. Man's power is ineffectual in the face of earthquake, hurricane or the fury of flood. He cannot control the raging of the sea, the shaking of the earth, or the velocity of stormy winds. At such times he is compelled to run for shelter, and hope that his possessions escape the worst ravages of nature's anger. The peals of thunder, the flashes of lightning, the fury of wind, the roaring of waves are expressive of Divine anger causing helpless dread and fear to dominate all creation: "He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for His land, or for mercy" (Job 37:13). As David remarked: "Yahweh sitteth upon the flood" (Psa. 29:10).

David meditated upon this theme as he observed a violent storm, and wrote of it.

The Psalm As Prophecy

But this Psalm is more than a description of a storm of nature. It is prophetic of a political tempest, that is going to break over the Land in the last days, sweeping down from the north. Ezekiel saw and described it, but in more prosaic language:

"Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm; thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land; thou, and all thy bands and many people with thee".

So declared Ezekiel of the political and national storm that is described as Armageddon (Ezek. 38:9).

Gog will be destroyed at Jerusalem; but that will be only the beginning. The storm of the future is going to sweep throughout all the lands of the Gentiles, bringing devastation to all man-

kind, causing them to crouch in fear and trepidation.

To see more clearly the prophetic aspect of the Psalm, notice the first and last verses:

"Give unto Yahweh, O ye mighty, give unto Yahweh glory and strength" (v. 1).

"Yahweh will give strength unto His people; Yahweh will bless His people with peace" (v. 11).

Now observe how the angels echoed the sentiments of this Psalm when proclaiming the birth of the Lord: "*Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace and goodwill towards men*". The first must precede the second. Christ is first King of righteousness, and after that King of Peace (Heb. 7:2). The wisdom from above is "first pure and then peaceable" (James 3:17). The Psalm describes first glory to God and then peace on earth.

Now consider how the thunder of Yahweh's voice clears the air, and makes for peace. The term "voice of Yahweh", suggestive of thunder (v. 3), occurs seven times in the Psalm (vv. 3,4,4,5,7,8,9). Can we place these seven thunders so as to put them in their proper prophetic context?

Yes, we can!

John, on the isle of Patmos, heard seven thunders. He records:

"And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not" (Rev. 10:4).

Those seven thunders, in their antitypical application, will comprise the judgments that follow the destruction of Gog at Jerusalem, and which will bring the whole world into subjection to Christ. Following David's ascen-

sion to the throne in Jerusalem, he conducted seven campaigns which ultimately brought all surrounding nations under his control. He transformed his kingdom into an empire. His wars in that way foreshadowed the sevenfold thunders of judgment that shall be heard when Christ "rebukes strong nations afar off" (Mic. 4:3). In that day the "nation and kingdom that will not serve him shall perish" (Isa. 60:12). As with the stone smiting the image, the first onslaught will fragment the united metals but the subsequent judgments shall grind them to powder which the wind shall carry away (Dan. 2:35). The sum effect of the storm that shall sweep down upon the earth from the political heavens, will ultimately bring all nations subject to the Lord's rule.

It will consummate in Yahweh reigning as King throughout the earth for the Millennium, and establishing therein Divine strength and peace for His people. So the Psalm commences with proclaiming glory to God in the highest, and terminates with peace on earth and goodwill towards men (vv. 10-11).

Verse by Verse Notes

A Call to Worship — vv. 1-2

As peace is first pure and afterwards peaceable, so there is a call to worship in order to enjoy the fruits of Yahweh's providence. It is significant that the Septuagint identifies this Psalm with the eighth or last day of the Feast of Tabernacles: a Festival that foreshadows the Millennium. The eighth day was the "great day" when the Lord called the people to worship as recorded in John 7:17. See also Lev. 23:36. It is also relevant that after delivering Jerusalem, Christ will proclaim an ultimatum to the nations calling upon them to

submit to his rule and worship. Time being provided to permit of them accepting or rejecting that offer (Rev. 14:6-7), the judgments of God will roar forth seven times (Rev. 10:4) bringing all mankind subject to Christ (Rev. 14:8-11).

VERSE 1

"Give unto Yahweh, O ye mighty" — The Hebrew is *Bne Elim*, sons of the mighty ones. This is a title given to the immortal angels (Job 38:7), a position to be shared by the approved in the age to come, when they shall be made "equal unto the angels" (Luke 20:36). In view of the prophetic significance of this psalm this call represents the judgement of the saints at the coming of the Lord.

"Give unto Yahweh glory and strength" — The appeal is to acknowledge Yahweh's attributes of glory and strength which are supremely His (see Deut. 32:3; Psa. 68:34; Luke 17:18; Rom. 4:20; Rev. 14:7). Those nations that respond to this appeal will escape the ravages of the storm.

VERSE 2

"Give unto Yahweh the glory due unto His Name" — This Christ did (Jhn. 12:28; 17:6,26), and saints should do. They are called out of the Gentiles "a people for the name" (Acts 15:14); and they give glory unto it by building into their lives the Divine characteristics manifested in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Hebrew is more direct: "The honour of His name". This is expressive of the various characteristics of the Name (Exod. 34:6-7), summed up in the declaration of Paul: "Behold the goodness and the severity of the Lord" (Rom. 11:22).

"Worship Yahweh in the beauty of holiness" — This is better rendered, as with the RV margin: "in holy array". In Mosaic times, the priests were dressed appropriately for purposes of worship. This entailed proper and careful preparation to meet Yahweh's requirements. The form of dress was not subject to personal preference, or of a fashion conveniently pleasing to the worshipper, but in strict accordance with the requirements of Yahweh. The priestly garments were designed for "glory and for beauty" (Exod. 28:2). Every portion of them, every colour used to beautify them, the very order and arrangement of the gems on the shoulders and the breastplate of the High

Priest, were significant and meaningful. The garments as a whole, shadowed forth the office and ideal set before the High Priest as Yahweh's prime minister. They were designed to symbolise his characteristics as well as the mediatorial duties of the priesthood. The High Priest in Israel foreshadowed the standing and work of Christ as High Priest after the order of Melchizedek (Psa. 110:2), whilst the lower priests, clad in their special garments speaking of righteousness, foreshadowed the calling of saints (1 Pet. 2:9). To worship Yahweh in holy array, is to do

so in a manner entirely acceptable to Him, fulfilling every requirement of teaching, dress and deportment as laid down by His word. No casual approach to Him and His worship will be found acceptable to Him. There is need to both love and fear Yahweh. This requires a joyful performance of His will, and a deep respect for His standing. The "holy array" of this Psalm is the equivalent of the beautiful, symbolic marriage dress of the bride (Psa. 45:14).

HPM

(To be continued).

At A Sisters' Class

"Worship Yahweh in the Beauty of Holiness" (Psa. 96:9)

The beautiful appeal of this lovely Psalm presents a contrast to this Sodomite age, in which a world that flouts the will and worship of Yahweh has given itself over entirely to pleasure seeking. No doubt multitudes worship with lip service, but they do not resort to the Scriptures, to find therein, the means of true worship.

We claim to be His children and to understand what pure worship is. Let us ponder the subject and ascertain whether our worship conforms to Yahweh's requirements. The Lord declared that He seeks the worship of those who are prepared to worship Him "in spirit and truth" (John 4:23).

We can claim to honour Yahweh in ceremonial acts of worship, that are actually motivated by the flesh. Such worship is vain, failing to give honour to God. To worship Him aright we must recognise how high and remote is the Father, infinitely above our thought. His majesty is such, that we as creatures of the dust, can only approach Him in spirit, truth, and purity of life and that only through His spotless Son. True worship is a combination of thought and action. We offer up our adoration, and acknowledge his honour; but we must practise also that perfect law of works manifesting righteousness, Godliness, love, patience, faith, meekness. This purifies the heart and mind causing us to respond in psalms of thanksgiving. Such a life is acceptable unto the Father because He that sees all things recognises that He is being worshipped in spirit and in Truth. A faithful sister will remember the gracious appeal of the Psalmist — "O worship Yahweh in the beauty of holiness" and will endeavour to comply with this beautiful precept. Her mind will be suitably prepared to receive the impressions which collective worship affords. Quietness, and thoughtfulness will characterise her demeanour before the commencement of the meeting. Close attention will be given to the spiritual ministrations of prayer, praise and exhortation. Meticulous care will be exercised to maintain the standard of holiness which becomes those who worship the Father in "Spirit and in Truth".

Our attention in 2 Chronicles 16 is drawn to this: "Give unto Yahweh the glory due unto His name, for glory and honour are in His presence, strength and gladness are in His place. Bring a free will offering and come before Him; "for Yahweh loves a cheerful giver". Prostrate ourselves in dedication unto him and "worship Yahweh in the beauty of holiness".

Beauty is *not* the outward apparel of costly array, but a Godly character which will reveal itself in a modest attire as a true sister in Christ, professing Godliness. "Favour is deceitful and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth Yahweh she shall be praised" (Prov. 31:30).

A head covering is an essential part of our mode of dress in meeting demonstrating a principle of subjection. Worldly-wise women have almost discarded the wearing of hats, attending church services with their heads uncovered; but we realise the scriptural principle in covering the head, and must ensure the hats selected conform to the requirements of showing our subjection unto our husbands as unto Christ.

"Holiness", is separation from the world with all its lusts. God commanded: "Be ye holy for I am holy!"

May we heed this warning whilst time permits, knowing our Creator has offered us "glory, honour, incorruptibility and eternal life" with an "inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled and that shall never fade away". He invites us to become "heirs", of these things and by our conduct prove ourselves worthy to possess them.

Let us all then, young and old, worship in deed and in Truth and in the beauty of Holiness, and at the last, we who have striven to reflect that glory in this life will manifest the fulness of the glory of Yahweh, that we may enter in, and worship perfectly, in the courts of His holiness.

Sis. J. Elton (SA).

Yahweh's Majesty In Storm and Thunder

David describes a storm as it breaks over the land from the north, and sees foreshadowed therein the latter-day international crisis when Gog shall "come like a storm" against the land. The Psalm commences with glory to God in the highest, and concludes with peace on earth. This message was repeated the angels at the birth of Christ. We continue our verse by verse notes from last issue, at v. 3.

Yahweh's Power And Majesty — vv. 3-9

The forces of nature are used to illustrate the awe-inspiring power of Yahweh, particularly in the manifestation of His future judgments. See also 2 Sam. 22:7-15.

VERSE 3

"The voice of Yahweh is upon the waters" — The "Voice of Yahweh" is descriptive of the roar of heaven's artillery as heard in thunder. This is the first of the seven occasions in the Psalm in which it is heard, and therefore foreshadows the seven thunders of *The Apocalypse*, after the manifestation of Yahweh's glory in the earth in the person of the Lord Jesus (Rev. 10:3). The short, sharp Hebrew expression *Qol Yahweh* appears in the Psalm as a clap of thunder! David describes the storm as sweeping in upon the land from the Mediterranean in the north-west, whipping its waves into a fury. This describes the fear and turmoil of the wicked at the coming of the Lord. Their agitation is likened to a stormy sea (Isa. 57:20), a turbulence stirred up by the crisis leading to Armageddon.

"The God of glory thundereth" — Here the word God is *EI*, expressive of Divine might and power. This will be manifest in judgment at the second coming of the Lord.

"Yahweh is upon many waters" — The margin gives "great waters"; the Hebrew signifies abundant waters such as must have been experienced at the Flood with which the judgment of the

future is likened (see Psa. 29:10). David observes the masses of heavy dark rain clouds rolling down from the north, blotting out the sun, and threatening to swamp the earth in its flood. Christ will first appear "with clouds" (Rev. 1:7). Their righteous judgment will wash the earth clean of its wickedness.

VERSE 4

"The voice of Yahweh is powerful" — And now with the sun darkened, and the ominous, threatening clouds preparing to pour out their devastating hail upon the earth, a splitting clap of thunder shakes the very ground, and induces fear in the hearts of all living creatures. The Hebrew has it: *"Qol Yahweh in power"*. Yahweh will be seen in power in the glorified saints, the "clouds" of the future political heavens. Until His judgments are past, the cloud of judgment will obliterate the shining forth of the Sun of Righteousness.

"The voice of Yahweh is full of majesty" — His judgments on a disobedient world will also be expressive of His majesty.

VERSE 5

"The voice of Yahweh breaketh the cedars" — Cedars are used symbolically for the majesty of fleshly leaders; the might of which will be bent and humbled by the strength of the storm (see Isa. 2:13).

"Yea, Yahweh breaketh the cedars of Lebanon" — The cedars of Lebanon

are accounted the most magnificent of trees, and here represent the most powerful and prominent leaders of the nations. But as a shattered, uprooted giant of the forest testifies to the strength of a storm, so the mighty of the Gentiles are to be humbled; "The day of Yahweh shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low; and upon all the cedars of Lebanon that are high and lifted up . . ." (Isa. 2:12-13).

VERSE 6

"He maketh them also to skip like a calf" — The entire forest is described as dancing, the mighty limbs shaking with the velocity of the wind. Wind is used symbolically for the spirit and for an army (Dan. 7:2). It will be the appearance of the divine army of immortals that will cause perturbation throughout the Gentile forest.

"Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn" — Sirion is another name for Hermon which is south of the Lebanese range (Deut. 3:9). The word signifies *Breastplate*, expressive of defence. Gentile defences will prove ineffectual as a protection from the fury of the storm. The ear-splitting crashes of thunder and the roar of wind will result in the greatest turbulence. The unicorn is identified with the aurochs, a huge animal that could weigh over a ton. The full grown bull stood about 6 feet (2 metres) at the shoulder. The animals were noted for their activity. Bringing such a massive and powerful beast under control would be hard enough today with all modern aids, and was considered a remarkable achievement in ancient times. Unfortunately, the aurochs no longer survives, though drawings of it remain.

VERSE 7

"The voice of Yahweh divideth the flames of fire" — The RV renders this as "cleaveth the flames of fire", a reference to forked lightning darting out of the black clouds following a clap of thunder. Lightning is used symbolically for the belligerent manifestation of divine power.

VERSE 8

"The voice of Yahweh shaketh the wilderness" — David observes the storm moving down through the land inducing fear wherever it proceeds.

"Yahweh shaketh the wilderness of

Kadesh" — The storm sweeps south to the wilderness of Kadesh (*Sanctuary*) which is represented as shuddering at the thunderclaps. Yahweh's judgments will be manifest against the political forces of the Gentiles, and shall reach to the sanctuary also. Vast changes will be brought about in regard to divine worship in the Age to come.

VERSE 9

"The voice of Yahweh maketh the hinds to calve" — The frightening effect of the storm causes premature births, and so brings about new life. This will be the case also in the Kingdom of God. Men shall learn to fear Yahweh, and the result will be a new birth to His glory (Isa. 66:8-9).

"And discovereth the forests" — The RV renders: "And strippeth the forests bare". Leaves, branches, bark are torn away. Thus the glory of the forest will be humbled, and the imperfections of human rule made bare (Isa. 2:12-22).

"And in His temple doth every one speak of His glory" — The RV renders this: "everything saith, Glory". The storm will humble mankind and impress all with the reality of Yahweh's existence. That storm will rage for forty years until all mankind is subject to the rule of Christ (Micah 7:15-17). During that period of time, the Temple will be built; and at its conclusion, at the beginning of the Millennium, a jubilee after Christ's return, it will be opened for service, and all will be commanded to worship therein (Zech. 14:16).

If the seven thunders are representative of the judgments of Yahweh administered by His glorious saints, why is it described as descending from the north over the land? The analogy not only agrees with nature, for in the Middle East, the north is the direction of such a storm (contrary to natural circumstances in Australia), but the north is the direction of judgment (symbolised by Dan as Judge stationed on the north of the Tabernacle). It is the symbol of God's throne (Isa. 14:31), the place of obscurity, so that Christ as Judge is described as coming from the north (Isa. 41:25). The Psalmist declared: "Promotion coming neither from the east, west nor south" but "God is the judge" (Psa. 75:6-7). If it does not come from those directions, it must come from the north, where Dan the Judge was stationed. It is appropriate to the symbolism of judgment, therefore, that the

storm is described as coming from the north, the direction from whence the Cherubim moved against Jerusalem as seen by Ezekiel (Ch. 1).

Peace After the Storm — vv. 10-11

The final picture is one of peace and amity between God and man. So the call to "give glory unto Yahweh" is concluded by "peace on earth and goodwill towards men". Figuratively, a rainbow spreads over the political heavens.

VERSE 10

"Yahweh sitteth upon the flood" —

The storm passes. Though awful in majesty, Yahweh's people need not fear it. To them it is His manifestation as Judge and King, and though the world will be devastated by it, He shall speak peace to them, and through them to the nations. The word "flood" is *marbuwl*, and signifies *Deluge*. The only other place the word is used is in Genesis 6. Moffatt renders: Yahweh "sat enthroned at the deluge". But it is not the Deluge of the time of Noah that is the subject of this Psalm; but that of the times "like unto Noah". The storm that gave rise to the Flood will again be repeated; and the world will be cleansed of its evil for the purpose of establishing true and universal worship. The confidence of saints is that Yahweh is in control of the storms of life, including the political storm developing today. The "seven thunders" yet to utter their voices are the outpourings of divine judgment. God will direct the course of that storm. But as Christ commanded the turbulent Sea of Galilee: "Peace be still", and a peaceful calm followed (Mark 4:39), so it will happen before the Millennium. (Psa. 65:7; Isa. 17:12-14; Hab. 3:10-15). He who can

control all nature can control the nations (Job 38:8-11,22-26; Ct. 22:15-17). The disobedient nations cower in humility by the divine storm to break forth upon them; but ultimately the saints will reign over an earth at peace, as the antitype of a rainbow in the clouds after rain (Gen. 9:12-16). In this happy consummation will be seen all the glory of Yahweh.

"Yea, Yahweh sitteth King for ever"

— The reference is to the Millennium. The establishment of such conditions will fulfill the covenant Yahweh made with Noah when the Flood receded; a covenant that involves all humanity, but particularly those in the ark (Gen. 9:16-17).

VERSE 11

"Yahweh will give strength unto His people" —

They survive the storm and are manifested in divine strength. See Psa. 28:8-9; 68:35; 84:5,7,10; Isa. 40:29-31; 41:10.

"Yahweh will bless His people with peace" —

The word "peace" in its Hebrew form signifies *to unite as one*. The redeemed will enjoy complete unity with the Father and the Son, being bound together as one by both mind and nature in that day of glory and of peace. See Psa. 72:3-7; Isa. 9:6-7. They enjoy a measure of such peace now (John 14:27; 16:33); but how much greater will it be when all the earth is subject to Yahweh, and His Son reigns in Jerusalem, before his ancients gloriously (Isa. 24:23). Such will be brought about by the outbreak of the divine storm that will destroy the Gentile refuge of lies, and bring all mankind in submission to Christ's teaching and authority. "Even so, Come Lord Jesus".—

HPM

The Judgment

The standing before the Judgment Seat of Christ (Romans 14:10-12; 2 Cor. 6:7-8) precedes the standing with the Lamb on mount Zion. The judgment of the household of Christ intervenes between the resurrection and the ascending of Yahweh's Hill. This is evident from Psa. 24 where, in answer to the question, Who shall go up into the Mountain of Yahweh? Who shall 'rise into' the place of His holiness? — it says, "The innocent of hands and the pure of heart; who hath not lifted up; his soul to vanity, and not sworn to deceit". This implies previous scrutiny. All saints whose moral qualities, on examination, are not found in accordance with the above; shall not "rise into the place of his holiness" — which is Mount Zion. They shall not be permitted to stand there as constituents of 144,000, who are the pure of heart, and in whose mouth no guile hath been found".

J. Thomas

Joy In The Morning



This Psalm presents a contrast to the one that precedes it. It is a Psalm of thanksgiving to Yahweh for great help received: a fervent expression of praise for deliverance from death. Gloomy, and dark as night, has been the horrifying experience through which the Psalmist has passed; but inasmuch as the golden glow of a new dawn heralds a new beginning, so "joy cometh in the morning" (v. 5). Humbled and brought low by adversity, the Psalmist is lifted up as he feels the healing touch of Yahweh's favour.

The Inscription

We pursue our studies by enquiring: 1. Who wrote the Psalm? 2. What were the circumstances in which it was written? 3. Has it a prophetic, or typical application? 4. What personal lesson has it to offer?

The Inscription implies that it was written by David. It is "a Psalm Song at the dedication of the house of David". The word "Psalm" is from the Hebrew *Mizmown* from a root *zamar* signifying to strike, hence to touch the strings of a harp, or the keys of a musical instrument. *Mizmowr*, therefore, describes a poem set to

music, expressive of emotion, "singing and making melody in the heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19). As a musician might play the harp, and move others with its harmony, so the experiences of life, indicative of the favour of Yahweh, are calculated to pluck the strings of the heart, and find their outlet in the joy of singing.

The expressions of the Psalm reveal that the Psalmist has gone through some frightening experience that has humbled him. But from a state of deep depression he has been "lifted up" (v. 1). He had been brought nigh to death, but has been snatched from the

jaws thereof (v. 3). He had felt the anger of Yahweh, but also has seen it pass away (v. 5). The crisis he had endured had been like an evil night of darkness, but joy came as in the morning. The gloom had been dissipated by the light of Divine favour; so mourning had been turned into dancing; and sackcloth had been replaced by a girdle of gladness (v. 11).

In similar circumstances, Hezekiah found comfort in this Psalm, and borrowed some of its expressions in his prayer of thanksgiving, when he likewise, experienced the Divine favour (Isa. 38:18-20). Indeed, all can share the joy expressed in it by setting their spiritual vision on the coming "morning without clouds" (2 Sam. 23:4). The theme of the Psalm: *Joy in the Morning* can be anticipated by Yahweh's people as they, in vision, look beyond the present to life eternal in the Kingdom (Heb. 12:2).

The Circumstances In Which It Was Written

The Inscription identifies the Psalm with "the dedication of the house of David". The word dedication is *Hanukkah*, and signifies the consecration of anything to a particular use.

David desired to build a House or a Temple for Yahweh. This, indeed, was "all his desire" (Psa. 27:4). It was a project that had occupied his mind since early times. He had discussed it with Samuel, and in conjunction with him, had arranged the order of service to be conducted therein (1 Chron. 9:22). Under Divine inspiration he had actually drawn the plans and laid out the speci-

cations of it (1 Chron. 28:11-12,19). He had accumulated great wealth to assist its construction (1 Chron. 29:2-5). Its completion was a constant theme of his prayers (Psa. 132:3-5); and impatiently he sought permission to commence its actual building. But this was not permitted.

However, in spite of Solomon's participation in this project, the Temple can well be described as "the house of David" as in the inscription to this Psalm. And though its actual dedication awaited the time of Solomon, David purchased the site of the Temple, and consecrated an altar thereat, dedicating the site to Yahweh upon which to construct the Temple.

The expressions of the Psalm, therefore, would indicate that it was the dedication of the *site* of the Temple or House to which the inscription refers. The site was acquired by David in a time of extreme trouble: in circumstances that had humbled him before all. It was a crisis in which the anger of Yahweh was openly revealed to the dismay and horror of the King. It was a time when thousands died as the result of folly, casting the King into deep mourning, and bringing him as well under the very shadow of death itself.

The Mourning King

The circumstances leading up to David acquiring the site of the Temple are found in 2 Sam. 24 and 1 Chron. 21. They record an incident that presents a problem to many. David numbered Israel, but it was the people who suffered. To many this appears as a

miscarriage of justice, and David, too, urged upon Yahweh that he was the one who should be punished.

But, in fact, the punishment was perfectly just.

The record of the incident is prefaced by the statement that "the anger of Yahweh was kindled *against Israel*, and He moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah" (2 Sam. 24:1).

This was shortly after David had been restored to the throne following the rebellion of Absalom. Israelites who had previously turned against the King and rejoiced in his fall, now, with the frightful fickleness incidental to human nature, went out of their way to welcome him back.

The waywardness of the people angered Yahweh. In rejecting David, Yahweh's Anointed, they had rejected Him. They had rebelled against a Divine appointment. Their action was equivalent to the Israel of God turning their backs on the Lord Jesus Christ. What can such renegades expect at the Judgment Seat? Exactly what those in Israel received who had been foremost in the repudiation of the King. It was necessary that the enormity of their action be made obvious. The punishment made it clear to all that men cannot sin with impunity.

The record states that Yahweh "moved David" to number the people.

How was this done? We are not specifically told; but obviously it was not by overruling David's mind so as to force him to sin. Yahweh does not work like that.

God-controlled circumstances evidently caused David to become fearful of his ability to retain his power on the throne. Perhaps he believed that his regime was under threat. Physically sick at the time, he lacked his normal vigour to act decisively against his imagined foes. He was not sure of the loyalty of the people. There were heard undertones of revolt. These and other circumstances moved him to number the people of Israel, to ascertain the strength of his fighting forces.

At this point, the people themselves were found in error. Not only had many of them been guilty of revolt against Yahweh's appointed and anointed King, but they had ignored the requirements of the Law. This commanded that it was the responsibility of the people, when they were numbered, to pay a half shekel of silver as atonement money (Exod. 30:12-16). But this was overlooked, and the omission resulted in fearful punishment. David was warned of the folly of numbering the people, and was invited to select the form of punishment the nation was to suffer: seven years famine; three months of defeat at the hands of Israel's enemies; or three days' pestilence.

It is indicative of David's willingness to identify himself with the people that he selected the third alternative. As king, he would have been immune from personal involvement in the two former forms of punishment; but not that of pestilence. There are no barriers to the effects of an epidemic; the King was as likely

to be attacked by plague as anybody else.

Seventy thousand men died from the pestilence; and because David blamed himself as being the cause, he suffered seventy thousand deaths. The destroying angel finally appeared over Jerusalem in threatening aspect; but David stood in the breach to plead with Yahweh to save the people of that city. He offered to die himself, if only the plague were stayed:

“Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done? Let Thine hand, I pray Thee, be against me, and my father’s house” (2 Sam. 24:17).

David’s prayer was granted to the extent that the pestilence ceased. The enormity of the sin of the nation in rejecting Yahweh’s Messiah had been made clearly obvious. Under the direction of Yahweh (2 Sam. 24:19) David purchased the threshing floor and place belonging to Araunah the Jebusite. The site already was hallowed by the offering of Isaac by Abraham; and was now dedicated, or set aside, as the future site of the Temple (Gen. 22:2; 2 Chron. 3:1).

David’s feelings at the time are revealed in the expressions of the Psalm before us, as we shall see when we engage upon our verse by verse exposition.

Is The Psalm Messianic?

There is no doubt about the

typical application of the Psalm. It is Messianic in character. As a general principle, the life of David is divided into two parts: that before his great sin, and that afterwards. Generally speaking, the incidents and attitude of David before this great dividing line of his life, typify the Lord Jesus Christ in two main particulars; those before his sin typify Christ personally; those afterwards foreshadow Christ multitudinously. Christ rendered perfect obedience; but not so his brethren. This Psalm, therefore, relates to the multitudinous Christ, for, of course, it relates to the second half of David’s life.

Hezekiah, in his time of distress, gained inspiration from this Psalm, for he found himself in exactly the same situation as did David. He drew upon its very expressions to describe his feelings as we have mentioned above. He recognised that there was no “profit in his blood”. His prayer was based upon the expressions of this Psalm (see Isa. 38:10-20). Hezekiah was a type of Christ; but not the individual Christ. He typed the multitudinous Christ, and as such relied heavily upon Isaiah who typed Christ individually.

Therefore, having considered the historical background of the Psalm we now propose to examine it verse by verse. HPM

(To be continued).

THE PSALMS. Let us thank God for this depot of spiritual energy, this galaxy of divine consolations, this illumination of midnight darkness, this shining armoury of truth, this storehouse of spiritual riches, this har-binger and evangelist of eternal day — R. Roberts.

Expounding The Psalm

Having ascertained the local background of the Psalm, and its prophetic foreshadowing, we are now ready to attempt a verse by verse exposition.

Analysis

Our Psalm is divisible into four parts. First there is an outpouring of thanksgiving arising out of personal *Experience* (vv. 1-3). Next, the Psalmist calls upon those likeminded to share his joy by joining with him in *Expressions* of praise (vv. 4-5). Then follows an *Explanation* of the cause of his rejoicing (vv. 6-9). Finally, he looks to the future in *Expectation* of further favours to come (vv. 10-12).

Look at the beginning of each of those sub-sections (vv. 1,4,6,10), and observe the natural divisions of the Psalm. They can be epitomised by four words: *Experience, Expression, Explanation* and *Expectation*.

Therefore, out of the agony of trial which David experienced, he was lifted up in adoration to Yahweh, and on the basis of such a favour could with confidence look to the future beyond the resurrection.

Thanksgiving For Divine Grace Experienced — vv. 1-3

Vividly the Psalmist describes the experience of help and restoration he has received. The anticipations of his foes have been disappointed, and he has recovered from his previous desperate state. He likens this to deliverance out of the power of the grave.

VERSE 1

"I will extol Thee, O Yahweh" — In the face of Yahweh's anger at the time of the numbering of Israel, David had feared for his life (1 Chron. 21:30). But he had been delivered from the dire distress that had brought him to the point of death, and now in an excess of joy he expresses his

desire to pour out his heart in thanksgiving. This is what every true saint is expected to do as Yahweh's goodness is experienced (1 Thess. 5:18). To David, the deliverance has appeared as a resurrection; anticipating the manner in which saints will rejoice at the resurrection when they will experience complete change from the failures and mortality of the present.

"For Thou hast lifted me up" — The RV renders this: "Thou hast raised me up". David had faced death in a very real manner, but had escaped its consequences. Some 70,000 lay dead as the result of plague, and David felt that he should have suffered a like fate. He blamed himself for the tragedy, and now thanks Yahweh for the deliverance.

"And has not made my foes to rejoice over me" — David's death would have been a cause of rejoicing to his foes. It was a time when he feared the opposition of such. Though the rebellion of Absalom had been crushed, there were others who desired his disgrace. There were bitter and unrelenting enemies who would have rejoiced at his death. His deliverance had been a defeat for them, and a victory for him.

VERSE 2

"O Yahweh my Elohim" — David invokes the Covenant Name of Yahweh. It proclaims His purpose to manifest Himself in a multitude of Mighty Ones. There is safety in that Name (Prov. 18:10), for those who shelter therein will build into their lives characteristics that will ensure their eternal salvation. This name is to be

both feared (Deut. 28:58) and loved (Deut. 6:5). See John 17:6,11,26.

"I cried unto Thee and Thou hast healed me" — The tragedy following the numbering of Israel had humbled David. What use the numbering, seeing that 70,000 of those so numbered were now dead! Yahweh can save whether there be few or many. Nevertheless, the fact that David did not succumb to the punishment witnessed to the favour with which Yahweh viewed him in spite of his failure. David had been physically sick at the time (Psa. 32:3-4 cp. 2 Sam. 15:3): but now, with the expression of Yahweh's confidence in him demonstrated by the ceasing of the plague at the point where he had pleaded the cause of the people, gave him new life. He felt healed of his malady, and saw it as the influence of Yahweh Ropheka: *He who shall be Physician* (Exod. 15:26). David's experience foreshadowed the resurrection and divine healing of saints brought under the power of the grave. The Psalm is an expression of thankful praise for goodness received; and typical of greater measures of Divine goodness to come.

VERSE 3

"O Yahweh, Thou hast brought up my soul from the grave" — The circumstances were such that David had gone through an experience that typified death. Several of the prophets had done so. Daniel, when he saw the vision of the man of composite metals described in his 10th chapter, typically experienced a death, resurrection, judgment and approval (Dan. 10:8-12,16-19). Ezekiel (Ezek. 2:1-2) and John in Patmos (Rev. 1:17-18) had done similarly. In his experience, however, David went through the process conscious of his own failings, and so came to recognise the goodness of Yahweh in granting him redemption. In this Psalm, therefore, he types not Christ personal, but Christ multitudinous.

"Thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit" — This is an expression that denotes condemnation. See Psa. 28:1.

Others Invited To Share His Expressions Of Praise — vv. 4-5

The assurance of mercy and consideration given to David in such circumstances can give every saint hope, in spite of his failings. When we see a man of the spiritual stature of David fall, who can

remain self-confident in his own ability; when we see him forgiven, who need despair of like treatment. In view of such acts of grace, all saints are called upon to rejoice.

VERSE 4

"Sing unto Yahweh, O ye saints of His" — The word *saints* is the plural form of *chacyd*, and is derived from *chesed*, a word frequently rendered "mercy" but which is really expressive of loving-kindness. A cognate word is rendered "holy" in Psa. 86:2, but has the margin note "*one whom Thou favourest*". The Hebrew expression denotes the special consideration and favour that Yahweh extends towards the children of His family. It is similar to the special care that a parent will extend to a child, merely because he is his child. So a true saint is under the special care, protection and favour of Yahweh. David had experienced the benefits of that privileged state, and now calls upon all others in similar position to share his joy with him. Saints are called upon to rejoice now (Phil. 4:4; 1 Thess. 5:16); how much greater will be their rejoicing at their acquittal at the Judgment Seat of Christ. And it is obvious, that in this Psalm, David has that in mind, based upon his deliverance in the present distress.

"And give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness" — The margin renders this: "to the memorial" of His holiness. Yahweh's Name is the memorial of His holiness (see Psa. 97:12; 122:4; Isa. 26:8). His name-bearers are called to His holiness (Exod. 15:11; Num. 6:21-27; Isa. 6:3; 1 Pet. 1:15-17; Rev. 4:8). Yahweh's holiness is His righteousness. The memorial of this is dramatised in the bread and wine which points to the offering of Christ. That offering was not limited to the Lord's physical death and resurrection, but was manifested in a life of perfect holiness to which all saints are called. They fail to manifest the fulness of his obedience, but acknowledging this, they can receive the forgiveness of their sins.

VERSE 5

"For his anger endureth but a moment" — In relation to eternity, the present represents but a moment of time. It is the moment of the manifestation of His anger, for all His saints, with the exception of the Lord who rendered perfect obedience, are "children of wrath" because they give way to the natural

desires of the flesh (Eph. 2:3). In this they justify the death penalty laid upon humanity. But this moment of Divine anger will pass away in the great joy of the future. See Psa. 103:9,17; Isa. 54:7-8; 57:15-16.

"In his favour is life" — David had experienced such favour. His sin had been forgiven, and his life extended. On the basis of present experience he anticipated the greater future.

"Weeping may endure for a night" — The Lord declared that so long as he was with the Apostles they could rejoice. "But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days" (Mark 2:20). These are the days of fasting; when true saints mourn the circumstances of life, and weepingly plead with the Father: "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Rev. 6:10). Figuratively it is night-time. "The night cometh", declared the Lord (John 9:4). Whilst he was in the world he was the

"light of the world". But the light has been withdrawn until it will appear in greater glory at his coming as "the sun of righteousness with healing in his wings" (Mal. 4:2).

"But joy cometh in the morning" — That "joy" will be expressed in "singing", for so the Hebrew expression signifies. David looked for that "morning" a "morning without clouds", promising an epoch of happiness and singing (2 Sam. 23:4. See Psa. 46:5 mg; 143:8; Mal. 4:1-2). The Psalm, therefore is expressive of the goodness and severity of Yahweh (Rom. 11:22), which sums up the principles of His memorial name (Exod. 34:6-7), and of the Divine purpose with the earth and mankind upon it. This important verse, therefore, sums up the teaching of the whole Bible. The joy of which it speaks will be manifested at the second coming of the Lord at the Judgment then to be manifested (Psa. 103:18 ; Mic. 7:18; John 16:20). HPM

(To be completed).

Prepared To Die

"Who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem" (Acts 20:4). This does not imply, as some have thought, that Paul visited Jerusalem contrary to the Spirit's command. There is an important difference between a revelation from the Spirit respecting what should happen at Jerusalem, and a command not to go there. It is in this difference that the explanation of the passage lies. The context justifies this interpretation: that certain brethren sought to dissuade Paul from visiting Jerusalem because the Spirit had revealed that hurt awaited him there. This interpretation is in harmony with the apostle's statement to the elders of the Ephesian Ecclesia — "I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Spirit witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me". Had Paul been influenced by the Spirit's revelation in the way that his friends apparently were, he would have had to cease from the work to which he had been divinely appointed! Paul's mission was to be accomplished through suffering. This Paul knew from the beginning. The apostle upon a subsequent occasion was very desirous that the brethren should know the good that resulted from this evil experience (Phil. 1:12). Paul went on while his brethren trembled. Their entreaties to halt were met by that grand reply — "I am ready to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus". How unanswerable was this! All that the brethren could say was — "The will of the Lord be done". This they could not have said had they thought that Paul was going in opposition to the Spirit's command. Paul was not disobedient — banish the thought.

Joy in the Morning

This Psalm expresses David's deepest gratitude for help given him by Yahweh at a time of great trouble and sorrow. The first two sections of the Psalm (see last issue) express:

1. His thanksgiving for Divine grace received (vv. 1-3);
2. His invitation to others to join him in praising the Giver of Good (vv. 4-5).

For the historical background see pp. 251-254. We continue our verse by verse exposition.

David's Appeal To Yahweh — vv. 6-10

David recalls the circumstances that caused him to number Israel. His restoration to the throne after the rebellion of Absalom had induced a confidence which disappeared, when punishment was meted out following his numbering of the people.

VERSE 6

"And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved" — The word for "prosperity" in the Hebrew is *shalev* and signifies carelessness or security. It implies a self confidence that takes things for granted without particularly recognising the real issues. It was in such circumstances that David ordered the census to be taken. Even Joab warned against the consequences of such an action, but David, over-confident in the assurance that Yahweh was with him in the Kingdom, ordered it to proceed.

VERSE 7

"Yahweh, by Thy favour Thou hast made my mountain to stand strong" — David acknowledges that his restored status in the nation was due to the favour of Yahweh and that "his mountain", the capital of his kingdom, was strong only through the grace of God. The wisest of men sometimes overlook this grace in their lives. It is to the credit of David that he never did so. He stressed its need in this Psalm, and delivered it to the Chief Musician for public service in the Temple. By that means he brought home to all, the folly of his action in numbering the people, and the need for all to exercise the greatest care. Notice the terms of Joab's rebuke (1 Chron. 21:3).

"Thou didst hide Thy face, and I was troubled" — To hide the face is to manifest displeasure. This God did on the occasion of David numbering the people (see 1 Chron. 21:7 and cp. with Num. 6:25). The experience greatly troubled David as he states in this Psalm, and as is expressed in the record in Chronicles.

VERSE 8

"I cried to thee, O Yahweh; and unto Yahweh I made supplication" — For the historical fact see 1 Chron. 21:8. The best Hebrew texts have *Adonai* instead of Yahweh in the second line. This is appropriate. For *Adonai* is the plural of *Adon*, a title denoting the rulership of God. The governance of heaven is effected through the angels, the medium of Yahweh's manifestation. In addressing Yahweh, and then using the title of *Adonai*, David called upon both the Covenant name of God, and His manifestation as Ruler of the heavens, revealed through the Elohim. See Dan. 4:17.

VERSE 9

"What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit" — Blood represents life (Lev. 17:11). As a sinner, David's blood, whether given in sacrifice or merely given up in death, would be profitless, because the grave would claim him. It was only the sinless Son of God, whom the grave could not hold. In his case it was "not possible that he should be holden" of death (Acts 2:24). Christ's blood representing his life was profitable, inasmuch as he rendered perfect obedience unto the Father. This gave Him great pleasure (Matt. 3:17). But what is the point of David stressing the profitlessness of his

blood in such a context? Because he had offered his life as an atonement for the people of Israel who had sinned; and now in retrospect recognised that such was of no value for such a purpose. He had pleaded the cause of those against whom the anger of Yahweh had been directed, and offered his own life in extenuation thereof (1 Chron. 21:17). But his death could only compound the tragedy. There is value in the Lord's offering, because his perfect righteousness ensured his resurrection from the dead, and the extension of divine grace to all in him, in the forgiveness of their sins. He was "delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25). On the contrary, David's offer to bear the punishment of the people, though understandable and admirable in concept, was profitless in providing a means of redemption or forgiveness of sins. This was brought home to him inasmuch as the angel of death, on the termination of the punishment, directed him to build an altar. That altar foreshadowed the Christ altar (Heb. 13:10), promised from the beginning (Gen. 3:15). The Christ-altar is alone profitable to provide the means of redemption.

"Shall the dust praise Thee? shall it declare Thy truth?" — The answer, of course, is that it will not, for man is completely unconscious in death and apart from Christ dies utterly without hope (Psa. 6:5; Ecc. 9:5-6). Even Christ's death was not sufficient; it is in the fact that he lives that we have hope (Rom. 4:25). It is significant, that these words of the Psalm were used by Hezekiah in his plea for grace at the time of his illness which he had been told would prove fatal (Isa. 38:18). Obviously he had pondered the Psalm intently, and derived help and guidance from the experiences of David.

VERSE 10

"Hear, O Yahweh, and have mercy upon me" — The word "mercy" is *chanan* in Hebrew, and signifies to bend down in kindness to the help of another in circumstances beyond the ability of the afflicted so to do. It is expressive of David's recognition that Yahweh alone could help him; and therefore of that helplessness that he felt at the time when the punishment fell upon Israel.

"Yahweh, be Thou my Helper" — The Hebrew word comes from a root signifying to encircle or surround, and so to protect,

David recognised his vulnerable condition, and sought the aid of Yahweh. The Altar provided a temporary means of access to Yahweh, opening up an avenue of mercy and help. Later the Temple further contributed to that need (see 1 Kings 8:31-32). Significantly, the incident of the numbering terminated with David purchasing the site where the Temple was later to be erected, and provisionally consecrating thereon an altar (Cp. 1 Chron. 22:1; 2 Chron. 3:1).

The Joy of Forgiveness — vv. 11-12

What a relief to a Godly man, when having repented of a wrong, he is accepted by God, and enjoys the calming joy of communion and fellowship. This David experiences. The final section of the Psalm expresses his joy in view of the forgiveness granted him. The purchase and dedication of the site of the Temple contributes to this: as the apocalypse of the living Temple in the Age to come will likewise do so. The experiences of David show the need and the value of the Temple as a means of approach by the people.

VERSE 11

"Thou has turned from me my mourning into dancing; Thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness" — This joy is a result of the sequel to the distressing circumstances associated with the numbering of Israel. Previously cut off from access to Yahweh through the outstretched sword of the angel guarding the way to the altar at Gibeon, David built another altar unto Yahweh at Moriah and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, calling upon Him probably in expressions similar to this Psalm (1 Chron. 21:26). In view of this, the sword of the angel was sheathed (v. 27).

VERSE 12

"To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent" — By his "glory" David meant his tongue (see Psa. 16:9), and note that Peter renders "glory" as *tongue* in Acts 2:26. See also Psa. 51:9. James wrote regarding the tongue: "Thereby bless we God . . ." (James 3:5-9). The use of the tongue in glorifying God is a great privilege granted to mankind. Unfortunately, due to the nature of flesh, the tongue is abused more than used properly as James observed (James 3:5-9). Paul advocates the use of the tongue in praise: "In everything give thanks;

for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thess. 5:18). "By him therefore," he exhorted, "let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name" (Heb. 13:14). It is pleasing to Yahweh that His worshippers use that which most people so flagrantly abuse, by the enthusiastic expressions of praise in hymns and prayers. It is man's glory to be able to express himself in terms pleasing to God. He alone of all earthly creation can do that.

"O Yahweh my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever" — The word "ever" is *olam*, a term signifying a hidden period, and hence, in this context, the Millennium. David looked forward in anticipation to the future. Recognising that he had received the forgiveness of his sins, he saw in the purchase of the site of the Temple a token of the grace extended unto him. Out of the depths of misery into which he had been plunged, he is now elevated to the greatest and purest joy: the privilege of expressing praise to Yahweh, in anticipation of bearing the Divine nature in the age to come.

"To the chief Musician" — In the A.V. this forms portion of the title of *Psa. 31*,

but, as is generally recognised, it should appear at the conclusion of *Psalms 30*. The "chief musician" was the one placed in charge of the musical arrangements of the Temple. A Psalm dedicated to such was specially elevated to be used for public service therein. This means that David did not hesitate to deliver a Psalm up for public use which recorded his own failure and humiliation, as it also expressed Yahweh's condescending grace and mercy in the forgiveness of sins. It is an indication of David's humility and greatness that he should do so. Notice that *Psalms 51*, a Psalm expressing the depths of his disgrace as well as his thanks to Yahweh, was likewise treated. In that Psalm David gives expression to his reason for so doing: "to teach transgressors Thy ways; that sinners may be converted unto Thee" (*Psa. 51:13*). There is joy in heaven when a sinner does this, and that joy is reciprocated on earth by those who recognising sin for what it is; bears his shortcoming up to Yahweh as a basis for forgiveness, and basks in the joy that comes from renewed fellowship through the grace extended by God in so doing. David found great joy in doing so; as we can also.

HPM

The Pope in the Synagogue

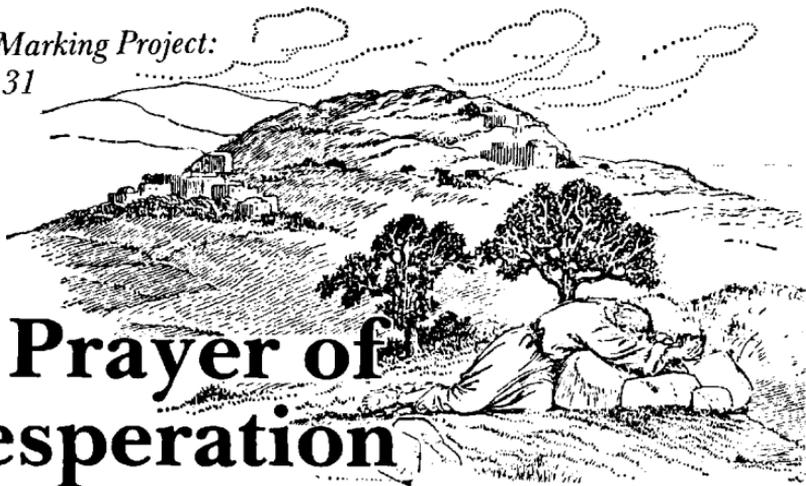
A few weeks back, Pope John Paul II visited the main synagogue in Rome. It was the first time in 2000 years that a pope has set foot in a synagogue. The visit was designed to close the gulf that has existed between Roman Catholicism and Judaism. It is in accordance with the attempts of the Papacy to extend its influence to every community. Even African pagans are being tinctured with Catholicism.

In the synagogue, the Pope spoke of common bonds and mutual respect. He called Jews "our dearly beloved brothers". He gave an outspoken denunciation of anti-Semitism.

But, as one commentator observed, "there was something missing from his speech, something very large. There was not a word about the central reality of Jewish life today; not a single mention of Israel. It is as if an Anglican leader came to a great meeting of reconciliation at the Vatican, spoke at length, and failed to acknowledge the existence of the Pope".

The Pope did not mention Israel because the Vatican does not recognise Israel. It was Jerusalem internationalised, and therefore wants to take it from Israel as much as the Arab powers do.

This is very significant. It is obvious from prophecy that we can expect a Communist-Catholic Confederacy to motivate the Gogian attack on the M.E. The future of the Holy Places will be a bone of contention as it was in the Crimean War. The time is going to come when Jerusalem is taken in the terms of *Zechariah 14:1-2*, that the boast will be made, "Even the ancient high places are ours in possession" (*Ezek. 36:2*). The Pope's speech in the Rome synagogue, and the Vatican's attitude towards Israel is in accord with this aspect of *Ezekiel's* prophecy.



A Prayer of Desperation

When circumstances are gloomy and difficult with no human help in sight; when problems mount as a flood, and there appears no apparent or satisfactory solution, what is one to do? If he is a man of faith, he can act upon the advice of Isaiah: "Trust in the name of Yahweh, and rest upon your God" (Isa. 50:10). That is what David did in trouble. The Psalm describes such response on such an occasion. Then, in the depths of his despondency, David experienced unexpected relief to strengthen his faith and lift him out of his depression. The Psalm before us comprises his prayer at this time of desperate need. It breathes forth his trust in Yahweh; it describes the trouble that threatened to crush him; it proclaims that Yahweh is ever a reliable Source of help; it expresses the triumph of his faith; and concludes by appealing to others to always seek Yahweh in need.

The Writer And His Circumstances

The writer, of course, is David. We are told that in the superscription to the Psalm. But it is David in distress that we meet here. And that can be encouraging. It shows that men and women of faith suffered then as they do now. When one is in trouble, it is helpful to receive practical advice from a friend who has surmounted equally trying circumstances. Therefore, in this Psalm, we do not merely consider David, and admire his

courageous and faithful reaction to trial, but see in his response an example for us to follow when similarly afflicted. David was "a man after God's own heart"; yet he was put to the test, and found the way out of his troubles, extremely difficult. Faith will not exempt us from trial; indeed it may increase it as Yahweh moves to perfect us for His Kingdom.

In circumstances of suffering or trial, it is always helpful to recall that there are others worse off than we are. The majority of men and women are in that cate-

gory. They have no access to the Almighty as we have. For them He is not a reality, and a shadow is of little value upon which to lean in time of need. Consequently, there is for them no true peace of mind to calm their agitation in times of distress.

And it is David in dire distress who pens the Psalm before us. The trouble he experienced was most unexpected. It came out of helping others in need. He had trouble enough without others increasing it. Relentlessly pursued by Saul, he was given cause to doubt the loyalty of some of those in whom he should have been able to place complete confidence. Their treachery depressed him. He became worn out in mind and body through tension and pressures. He found himself defamed, despised, isolated from those who should have sustained and encouraged him. However, in his desperate need he turned to Yahweh and found in Him the consolation and help he sorely and urgently needed. His subsequent experiences exhibit the truth of John's words: "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4). Faith sustained David. He recalled past mercies he had received from the hand of God; and on the basis of Yahweh's grace then revealed, sought for it again. He spake plainly to Yahweh of his fears and depression, and by so doing found an answer to his despondency. Having delivered up his problem to God, the clouds gradually cleared, and the sunlight of Divine goodness drove away the darkness of his doubts. Thankfulness to Yahweh then

flooded his being; and the Psalm concludes by him urging others to seek the same cure to their complaints.

These are the expressions of the Psalm as a casual reading will reveal. Under what circumstances was it written, that we might share more completely David's feelings at the time? Internal evidence indicates that the historical background to the Psalm was the time when he experienced the treachery of his own countrymen after putting his life at risk on their behalf. The suggested incidents are those recorded in 1 Samuel 23. David was in hiding from Saul, but a city of his tribe was threatened by the Philistines. They were about to attack Keilah, and David heard of it. What should he do? He had the means to defend the city, but to use them would publicly reveal his presence, and bring it under notice of Saul. Could he risk that? David's warm-hearted generosity, and deep-seated loyalty was such that he believed that the people he helped would reciprocate by sheltering him in the "strong city" of Keilah in Judah (1 Sam. 23:1; Psa. 31:8).

His confidence was not shared by his associates. They expressed their dread at his decision:

"Behold, we be afraid here in Judah; how much more then if we come to Keilah against the army of the Philistines" (1 Samuel 23:3).

But David could not resist the appeal of his fellowmen in need. In obedience to the instruction, or permission, of Yahweh, he marched to the assistance of Keilah and delivered the city. But now the fears of David's men would seem to be justified. News

of the attack reached Saul, and with a substantial army he marched swiftly towards Keilah to overthrow it, and take David captive. In this predicament, David experienced the craven cowardice and heartless ingratitude of the people he had put himself at risk of life to deliver. The men of Keilah sent advice to Saul that David was with them, and they were prepared to deliver him up if the king would call off the attack. David sought advice of Yahweh, and acting upon it made his escape. This seems to find reference in the Psalm, for David responds: "Blessed be Yahweh; for He hath shewed me His marvellous kindness in a strong city" (v. 8). The description defines the strong city as a *citadel*, and though it is from a different word, so also does Keilah.

Fleeing from Keilah, David sought refuge in a wood in the wilderness of Ziph, but now he was constantly harassed by Saul's men who "sought him every day". Only through the goodness of Yahweh did he escape out of their hands (1 Sam. 23:14-15).

At that time of crisis, Jonathan, recognising the tension these conditions exerted on his friend, secretly made his way to David to "strengthen his hand in God" (v. 16). But not so the men of Ziph. Though they comprised portion of David's own tribe, they imitated the treachery of Keilah, and advised Saul that David was in their area. Again harassed by Saul, "David made haste" to escape. But to where? The wilderness of Ziph offered little in the

way of refuge. It is an area of innumerable low, bald hills and deep valleys in such proximity to each other, that a group of people in one valley would be able to hear the noise of others in an adjoining one.

Saul's men drove David's company into an area where there was no possibility of escape. They commenced to search the valleys one by one, and gradually closed in upon David and his companions. They came so close to taking them that David's men could hear the sound of Saul's men on the other side of the hill. Escape seemed impossible. David and his men were trapped. The account states:

"And Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men went on that side of the mountain! And David made haste to get away for fear of Saul; for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them" (v. 21).

David and his company were surrounded. There was nothing he could do, but to pray. The Psalm we are considering answers to the requirements of the moment. It speaks of the hopelessness of his situation and pleads for help:

"Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me; for Thou art my strength" (v. 4); "Thou hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy; Thou hast set my feet in a large room" (v. 8).

In other words: "Thou hast helped me before; do so again!"

The effect of his prayer and appeal was dramatic. The hand of Yahweh was displayed in current events. A messenger from Gibeah made his way to Saul with news that he was urgently needed back home: the Philistines had invaded the land and were

spreading throughout it (1 Sam. 23:27). The crisis was critical. The problem demanded Saul's presence in Gibeah immediately. He was compelled to leave off seeking David, and attend to the more urgent issue of the invasion. Twice in this chapter: in the strong city of Keilah (see Psa. 31:21); and again, on the point of capture at the hands of Saul, a way had been providentially opened for David. Most appropriate to those circumstances are the expressions of Psa. 31:21-22:

Blessed be Yahweh:

For He hath shewed me His marvellous kindness in a strong city;

For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before Thine eyes:

Nevertheless Thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto Thee.

Is The Psalm Prophetic?

Do the expressions of this Psalm foreshadow the experiences of the Christ? Yes they do; and not only the personal Christ; but the multitudinous Christ as well.

David's words recorded in v. 5 were repeated by the Lord immediately before his death.

They constitute the seventh of the seven sayings from the cross:

"Into thy hand I commit my spirit"
(Luke 23:46).

This statement summarises the Lord's whole life and character, as we shall see when we examine the verse more closely. And all those who have successfully used the Lord as an example for their own characters, can repeat the words. Stephen did so, as his life was ebbing away (Acts 7:59).

Again, the words of v. 13 inspired Jeremiah as he fellow-shipped the sufferings of the Lord, and typed his ministry as a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief". He gave expression to them (Jer. 20:10), as Christ must likewise have done.

Finally, v. 24 forms the basis of Paul's exhortation to the multitudinous Christ as expressed in 1 Cor. 16:13.

Dissecting The Psalm

The Psalm is divisible into five parts which, in turn express the feelings of Trust, Trouble, Praise, Appreciation and Appeal.

A PRAYER IN DESPERATE NEED

1. Prayer for Deliverance — TRUST — vv. 1-8

Based on confidence in the grace of Yahweh — vv. 1-5

Fortified by previous experiences of help — vv. 6-8

2. Description of Present Difficulties — TROUBLE — vv. 9-13

Worn out by trouble — vv. 9-10

Despairing of help — vv. 11-13

3. Confidence in Yahweh — PRAISE — vv. 14-18

Expressions of Trust — vv. 14-16

Assurances of heartfelt faith — vv. 17-18

4. Thankful Praise — APPRECIATION — vv. 19-22

For Past Evidences of Help Received — vv. 19-20

For Harkening to the Plea of the Psalmist — vv. 21-22

5. Exhortation — APPEAL — vv. 23-24

Let all avail themselves of such help — v. 23

Show both faith and courage in co-operating with Yahweh — v.24

(We hope to commence our verse-by-verse exposition next issue).

HPM

David's Prayer of Desperation

Having provided the background to the Psalm (pp. 326-329), we now consider its expressions as David turned to Yahweh for help.

Plea For Deliverance — Trust — vv. 1-8

Surrounded by enemies who threaten to overwhelm him, worn out in mind and body by constant attacks, and the need for constant vigilance, and without help from the sons of men, David turns to Yahweh pleading his cause. He seeks guidance and assistance from Yahweh his Strength; at the same time expressing his trustful confidence in Him, and in His ability to help (vv. 1-5). He does so fortified by other evidences of Yahweh's help that he has received in the past (vv. 6-8).

VERSE 1

"In Thee, O Yahweh, do I put my trust" — In addressing God by His name of Yahweh, the Psalmist does so on the basis of His covenant relationship. His trust in Him is complete. However, this phrase also can be rendered: "I have taken refuge". Solomon declares: "The name of Yahweh is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe" (Prov. 18:10). The Lord, in his intercessory prayer, likewise gives expression to the protection afforded through the Divine Name (see John 17:6, 11, 26). Those truly, "in the name" are protected by obeying the demands made upon them. In his prayer, the Lord mentions that he has manifested the name (v. 6), asks Yahweh to protect those who are in the Name (v. 11), and declares his intention of further declaring it after his resurrection, "that the love wherewith Thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them" (v. 26).

"Let me never be ashamed" — Such a state could only come through his own folly, in so acting that Yahweh would withdraw His help.

"Deliver me in Thy righteousness" — Recognising his need David pleads his cause not on his own merits but in the

righteousness of God Who has made to him "great and precious promises".

VERSE 2

"Bow down Thine ear to me: deliver me speedily" — Yahweh dwells in unapproachable light, far removed from flesh. Recognising this and his own insufficiency to approach so exalted a One, David pleads in humility that Yahweh condescend to bow down to help him in his trouble. He is utterly despondent upon Yahweh to do this, for he cannot ascend up to the dwelling place of God. Nehemiah pleaded likewise. He prayed: "Let not all the trouble seem little before Thee, that hath come upon us" (Neh. 9:32). In trouble, we are often helpless, and are as children crying unto a parent, weeping and distressed over small things that are of little consequence to those of more mature minds. "Lord, we perish", complained the Apostles in the boat on the storm-tossed sea. How was that possible with Christ in the vessel? So it is with many of our complaints in life: they are little things to God. But not so to man. The Psalmist calls upon Yahweh to help him in his time of need.

"Be Thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me" — The word Rock is *Tzur*, a hiding place from the storm, an immovable rock upon which to build, or a high substantial, everlasting rock on the summit of which one is lifted above the troubles of life. This title was first used by Moses (Deut. 32:4). To it the Psalmist appended the descriptive title "a fortress house of defence" in which he found refuge. Yahweh is that to all who seek Him in truth. We have suggested that the Psalm was composed at the time David had rescued the men of Keilah, only to find that subsequently they conspired

* See notes on this chapter in *The Christadelphian Expositor* on Deuteronomy.

with Saul to traitorously deliver him into their hands. Keilah, itself signifies a *Strong City*, but such means of defence or refuge had proved to be in vain: unlike the help that Yahweh could give. It is valuable to learn this lesson of life: to be so reduced by trouble to discover that the fleshly means of defence which in our weakness we might put our trust are ineffectual; causing us, in desperate need, to seek the help of Yahweh.

VERSE 3

"For Thou art my rock and my fortress" — Here the word is *Sela*. It denotes a high, craggy cliff-like eminence in which the pursued can hide unseen by his pursuer, among the caves which abound in such eminences.

"Therefore for Thy name's sake lead me and guide me" — David implies that the reputation, or Name, of Yahweh will suffer if he is destroyed. That Name endorses the covenant given at Horeb; it is the guarantee that the Divine promises will be fulfilled. David, therefore, pleads, not merely for his personal safety, but for the "sure mercies" involved therein (Isa. 55:3). Yahweh's name is expressive of His character (Exod. 34:5-7) and purpose (Exod. 3:13-15), both of which could be invoked in David's case. If the enemy destroyed David Yahweh's name or reputation would suffer. But the enemy did not conquer him; showing that those who have taken shelter in that Name are safe. That Name is a defence (Psa. 20:1); should be displayed (Psa. 20:5); and will deliver (Psa. 20:7). The Psalmist appealed to Yahweh as the Shepherd of Israel (Psa. 80:1); one qualified to lead and guide, administering such discipline, as would be beneficial.

VERSE 4

"Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me" — The Psalmist (David as typical of Christ) compared his enemies to clever hunters or fowlers who skillfully take their prey off guard, and ensnare them. That was David's experience at Keilah and Ziph as described in our background to the Psalm. He risked his life to help them, but they returned his sacrifices of love with base ingratitude, betraying him to Saul (1 Sam. 23:7-11; 22-26). The expressions of Saul at the time were those of a hunter; "Prepare yet, and know and see his place where his haunt is, and who hath seen him there . . . Take

knowledge of all the lurking places where he hideth himself . . . I will search him out" (1 Sam. 23:22-23). The leaders of Jewry in the days of the Lord acted similarly.

"For Thou art my strength" — In the Hebrew *Thou* is emphatic; David relied upon Yahweh, not upon flesh. The Hebrew *ma'owz* signifies a fortified place, a defence. The R.V. renders it as *Stronghold*. David sheltered in Yahweh, and on that basis pleaded His help. See Prov. 18:10.

VERSE 5

"In Thine hand I commit my spirit" — This is an exclamation of complete trust and faith. The term "spirit" is often used for the sentient or thinking part of a person, such as "the poor in spirit" (Matt. 5:3), and "the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak" (Matt. 26:41). The "poor in spirit" are those who are humble and pliant to the Divine will. The term is sometimes used to denote the individual himself; so that it is said of Jesus that he "perceived in his spirit", that is, in himself (Mark 2:8). The statement of the Psalmist, therefore, signifies that he presents the motivation of his actions, his true attitude and character before God for His commendation and keeping. He was subjected to the criticism and scandalising of many in Israel, but delivered up his innermost attitude to the consideration of Yahweh.

This attitude on the part of David is prophetic of that of the Lord. His seventh saying upon the cross repeats it: "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46). His first saying was: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). It is significant that Stephen, in dying, first used the last appeal of the Lord on the cross, and afterwards, his first prayer (Acts 7:59-60). It is further significant, that Paul, on the eve of his martyrdom drew on the same prayer (2 Tim. 4:16). So David's experiences and reaction are prophetic of Christ's both personal and communal.

"Thou hast redeemed me, O Yahweh God of truth" — The word "redeemed" is from the Hebrew *padah* and signifies "to liberate or release". David prayed with confidence in view of his past experiences. He, therefore, appropriately, referred to God as *Yahweh El 'emeth*, or "He will provide strength to sustain". The word *'emeth* signifies faithfulness, stability, from a root to build up, support or establish. In the midst of his trouble and

perplexity, David expressed his utmost confidence in Yahweh.

VERSE 6

"I have hated them that regard lying wonders" — The R.V. renders this in the present tense: "I hate them that regard lying vanities". David has no sympathy or fellowship with worshippers of false gods. In that, he also anticipated the hatred of Christ for those who introduced false teaching. See Rev. 2:6.

"But I trust in Yahweh" — In this statement, "I" is emphatic matching "Thou" of v. 5. The basis of David's confidence is his experience of the past, in which Yahweh had helped him.

VERSE 7

"I will be glad and rejoice in Thy mercy" — The word "mercy" does not denote the forgiveness of sin, but is a translation of the Hebrew *chesed*. This is a difficult Hebrew word to render, for Hebrews are divided in their understanding of it. The R.V. renders it as *lovingkindness*; but it is expressive of more than that. In Psa. 86:2 a cognate word is rendered "holy" but in the margin is changed to "one whom Thou favourest". This describes the unique relationship that exists between Yahweh and those who are truly His own. They are selected ones whom "He favours" in much the way as a parent gives preferential treatment and unique affection to his children. Why do parents do that? Because there is inborn into them a unique love and consideration for their own that is greater than any concern that normally they will give to others. It is in that relationship, in the tender, loving, parental care of Yahweh, that David is made glad and rejoices in spite of his troubles.

"For thou hast considered my trouble; Thou hast known my soul in adversities" — David has experienced the loving care and help of Yahweh in the past, and on that basis looks for it again. Human friends are variable in their love and consideration; they often desert in times of adversity, particularly if it seems that they may become involved therein; but not so Yahweh. He is "Father and Friend" to all who truly trust Him.

VERSE 8

"And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy: Thou hast set my feet in a large room" — A "large room" is

a place that allows ample space to manoeuvre. Yahweh had rescued David in adversity before, and now David pleads with Him to do so again.

Confidence in Yahweh — Trouble — vv. 9-13

Having presented his plea for help, the Psalmist now describes the nature and extent of his trouble.

VERSE 9

"Have mercy upon me, O Yahweh, for I am in trouble" — The word "mercy" in this verse is from the Hebrew *chanan*. It signifies a request to One exalted and with the ability to help to bend down in condescension and do so.

"Mine eye is consumed with grief, yea, my soul and my belly" — Eyes, life and body were all affected by the trouble through which David was passing. His eyes were filled with tears; his life was in jeopardy; and the constant tension affected him physically. This state was brought on by the pressure of those anxious moments described in 1 Sam. 23. But David also typed the Lord who, on one occasion declared: "I have a baptism to be baptised with (his death on the cross); and how am I constrained till it be accomplished" (Luke 12:50). Sometimes, we, too, experience great distress; our eyes are filled with tears, our lives seem weakened even to the grave, and we are physically affected by our trials. In such cases let us like David and Christ "take it to the Lord in prayer".

VERSE 10

"For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing; my strength falleth, because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed" — David's sufferings were traceable to his "iniquity". But to what iniquity does he refer? Can this expression relate to the antitype, Christ Jesus? The word is *avon* in the Hebrew and is derived from a root "to be bent" or "crooked". As a noun it can relate to the tendency of human nature, the flesh, to go astray. Because David was so sensitive to the moral requirements of Yahweh, he was bowed down in grief by the consciousness of his failings. That is understandable, but what of the Lord? He too had to battle with human nature, and because of circumstances, he was "a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief". His strivings against sin, were unto blood (Heb. 12:3-4). He bore the sins of others,

in that being so intimately linked with them, he felt for them. His feelings of grief were those of a near relation who suffers through the folly of other intimate members of the family. That very feeling is inbedded in humanity so that those called might understand the sorrow of Christ at the lack of understanding and manifest weakness on the part of the Apostles. The grief was felt physically ("my bones") as well as mentally.

VERSE 11

"I was a reproach among all mine enemies" — It was reproach that broke Christ's heart (Psa. 69:20).

"But especially among my neighbours" — David experienced reproach from his "neighbour" Saul of the tribe of Benjamin; even harder to bear was the attitude of the men of his own tribe, such as those of Keilah and Ziph who betrayed him to Saul. Christ, too, found hardest to bear, the opposition of his neighbours of Nazareth, and even that of his own family, leading him to observe: "A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house" (Mark 6:5).

"And a fear to mine acquaintance" — The Hebrew *pachad* signifies a state of sudden alarm with undertones of shame shown towards the one causing it; appropriate to the circumstances of the Lord. David's followers shared such alarm (see 1 Sam. 23:3). See also the attitude of Christ's brethren towards him (Matt. 12:46-50; John 7:5).

"They that did see me without fled from me" — Even the Lord's apostles "all forsook him and fled" at the sudden alarm caused by his capture (Mark 14:50). The attitude of the men of Keilah were as described in this verse.

VERSE 12

"I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind; I am like a broken vessel" — The benefits David had extended to the nation in gaining such victories as that over Goliath, or the help rendered to such as the people of Keilah and Ziph were soon forgotten. The Lord experienced the same shortness of memory on the part of many whom he had helped. The dead are soon forgotten; a broken vessel is tossed away as useless; and this was the treatment David experienced, foreshadowing that endured by Christ. Human nature is forgetful of benefits received and fre-

quently turns on those who have expended themselves to help. In such circumstances let those of faith recall that they fellowship the sufferings of Christ.

VERSE 13

"For I have heard the slander of many; fear was on every side: while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life" — True of David (1 Sam. 22:7-10; 23:7-12, 19-20); and even more so of Christ. It is interesting to note that Jeremiah, who also typed the Lord as a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief", derived great comfort from this verse (see Jer. 20:10).

Confidence In Yahweh — Praise

— vv. 14-18

In spite of all his troubles, David's confidence is in Yahweh, to Whom he directs praise.

VERSE 14

"But I trusted in Thee, O Yahweh: I said Thou art my God" — The word "God" is *Elohim*, a plural word signifying "mighty ones". Brother Thomas in *Elpis Israel* p. 183 states that it is a word used to describe manifestations of Yahweh, in angels or men elevated to positions of authority. David's trust was in Yahweh whose deliverance would come through the Elohim.

VERSE 15

"My times are in Thy hand" — David realised that his life was governed by Yahweh. He knew the Kingdom was to be his, and was prepared to await the time dictated by God. He refused to precipitate matters by slaying Saul when it was in his power to do so, even though the point was pressed that this was "the day" that Yahweh had appointed (1 Sam. 24:4). The same is true of the Lord. Frequently the statement is made that "his time had not yet come" (John 7:6,8; Luke 9:51; John 16:2,4,25). Christ knew the hour of the day of the month of the year he would die, because he fulfilled the Passover type, and the year had been appointed (Dan. 9:24).

"Deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me" — Though David knew that he would be delivered ultimately, he prayed for it to be done. Why? Because such prayers bring the one praying into fellowship with Yahweh. In David's case, the

prayer acknowledged the right for God to decide when he should be delivered.

VERSE 16

"Make Thy face to shine upon Thy servant; save me for Thy mercies' sake" — For one's face to shine upon another is to look with favour towards him (Num. 6:24-26; Psa. 80:1). The shining forth of glory as in the Most Holy of the Tabernacle and Temple demonstrated that the presence of Yahweh was with Israel to save. David made this plea on the basis of Yahweh's "mercies' sake". The word is the plural form of v. 7: the many facets of favour as is shown to those closely related.

VERSE 17

"Let me not be ashamed, O Yahweh; for I have called upon Thee; let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave" — See note v. 1. David's prayer is that the wicked should be judged of God. Their destiny, as God-proclaimed, is an abiding place in the grave. David is not moved by vindictiveness in so praying, but by a factual recognition of the end of wickedness and those who are wicked. The time is approaching when present evils will be eliminated from the earth. For that David waited and prayed.

VERSE 18

"Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things, proudly and contemptuously against the righteous" — The Hebrew has it as "the righteous one". The noun related to David and Christ. David refused to speak against Saul or to exact vengeance on him because he was "Yahweh's anointed". But those who act contrary deserve the punishment they will receive.

Thankful Praise — Appreciation — vv. 19-22

In confidence of good to come, David gives expression to ardent praise, in glorious terms expressive of the grand privileges of God's people.

VERSE 19

"Oh how great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee" — This is an expression that is used to describe the fulness of the Gospel. See Paul's use of it in Rom. 11:22-23. Only those who "fear" Yahweh will experi-

ence this "goodness" (see Prov. 1:7). Being expressive of the Gospel, the fulness of its benefit awaits the future; it is laid up for such a time.

"Which Thou hast wrought for them that trust in Thee before the sons of men" — Yahweh works effectively on the behalf of His own (Jhn. 5:17). He did so in calling and anointing David, and in overshadowing his life so as to develop him to sufficient maturity to take over the Kingdom. He has wrought in providing one able to overcome sin and open the door to salvation and glory in the age to come (Psa. 139:15-17). He overshadows the lives of all those who trust in Him before the sons of men, so that they become "His workmanship" (Eph. 2:10; Phil. 2:13). Sons of Adam are men of the flesh. Those who confess Yahweh before such, shall be confessed as righteous before the angels of heaven (Luke 12:8). It is valuable to bear this in mind when beset with problems and frustrations, and ridiculed by those governed by flesh.

VERSE 20

"Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence from the pride of man" — The expression can be rendered the "covering of Thy faces". It denotes that nothing that happens to the righteous goes unnoticed (Col. 3:3-4). Yahweh's presence, His faces, are the *Elohim*, and they overshadow the saints. Christ warned: "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven thy angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 18:10). That is the wonderful heritage of the saints (see Isaiah 54:17). The "pride of man" cannot affect them. The R.V. renders this, "the plotting of men". David experienced such from the men of Keilah, from those of Kiph, from Saul and others, but without avail. "If God be with us, who can (successfully) oppose us," is the philosophy of faith.

"Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues" — No matter how powerful is the opposition, no matter how many tongues are raised against one in slander or condemnation, it will affect nought. The righteous are "secretly in a pavilion". The word signifies "tent". They are covered, as it were, in the tabernacle, and there enjoy the fellowship of Yahweh (1 John 1:6-7). With such a covering, and in such fellowship, how can the scandals of flesh affect one!

VERSE 21

"Blessed be Yahweh; for He hath shewed Me His marvellous kindness in a strong city" — That city was Keilah which likewise signifies *Fortress*. In spite of the treachery of its citizens, David was delivered of Yahweh (see 1 Samuel 23:10-14). There, attacked by Saul, and surrounded by those who were prepared to betray him, he threw himself on the mercy of Yahweh, and experienced a token of His salvation. The word "blessed" is *barak*, and signifies to bow the knee in humble adoration.

VERSE 22

"For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before Thine eyes" — The R.V. mg. renders "haste" as *alarm*. That was David's state in the incidents recorded in 1 Samuel 23. In his weakness he thought for a moment that he had been overlooked.

"Nevertheless Thou hearest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee" — See the circumstances as recorded in 1 Samuel 23, and compare with Heb. 5:7-8.

Exhortation: Appeal — vv. 23-24

On the basis of his own experience, David presses home exhortations for others to heed.

VERSE 23

"O love Yahweh, all ye His saints" — They are to first fear Him (v. 19) and then mature to love Him (Col. 3:14). Frequently both expressions are used in conjunction with each other (cp. Deut. 6:2,5); for one will inevitably lead to the other. From the

first we learn to respect Yahweh: and from the second to adore Him.

"For Yahweh preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer" — There are rewards and punishments that inevitably will be made manifest in due time.

VERSE 24

"Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart" — Both David and Christ showed outstanding faith and courage under pressure. See also the exhortation to Joshua as he was about to enter upon the conquest of the land (Josh. 1:9). Faith must be matched with courage to gain the victory over the world (1 John 5:4). When they are in evidence nothing will prove insurmountable. Hearts will be strengthened and resolutions pursued more determinedly if Yahweh's presence and promise are kept in mind (1 Cor. 16:13).

"All ye that hope in Yahweh" — The word "hope" is *Yachal*, to wait, to be patient (see Psa. 42:5,11; 43:5; Psa. 119:49). How important it is to learn to "wait" for Him (Isa. 30:18). We tend to become impatient, particularly under trial. But faith should teach us to wait, for Yahweh knows best when to extend His help. David learned this lesson when faced with the problems of Keilah and Ziph, he waited relief, and anticipated his elevation to the promise authority. Let us do likewise in any time of trial, for in so doing we honour Him who has declared to the faithful: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee". The lives of David and Christ exemplify that glorious fact. HPM

An Apology

We are sorry to have taken up so much space with this article; but as this number completes a volume, we did not want to halve the Psalm. The experiences of David as they foreshadow those of Christ provide outstanding and practical lessons in life's journey towards the Kingdom — Editor.

Prayer ought to consist chiefly of three things: the expression of our sincere adoration of God's greatness and excellence; the giving of thanks for His goodness as manifested both to the race and ourselves individually; and supplication for the various things needed, among which should stand first, the consummation of Yahweh's purpose in the earth — R.R.

The Joy of Justification

(Psalm 32)

This important Psalm sets forth the doctrine of Justification by Faith in contrast to Justification by the works of the Law: the impossible aim of Judaisers. The circumstances that led to its composition are extremely sad: but they reveal powerful lessons and glorious truths for all time.

The Superscription

The author is David; but not the David we see moving confidently across the field of battle against Goliath, nor the triumphant warrior at the head of his forces defeating the Philistines; but David in disgrace; David cast down in despair as the result of a moment of folly and weakness that almost cost him his throne; but David also raised up again through the understanding grace and forgiving mercy of Yahweh.

The superscription describes it as a *Maschil* Psalm of David. The word signifies "instruction" from the root *sakal* "to look at", "to scrutinise" "to look well into a matter". It is rendered "sense" in Neh. 8:8, and "understanding" in Prov. 13:15; and appears in v. 8 of the Psalm before us: "I will *instruct* thee". The margin renders the superscription as "A Psalm of David *giving instruction*".

There are thirteen *Maschil* Psalms (32, 42, 44, 45, 52, 53, 54, 55, 74, 78, 88, 89, 142), and they are all attached to names, implying that the instruction received has resulted from personal experiences. That is certainly the case with the Psalm before us. Based upon an incident in the life of David, it illustrates the joyful relief that comes from justification through faith in contrast to the frustration of defeat in the search for justification through the works of the Law.

The Circumstances

What were the circumstances, the experiences that caused David to write this Psalm? In chronological sequence it should follow Psalm 51. That Psalm records the prayer of David at the stern rebuke of Nathan following his sin in the matter of Bathsheba (2 Samuel 12). Very sad are those circumstances, very distressing to friends of David to this very day.

David had tried to cover his tracks following his adultery with Bathsheba.

Uriah had been placed in the front line of battle, and had fallen acclaimed as a hero. David seemingly had legitimately married the widow Bathsheba. Externally there was nothing irregular in this. But David remained uneasy. A man so sensitively spiritual as he, could not be otherwise under the circumstances. The enormity of his sin gnawed at his conscience. He mentions his unease in his Psalm. His knowledge of failure made him physically sick (vv. 3-4); he could not even bring himself to mention it to God in prayer (v. 5). He had possibly justified his actions by hypocritically covering them up on the grounds of expediency: deluding himself with the belief that it was best for the nation if they remained hidden.

He had to learn the lesson that the doctrine of expediency is not sound; that before sin can be covered, it must be opened up to God.

Meanwhile, Bathsheba gave birth to a son. And at that point of time, David's carefully built facade of deceit collapsed. He was visited by Nathan who sought his opinion regarding the rich man who callously stole his poor neighbour's ewe lamb. Having condemned the action of the thief, David was bluntly told: "Thou art the man!"

David learned the lesson we all must learn, namely that "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13). Whilst we cannot in any way excuse the sin of David, there is no place for self-complacency or personal justification of our supposed moral righteousness. We must learn the lesson that Yahweh would bring home to all, and which David himself underlines in this Psalm: sin must be recognised for what it is, confessed and covered over by seeking restitution through the grace and forgiveness of Yahweh.

The Law condemned David, and the Law condemns us, so that we must seek beyond its scope for salvation. But are our sins as grave as those of David? He was an adulterer; but so also are many who may pride themselves on their moral rectitude; for James defines "friendship of the world" on the part of believers as adultery (James 4:4). David was a murderer; but so also is he who unrighteously "hateth his brother" (1 John 3:15). David was hypocritical in deceit; but are we never guilty of that in the face of pressure? David recognised his guilt, and in humility sought restitution. We must do likewise. And let us, at this stage, recognise the extent of his humility. Notice that Psalm 51 which frankly acknowledges the extent of his failing and humbly seeks the mercy of Yahweh is dedicated to "the chief Musician". That means that David composed it, put it to music, and appointed that it be used *publicly*, for all time, in the Temple service. The King published his sin that all may learn the extent of Yahweh's goodness even at the expense of his own reputation! If we had been guilty of sin so grievous would we so openly and publicly acknowledge it? And, remember, he was King! He could have suppressed knowledge of it! He realised his open confession would lower his standing before others! It contributed to the appeal of Absalom, Sheba and others in their rebellions against him.

But courageously David set about doing what he knew was necessary. In fact, David in disgrace reached an attitude of spiritual understanding and submissiveness seldom attained by any others. He provides an example of

our own need in times of sin. His reaction, his search for help shows the way for us when we sin. We need to observe and take heed of his example without unduly condemning the man whom Yahweh forgave. Let us remember: who can rest confident in his own strength when he sees a man of the spiritual calibre of David fall? And who can ever despair of Divine mercy when he sees such sins forgiven!

Those are some of the lessons derived from the circumstances of David's sin, and the Psalms relating thereto.

There was no condoning of his conduct, no extenuating excuses extended to David; no avoiding of the heavy punishment laid upon him. His pleading for the life of his child, the fruit of his transgression, was rejected; and David himself was faced with the condemnation of the law. It offered no forgiveness for what he had done; only condemnation and execution. As David contemplated that fact, questions arose (see Psa. 51:18-19): What of the covenant made with him? What of Israel's future? His sin appeared to bring all this into jeopardy. As David contemplated that fact he fell into a hopeless state of depression and grief. He was helpless. If there was an offering he would present it (Psa. 51:16). There was none! What could he give Yahweh in extenuation of his conduct? Nothing! But, yes, there was one thing: a contrite and a broken heart (Psa. 51:17). But David could not even trust his heart. He prayed for a heart-transplant: "Create in me a clean heart, O God" (Psa. 51:10).

It was this attitude that commended David to God. His humility, his willingness to recognise his failings, his pliability to the discipline of God, his submissiveness to whatever punishment was laid upon him. His attitude towards these matters came to his aid at this moment of dire need. He was ill at ease at the estranged state in which he found himself with God. And his ill-ease was to his benefit. It showed that he was genuinely contrite. On that basis, and looking beyond the righteousness of the Law he sought the goodness of Yahweh through the seed promised him, whom he recognised as the Redeemer, the "seed of the woman" (see 2 Sam. 7:4,19). And on the terms expressed in this Psalm forgiveness was granted him because of his faith.

That is the background to the Psalm before us. It is a Psalm of joyfulness and praise in the assurance of forgiveness which lifted him out of the depths of dire depression and shame. It sets forth the principle of justification by faith which is so essential to the salvation of sinning humanity.

Prophetic Application

The Psalm is certainly typical and therefore prophetic of justification by faith and grace through the offering of Christ.

Justification is possible in two ways: by "the works of the law", that is by perfect obedience; or by faith in the redemptive work of the promised Lamb by which sins are blotted out. The Lord was justified by perfect obedience. This brought him out of the grave to life eternal. All others can only be justified by faith by forgiveness of sins.

In Rom. 4:7-8, Paul cites Psa. 32:4 to expound the doctrine of justification by faith. But he extends the lesson. David speaks of the blessedness of the

man "whose sins are forgiven, and whom Yahweh imputeth not iniquity". Paul gives it a more positive application. He declares that "David described the blessedness of the man unto whom Yahweh imputeth righteousness without works" (Rom. 4:6), that is, justifies one who falls short of perfect obedience. Wipe out David's sins, and what remains? His faith and submissiveness to Yahweh.

The significance of the word "imputeth" we will consider when we treat with the Psalm. What is important to notice here, is that David's sin and its cure foreshadowed the forgiveness of sins in Christ. Divine grace or favour was extended to David in his predicament, such as had not been provided for by the Covenant of Law.

Paul's statement, however, does not mean that God accounts a person righteous who has done nothing to warrant it. That is a doctrine of the apostasy. What had David done to warrant the treatment he received? Previously he had panicked and attempted to cover up his mistakes before flesh by the murder of Uriah and his subsequent marriage to Bathsheba. This was like Adam's fig leaf device. It left Yahweh out of consideration. In Yahweh's merciful goodness, however, He plainly revealed to David the extent of his iniquity; he stripped David's actions of all camouflage, of all excuse, and revealed the enormity of his transgressions. That was a Divine kindness. It is always good for flesh to recognise its mistakes. As David elsewhere declared: "Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head; for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities" (Psa. 141:5).

So now we are face to face with David's problem. He has committed sins for which the Law prescribed death. How can he avoid the consequence of his failings? In considering this, let it be borne in mind that his failings are not therein recorded to condemn him, but to show the way of salvation to us.

There was but one thing David could do in his extremity: open the whole of his sin to God, and throw himself without reserve on His mercy. That is exactly what David did. He learned the lesson for all time that to cover sin one must first open it up to God. That is the basis for justification by faith.

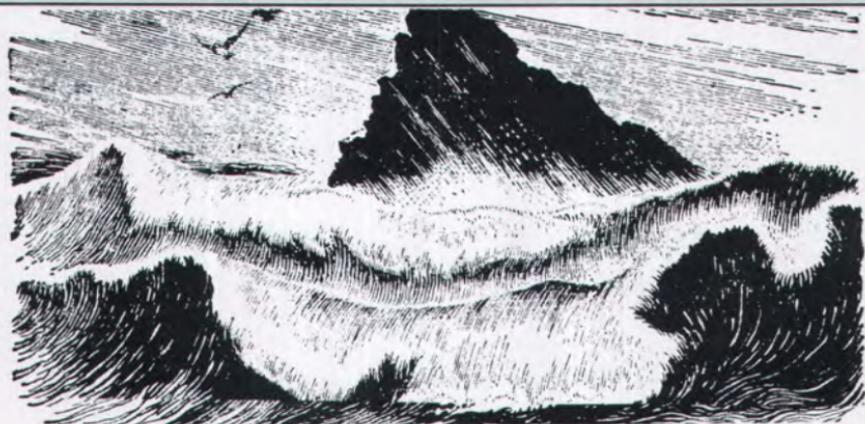
An Outline of the Psalm

We suggest the following headings and subheadings for Psalm 32.

THE JOY OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

The Joy of Justification	vv. 1-2
The Sorrow of Sin	vv. 3-4
The Comfort of Confession	v. 5
The Reward of Righteousness	vv. 6-7
The Guidance of God	vv. 8-9
The Anticipations of the Upright	vv. 10-11

Faith in the unseen verities of the Gospel will lead at last to things more visible and tangible than those the world now hugs with fond desire
R.R.



The Blessedness of Forgiveness

(Psalm 32)

Sin creates a state of disharmony between the Creator (Who is essentially good) and His creation. Accordingly, Yahweh cannot look upon it with any degree of allowance. True believers acknowledge that, and are made uncomfortable by its presence, or when they are guilty of misdemeanour.

David has experienced this state, because of his transgression; but the enormity of his actions having been brought home to him, he takes steps to rid himself of its effect. For him all indecision is at an end. Full confession of sin has been made and forgiveness granted. Peace of mind follows. It is the peace of harmonious co-operation with Yahweh based upon an acknowledgment of dependence on Him, a recognition of personal failings, a pleading for forgiveness, and a forsaking of the way of wrong doing. David has followed that course, and in seeking and receiving forgiveness, types the multitudinous Christ, in contrast to many incidents referred to in the Psalms in which he types the individual Christ.

The Joy of Justification by Faith — vv.1-2.

David expresses the great relief and joy obtained from a frank confession of sin, and the consciousness of having been granted forgiveness by Yahweh.

VERSE 1

“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven” — The word *Blessed* signifies “most happy”. In the Hebrew, the word is in the plural; “The happinesses of he...” Such joy is not limited to one narrow channel of bless-

ing, but extends to various avenues of such; hence the use of the plural. It is significant that the Psalms promise blessings on two counts: The first, accruing to one who keeps himself completely from sin; and in that regard can fully apply only to the Lord Jesus Christ (Psa. 1:1). The second, as expressed by the Psalm before us, through justification by faith in the forgiveness of sins. The first sets forth the ideal; the second reveals what should be sought when one falls short of it.

The verse before us is cited by Paul in Romans 4:7-8 to emphasise the personal blessedness that stems from justification through faith. The Apostle was an example of this. An amazing transformation had been effected in his life through this means. He considered himself to be a foremost example of one so blessed (see 1 Tim. 1:12-15). In his exposition in Romans, he placed the emphasis upon the word "blessed". "David", he wrote "describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying. . ." And then he quotes the verse before us. What is justification? The same Greek word is rendered righteousness. It is the vindication of a person as being accounted right by God. That is possible by two ways: justification by works, or justification apart from works. By "works" is meant the perfect obedience of all the requirements of the Law. The Lord was justified by works: he completely fulfilled all the requirements of the Law (Matt. 5:17-19); he "magnified it and made it honourable" (Isa. 42:21). His resurrection to life eternal proclaimed that that fact, for "the grave could not hold him (Acts 2:24). If the grave could have held in bondage that righteous man, who had rendered complete obedience "even unto the death of the cross" it would have revealed God as unrighteous, for His judgment would have consigned to eternal death one whose thoughts, words and deeds were

divine. His resurrection to eternal life was a witness to his complete manifestation of Yahweh earning for him the title "Son of God with power" (Rom 1:4). The other form of justification is open for those convicted of sin, and requires forgiveness therefrom. This is done "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 2:38).

When Paul taught that justification is possible "without works", he did not mean in the absence of some demonstration of an active faith. By "works" in such a context he meant perfect obedience to all the requirements of the Law. For example, he cites Abraham as a classic example of one justified by faith: "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Rom. 4:3). The word "believed" signifies to manifest faith, and Abram's faith was such as to cause him to leave Ur of the Chaldees, and make his way into the land shown him by God. His justification had a beginning and a completion. His faith which was manifested in leaving Ur was justified by works when he offered up Isaac. So reasons James (Ch. 2:21-23). The preposition "for" in the statement "for righteousness" is from the Greek *eis*, which signifies a moving towards an object and not the end of the process. Faith in the abstract, therefore, is the beginning of justification but only when manifested by baptism; and that lays a foundation for the demonstration of works of faith as revealed by Abraham. By the offering of the Lord Jesus, and through the forbearance of God, forgiveness of sins is granted (Rom. 3:20-27).

Christ declared that "all manner of sins" will be forgiven the man of faith (Mark 3:28). David is a classic example of the extent of sinfulness that can be forgiven. This is illustrated by his use of the word "transgression". This describes sin so grave as to invade the rights of another. David's sin with Bathsheba ignored the rights of Uriah. More, it ignored the right of Yahweh to legislate against such

acts, and that was even more serious. In his great confession, David acknowledged that. He declared: "I acknowledge my transgression: and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight; that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest" (Ps. 51:3-4).

That transgression had been "forgiveness" or *borne away* as the Hebrew *nesui* signifies. It had been lifted from off David as a heavy burden might be. "Behold the Lamb of God," declared John of Jesus, "which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Now notice the margin. It renders it as "*beareth*" away. That is what David experienced as expressed in the first line of the Psalm. But how was it done? The next line reveals the process.

"Whose sin is covered" — The word "sin" is from the Hebrew word signifying *to miss the mark*. It describes the natural tendency of the flesh to go astray. The cure requires baptism, for baptism is a token of death, burial and resurrection to newness of life. It is a token sacrifice or repudiation of the flesh, for all sin springs therefrom (Mark 7:18-23; John 2:16). Baptism, therefore, is an acknowledgement that the one so baptised recognises the weakness of flesh, and will attempt to "mortify" it or put it to death, that is, to deny it (Col. 3:5). He is "baptised into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit", and therefore is covered with Christ (Gal. 3:27). That which is "covered" is hidden away or forgiven.

VERSE 2

"Blessed is the man whom Yahweh imputeth not iniquity" — A third word is introduced to describe wrong doing. Here the Hebrew word denotes *rebellion*. The three words thus used imply a gradation of "wrongdoing". "Sin" expresses the tendency of the flesh to go astray, its weakness; "iniquity" denotes a rebelliousness of attitude that persists in so doing; "transgression" describes the intention of the sinner to do so irrespective as to the rights of others. Yet as terrible as sin is in the

sight of Yahweh, He opened up the means for it to be forgiven. The means provided are only available to the sincere of heart.

What is meant by God "imputing not iniquity"? The word Paul used in his citation in Romans denotes *to charge against one*. When a person's sins and iniquities are forgiven, they will no more be charged against him: they are completely blotted out (Ezek. 18:21-22).

To "impute not iniquity" is to forgive a person of such.

"And in whose spirit there is no guile" — "Spirit" in such a context as this Psalm indicates the innermost thoughts and feelings of a person. Similar usage is found in such expressions: "Blessed are the poor in spirit..." "The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak..." A person who is guileless in spirit is open and honest with God. He is inwardly completely sincere. He realises that the One with Whom he has to do "discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart" for "all things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:12-13). Such knowledge if meditated upon and applied will annihilate all guile.

The Sorrow Of Sin — vv.2-3

Before openly recognising the gravity of his sin, and seeking a Divine way of forgiveness, the realisation of the enormity of his action has weighed heavily on David, even though he attempted to excuse it. As a result it made him physically ill; he could find no help or rest from his malady.

VERSE 3

When I kept silence, my bones waxed old — David now refers to the time when he attempted to hide his sin from God and man. He tried every strategy to cover it up, including the methods adopted to rid himself of the embarrassing presence of Uriah, and his subsequent marriage to Bathsheba. But a man of David's spiritual calibre knew that he had done wrong, and suffered the physical result of his transgression. Beset with doubts and fears, ill at ease at his inconsistency, worried and

troubled as to the outcome of it all he was afflicted with an illness that affected his very being. The reference to "bones" relates to the body as a whole. See Ps. 35:10.

"Through my roaring all the day long" — The word "roaring" is rendered *groaning* by the RSV. It suggests the irrepressible anguish of David in his misery.

VERSE 4

"For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me" — His misery stemmed from his innermost recognition that his sufferings were due to the disharmony of his state with Yahweh. He recognised his condition as just punishment for his iniquity: difficult to endure, but matching the crime.

"My moisture is turned into the drought of summer" — The vital sap and juice of his body seemed dried up by the burning fever which afflicted him through his illness. See Ps. 22:15.

"Selah" — The word is not merely a musical notation, but an important element of the Psalm. It is derived from the Hebrew *salah* signifying "to strew" or "spread out", and therefore to think upon, to meditate. It is actually a thought link calling upon the reader of the Psalm to meditate upon what has been recorded in the light of that which follows. The previous verses have expressed the joy of justification in contrast to the misery of sin committed and remaining unforgiven in the mind. What follows expresses what one must do under such circumstances.

The Comfort of Confession — v. 5

The true worshipper has the infinite comfort of being able to confess, plead and confide in God, and of deriving therefrom a "peace of mind that passes the understanding of man".

VERSE 5

"I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid" — David has learned what all must do, namely, that in order to cover sin it must

be frankly opened up to God. As soon as David openly admitted the enormity of his conduct to God, and pleaded His forgiveness, he felt much better; for the way had been opened for reconciliation. The clause before us can be rendered: "I began to make known. . ." implying that as soon as he turned to Yahweh, the Father instantly turned to him, illustrating the parabolic description of forgiveness expressed by the Lord in the parable of the prodigal son who returned to his home in his extremity, and found his father waiting for him (Luke 15:19-24; Heb. 13:5; James 4:8).

"I said I will confess my transgressions unto Yahweh" — See Ps. 38:18; Luke 15:18.

"And Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin" — There was no minimising the seriousness of his sin, but a frank recognition of its full gravity.

"Selah" — See note above.

The Reward Of Righteousness

— vv.6-7

David outlines the great benefits instantly derived from justification.

VERSE 6

"For this shall every one that is Godly pray unto Thee in a time when Thou mayest be found" — The word "for" is a translation of the Hebrew *al* which signifies "because". The idea is that the forgiveness extended to David became a precedent for others in like need to seek the mercy of the Father. In pleading his case, as recorded in Ps. 51, David had vowed:

*"Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation;
And uphold me with Thy free spirit.
Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways;
And sinners shall be converted unto Thee"
(vv. 12-13).*

In order to teach others, David had arranged for the public singing of the Psalm that expresses the enormity of his conduct, and the great mercy of the Father; for he gave Psalm 51 into the charge of "the Chief Musician" (see introductory note to Psalm 51) which meant that it was used in the public service of the Temple. Now, at the time of composing Psalm 32, full justification

had been granted the King, and the way opened for others to likewise seek the mercy of Yahweh. Accordingly, they are recommended to do so. Perhaps the word "shall" is better rendered *let*. It is an invitation for those in need of forgiveness to follow David's example. The Psalm limits this action to the "Godly". The Hebrew word is *chaycid* and denotes *one who can claim a special relationship to Yahweh*. The word is rendered *holy* in Psalm 86:2, with a marginal amendment: "one whom Thou favourest". A father-child relationship is established between Yahweh and believers, and the latter are invited to experience the same boon in trouble as David found. They are urged to do so in a time of finding (mg). When is this? Psalm 69:13 declares it to be "an acceptable time", which Paul taught is "now" (2 Cor. 6:2). The condition needful to finding Him are stated in Deut. 4:29; Jer. 29:13; ct. Isa. 53:6. They must be developed in the hearts of those who desire to "find Him" (Jer. 14:12; 15:1; Prov. 1:28). Therefore, let no one delay in searching for God; but be sure that an attitude of mind is revealed that is acceptable to Him.

"Surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him" — The RV renders this a little clearer: "Surely when the great waters overflow they shall not reach unto him". The "Godly man" who seeks Yahweh in time of need will not find his search in vain. In the time of calamity and judgment he will be safe.

VERSE 7

"Thou art my hiding place; Thou shalt preserve me from trouble" — A "hiding place" is a place of refuge and safety. Yahweh's provision for those in need was dramatised in the Cities of Refuge outlined in Joshua 20. Accordingly, the Proverbs declare: "The name of Yahweh is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe" (Prov. 18:10). How does one enter that Tower? By baptism (see Matt. 28:19 and Ps. 31:20). Christ is likened to a City of Refuge (Heb. 6:18). To shelter in the Father and the Son is only possible if

they are living realities in one's life: constantly brought to mind. Those who do so will find a very real help in time of trouble, and ultimately shall be delivered from such.

"Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance" — Such songs of deliverance will be sung by the redeemed with full meaning in the Age to come (See Ps. 33:1-5; Rev. 5:9-10; 14:3; 19:6-7).

"Selah" — See note at v.4.

The Guidance of God — vv. 8-9

Yahweh now responds to the appeal of the Psalmist. By inspiration, David is caused to write the response of the Almighty to his plea.

VERSE 8

"I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go" — This instruction is revealed in Yahweh's word. See notes on Psalm 25:8-9. See also John 6:45.

"I will guide thee with Mine eye" — The RV renders this line: "I will counsel thee with Mine eye upon thee". See Num. 6:23-27; Ps. 33:18; Jer. 24:6. Yahweh's eyes will be on such as the Psalmist to ascertain whether they have learned the lessons that His discipline should have brought home to them.

VERSE 9

"Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule which have no understanding" — The word signifies the ability to discriminate between right and wrong, which, of course, the horse and the mule do not possess. A lack of the power to discriminate, a lack of understanding of Divine principles and its motivation in action lowers a man to the state of a beast. See Ps. 73:22; 92:6; 94:8; 49:6-10; Jer. 10:14,21. The ability to discern right from wrong, to develop faith and Godlike characteristics are beyond the ability of mere animal flesh, and elevates a human being above such. Mankind were created by the Elohim to manifest the qualities of God (Gen. 1:26), and when they fail to do that they become brutish, and unfit for the Divine

purpose. Man in that state is no better than a horse or a mule, which are useful animals for labour, but of no value beyond that.

“Whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle” — Such animals do not understand the will and purpose of their masters, and hence are subject to unthinking obedience to the pressure of bit and bridle which restrains and guides them. Yahweh’s servants are expected to know and understand the Divine purpose, and to identify themselves with it so as to be one with the Father in heaven (John 15:15). They should “cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart” (Acts 11:23), that is, with a clear conception of objectives, walking in co-operation with God to that end.

“Lest they come near unto thee” — If animals do not respond to the restraints and direction of bit or bridle, they will experience the discipline of the whip and rod (Prov. 26:3). A man pleasing himself in what he elects to do is no more than an animal; he is brutish and will suffer accordingly. Figuratively, the whip and rod will come near him!

The Anticipations of the Upright — vv. 10-11

Whereas the wicked will suffer, the faithful will enjoy the consolation of their anticipations.

VERSE 10

“Many sorrows shall be to the wicked” — The *Septuagint* renders “sorrows” as *scourges*. The wicked

shall experience the lash of the whip and the stroke of the rod: the disciplinary hand of God.

“But he that trusteth in Yahweh, mercy shall compass him about” — The word “mercy” is *chesed* in the Hebrew; an expression that denotes the very favoured relationship existing between Yahweh and His own. It is a family relationship; a Father-Child relationship, in which Yahweh extends favour, and loving kindness to His children because of their relationship to Him. In life, parents show particular favour to their children, and are more ready to overlook their shortcomings, or help and guide them. The word *chesed* suggests the same emotion between the Father and His children. It needs to be cultivated by a response on the part of the children towards Him.

VERSE 11

“Be glad in Yahweh, and rejoice, ye righteous” — In these words the Psalmist encourages such a response. See Phil. 3:1; 4:4; 1 Thess. 5:16.

“And shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart” — If a person is upright in heart and not merely in externals, he can shout for joy. The Divine goodness is such, that in spite of past failures, he can make his peace with God, and find pleasure in Yahweh, as had David in dire need. This requires obedience, or the recognition of failure and the forgiveness of sins. He can then look forward to a future inheritance and glory which no man can take from him. See Ps. 7:10.

Summary

This wonderful Psalm thus concludes on a note of joyous anticipation. David has reached that state, in spite of past transgressions that have plunged him into the depths of misery. He has experienced the forgiveness of his sins, through what Paul describes as “justification by faith”. All are in need of that for “all sin and come short of the glory of God”. Let us challenge sin in the strength of God; and if it gain temporary victory over us, as it did over David, let us take the courageous and faithful steps that he did to conquer it. Then we too can rejoice with him and look with confidence to the future.

H.P.M.

Praise To Yahweh For His Goodness Psalm 33



Psalm 33 is a Hymn of praise and adoration for Yahweh's goodness as expressed in His word and works, and epitomised in the Gospel. "Behold the goodness and severity of God" exhorted Paul (Rom. 11:22). This Psalm praises Yahweh for His goodness, acknowledging that "all His works are done in truth" (v.4).

It's Author

The Psalm is considered an "orphan" Psalm because of its lack of a title of authorship. But its expressions are Davidic in concept, and their sentiments are so closely linked to those of the previous Psalm as to suggest a common author. For example, Ps. 32:11 invites all those who have experienced the Divine benefits of justification to "be glad in Yahweh, and rejoice ye righteous". And in response thereto this Psalm commences: "Rejoice in Yahweh, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright" (v.1).

We conclude, therefore, that the author was David, and this is supported by the Septuagint Version that describes it as *A Psalm Of David*. Some psalms lacking such titles have their authorship supplied elsewhere. For example, Psalm 2 is not ascribed to David in the title of the Psalm itself, but the omission is supplied by the Apostles in Acts 4:25.

The Circumstances

If David's pen inscribed the Psalm what were the circumstances that moved him to write? Obviously the same as gave rise to the penning of Psalm 32. That Psalm expresses David's joy at the renewed fellowship with Yahweh due to the forgiveness of his sin though the justification that he had experienced. The one before us invites others who are in need of such to rejoice that Yahweh has opened the way for all to share in His goodness. These circumstances we have already outlined (see pp. 19-22), and in passing it is again valuable to reiterate, that those who may be disposed to unduly criticise David for his fall, might well find themselves in similar situation. His failure, at that time, foreshadowed those of all saints apart from the Lord Jesus. He, alone, was sinless.

Analysis

We have entitled the Psalm: *Praise to Yahweh for His Goodness.*

It answers the invitation of Psalm 32:11, and provides an example of the "songs of deliverance" to which David made reference therein (see v.7).

We sub-divide the Psalm into four parts:

- A call to Praise vv.1-3
- The Ground For Praise vv.4-11
- The Theme of Praise vv.12-19
- The Confidence of Praise .. vv.20-22

First read the Psalm through and note those sub-sections.

Now observe how the Psalm falls

into major divisions calculated to call forth praise:

- Yahweh's Majesty in Creation..vv.1-9
- Yahweh's Guidance
of History vv.19-17
- Yahweh's Saving Grace
in Redemption vv.18-22

Finally, after noting the call to praise (vv.1-3), see how the emphasis is given to:

- The Word of Yahweh vv.4-9
- The Counsel of Yahweh vv.10-12
- The Eye of Yahweh vv.13-19
- Response thereto vv.20-22

Summary

This brief outline of the Psalm reveals that Yahweh should be praised for His power, Wisdom and Redemption. The Key word of the Psalm is *Praise*, and dominant verses are vv.4,6,10,18,21.

The call to praise suggests that the righteous, who know the "goodness of God" should never cease such exercises. Though Yahweh dwells in the highest heavens, yet His eye is upon every one of His people, and no detail of their lives escapes His observation.

A verse by verse consideration of this Psalm will draw us nearer to our God, and in view of the privileged position to which he has called us, induce us to respond in the most enthusiastic praises unto His holy name

HPM

Prayer

Prayer should never be voluble. Much of the prayer saying we have been accustomed to carried this condemnation with it, that it is clearly a matter of vain display. The pray-ers cultivate it as an art, instead of being governed by it as an inspiration. Brevity and order plus the "editing out" of vain repetition is the soul of prayer. "God is in heaven, and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few". Prayer is not to inform the Father, but to knit our hearts unto Him. When in the language of childhood we have simply asked in proper manner it proved quite enough. The silence of thought, and the expectancy of faith, are better than a dozen rounded and finished periods of pulpit-like prayer. Away with heathen institutions, and the repeated chants and cadency of "miserable sinners!" — A.B.

On Praising Yahweh (Psalm 33)

The Psalm expresses the power of Yahweh's Word to accomplish His will and the manner in which He brings the counsel of the wicked to nought. Previous instalments have set forth the background and outline of the Psalm as well as expounding the first five verses. These contain a call to praise. (vv.1-3), and then the ground for praise (vv.4-11).

VERSE 7

"He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap" — The mighty deep witnesses to the power of an Almighty hand (Ps. 104:25-28). The ocean in its storms and tides obeys invisible Divine control (Job. 38:11). In this it typifies the nations (Isa. 57:20), whose times, extent and violence are likewise limited by God's power (Acts. 17:26).

"He layeth up the depth in storehouses" — Huge masses of water are stored in the form of ice at the earth's poles, reserved for judgment if necessary, as at the Flood (Gen. 7:11).

VERSE 8

"Let all the earth fear Yahweh" — A contemplation of His great power and majesty in creation will inspire reverence for Him; as will also a contemplation of His mighty deeds in the restoration of His kingdom on earth, and the judgments associated therewith (see Heb. 12:28-29).

"Let all the inhabitants stand in

awe of Him" — The contemplation of Yahweh's glory in creation should induce respect and awe even in the absence of a knowledge of His truth (see Rom. 1:20). See the appeal of Amos (ch. 4:13; 5:8; 9:6); or the exhortation and exposition of Yahweh to Job (Job 38:4-7 etc.). The more the design, majesty and purpose of Yahweh in creation are pondered, the more will there be developed a sense of awe and respect.

VERSE 9

"For He spake, and it was done" — This statement again emphasises the power of Yahweh's word (cp. vv4,6). This is the *Logos*, used as a title of Deity, expressive, not merely of His word as something spoken, but of the wisdom and thought behind the spoken (or written) word. In *Eureka*, vol 1, p.90, Bro. Thomas declares: "In this text, then, there is ONE DEITY, and He is styled THE LOGOS. This word signifies, 'the outward form by which the inward thought is expressed and make known; also, the inward

thought or reason itself. So that the word comprehends both the ideas of reason and speech'." It sums up the principle of Wisdom in the purpose of Yahweh. This is personified in Proverbs 8, and is represented as claiming: "Yahweh possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth... When He gave to the sea His decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment; when He appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him" (Prov. 8:22-31). This teaches that in the work of the first week Yahweh had in mind His ultimate purpose. In Ps. 104:24 the statement is found("O Yahweh, how manifold are Thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of Thy riches." In other words, there is wisdom and design in all Creation, including its natural laws. All that was done stemmed from the word which is powerful to effect His purpose, for God "spake and it was done" (v.9). His purpose to fill the earth with glory (Num. 14:21) was ever kept in mind. The distance of the earth from the sun, the division of sea and land, the provision of rain and water, the action of the tides of the sea, or the purification of the air through the breathing of trees and so forth, all witness to design, wisdom and purpose, so that only a fool will deny the existence of God.

"He commandeth, and it stood fast" — The acts of creation were

not performed for temporary duration, but to last forever (Isa. 45:18). In doing so He established natural laws of creation. When man breaks these he is in trouble. That is the basic problem of today. Man no longer wants rural life such as was designed from the beginning (Gen. 3:19); instead he crowds into cities, and endeavours to free himself from work. In fact, he destroys the dignity of labour, so that millions are paid the dole not to work. This is contrary to Divine law (2 Thess. 3:10), and mankind suffers in consequence. All the problems, frustrations and failures of modern society and civilisation stem from attempts to break God's natural laws. Christ's Kingdom will work because everything done, including the economic, social and moral requirements of society will be according to Divine principles, establishing a harmony between man and inanimate creation such as does not exist today.

VERSE 10

"Yahweh bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought" — From the wisdom of natural creation the Psalmist turns to consider the wisdom of the Divine purpose. Yahweh designed a spiritual creation to be formed, typed by the natural creation everywhere in evidence. The conclusion of the sixth day, witnessed in the earth a man, a woman, a marriage, and a rest in harmony with the Creator. Such also is Yahweh's purpose ultimately. At the conclusion of the sixth millennial day there will be manifested in the earth the Second Adam, the Second Eve, a Marriage and a Rest! The second Adam as the manifestation of Yahweh is "the beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. 3:14), and in regard to him it is said: "Thou hast

created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created" (Rev. 4:11). He is the Logos, the manifestation of the wisdom of God, and through Him the spiritual creation of God will be completed.

"The thoughts of His heart to all generations" — This expression describes the "everlasting covenant" that He has "commanded to a thousand generations" (Ps. 105: 8-10. See also Deut. 7:9; 1 Chron. 16:15). That covenant is incorporated in the Divine name of *Yahweh Elohim of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob* concerning which, He declared to Moses: "This is My name for ever (for the age), and this is My memorial to all generations" (or for a generation of the race Exod. 3:15).

The Psalm before us, reveals that creation and history both testify to the existence of God. When men are called upon to praise Yahweh from these standpoints, their worship will become more definite and sweet, for both the glory and diversity of creation, and the unfolding and development of His purpose in history testify that He is not a God Who is only far

off; but one near at hand, Whose works are found in the earth, whose power is evident in the laws of creation, and Whose purpose is manifested in Israel. Therefore His proofs of existence are obvious to the seeing eye and hearing ear. But above all else, it is a knowledge of the covenant, given to a thousand generations, that testifies to the reality, personality, omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence of God, and His overshadowing care of those Whom He has called. The very miracles of creation, the historical wonders wrought among the nations, were and are governed by the purpose of His covenant. They are tokens of its truth and power. The expressions of the Psalmist emphasise the force of the Divine word. Nowhere does He say in His word that anything new has been spoken, but everywhere He shows that some new illustration of it has been constantly given, demonstrating the wisdom and goodness of Yahweh as revealed therein. It is the power of that Word that can change and equip us for the Kingdom to come (see Phil. 2:12-13; 2 Cor. 3:17-18; 4:6-7; Isa. 60:21). HPM

Divine Providence

Our discovery of the way of salvation was not accidental. It may seem so when we merely look at the apparently natural means which led to our knowledge and reception of the Truth — the Christadelphian leaflet picked up by the wayside, the copy of *Christendom Astray From The Bible* purchased at the second-hand bookstall, the public address quite casually attended — but appearances are altogether misleading in this matter. Our standing in the Truth is due to the kind but unseen intervention of God on our behalf. His hand may not be seen, but He is ever working for the well-being of God-fearers. The Scriptures abound with illustrations of this glorious and precious fact. In the first century men and women who were able to receive and prize the Truth were remembered and cared for (Acts 2:47; 13:48; 18:10). If God has "much people" in any place He will soon create and develop the means to enlighten them. The ways of God in this matter are unfathomable. We have to be content with what is revealed on the subject — A.J.

"God did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name" (Acts 15:14). The call of the Gospel is a work of Yahweh.

The Goodness of Yahweh (Psalm 33)

This thoughtful Psalm is given over to expressing the benefits of praising Yahweh. The first verses express the Call to Praise (vv. 1-3); then follow the Grounds of Praise (vv. 4-11). The third section (considered in this instalment), outlines the Blessed, Privileged Status of His People (vv. 12-19); and, finally, The Confidence They Repose in Him (vv. 20-22). These notes can assist in the meditative consideration of its expressions.

The Blessed Privileges of His People — vv. 12-19

His people should praise Yahweh because of the privileges of their standing as His chosen. This includes His overshadowing care of all their ways and circumstances, and their ultimate deliverance from every problem, including death itself.

VERSE 12

“Blessed is the nation whose God is Yahweh” — The word “blessed” in the Hebrew is in the plural, and signifies the manifold “happinesses” of such. Despite the tribulations of the present such a nation (and there is only one) can reach forth to happiness for that is its destiny. Its members can therefore rejoice in Yahweh (see Ps. 144:15; Matt. 5:1-12). To such a people even tribulation can become a source of happiness, for they will recognise it as the necessary moulding of their characters to fit them for the Kingdom of God (see Acts 14:22). Paul reached that state of true happiness, though he was persecuted because of the truths he proclaimed. What a difference he revealed in character from the time he went forth “breathing out threatenings and slaughter” (Acts 9:1), to when, in prison, he wrote: “I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content” (Phil. 4:11).

He called upon his readers to seek the blessed state of happiness in Yahweh: “Rejoice in the Lord alway”, he wrote to his brethren, and again I say, “Rejoice” (Phil. 4:4).

Such happiness stems from recognising that “our God is Yahweh”. The word “God” in this place is *Elohim*, “Mighty Ones”, and is a term most frequently used for His angelic ministers (Heb. 1:14). They overshadow the lives of saints under His supervision (see Gen. 48:16; Matt. 18:10), and so form a link between Yahweh above and His family on earth. In that regard, they have access to tremendous help as Hezekiah reminded the nation in his day of crisis: “Be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him; with him is an arm of flesh; but with us is Yahweh our Elohim to help us, and to fight our battles” (2 Chron. 32:7-8). Surely his experience illustrates the statement of the Psalm.

“And the people whom He hath chosen for His own inheritance” — Israel, the “chosen” of Yahweh was constituted an “holy nation” (see Exod. 19:5; Deut. 7:5). So also are those “in Christ”. They are styled “the Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16); and are “blessed with spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in

Christ" (Eph. 1:3). They are described as "the called, and chosen and faithful" (Rev. 17:14). The true Israel is "the rod (i.e. measure) of Yahweh's inheritance" (cp. Jer. 10:16; Eph. 1:18; Tit. 2:14). His "possession", where He may dwell by manifestation (2 Cor. 6:16-18). How precious is that privilege; let saints give expression to it in their praise of Yahweh.

VERSE 13

"Yahweh looketh from heaven" — Though remote, invisible to human sight, and beyond the ability of human understanding (1 Tim. 6:15-16), Yahweh condescends to take heed of the needs and circumstances of His chosen. His saints are constantly under His cognisance (Ps. 11:4); therefore, He can properly supervise the interests of His own people, "showing Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him" (2 Chr. 16:9). There is both privilege and responsibility in that fact. Note the reality of His supervision as expressed in Heb. 4:12-14.

"He beholdeth all the sons of men" — Though Yahweh has His saints particularly in view, He also heeds the ways and circumstances of all mankind, and if need be he limits their activities (see Dan. 4:17). He never loses sight of His purpose to fill the earth with His glory. See Acts 17:24-31).

VERSE 14

"From the place of His habitation He looketh" — The Hebrew word rendered "looketh" in this verse, is different from that in v. 13. There it is the word *nabat*, "to scan, look intently at" and by implication to view with pleasure. He is there depicted as searching for His own people. Here it is the word *shagach*, and signifies to glance sharply at. The expressions indicate the difference with which He views different people. His eyes rest with favour on those who faithfully try to win His approval, but sharply upon those who do not.

"Upon all the inhabitants of the earth" — The generality of mankind.

VERSE 15

"He fashioneth their hearts alike" —

The RV renders: "He that fashioned the hearts of them all". Having been given an heart, or intellect, to understand, it is the responsibility of flesh to adequately respond. See Prov. 22:2; Isa. 64:8; Jhn. 2:24-25. Some use their hearts, or God-given intellect to worship and praise Him; others do not.

"He considereth all their works" — He takes heed of their actions, and not merely to their words. See Ps. 44:21; Prov. 24:12; Jer. 32:19; 1 Cor. 4:5; James 1:22-25; 2:20-26; Rev. 2:23.

VERSE 16

"There is no king saved by the multitude of an host" — Human power and ingenuity are of limited value; particularly in the absence of the Divine blessing. God is not dependent upon numbers or fleshly strength to ensure results. See the exhortation to Gideon (Jud. 7:2,12; Elisha at Dothan (2 Kings 6:11-17) Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. 20:13-18); Hezekiah (2 Chron. 32:7-8); Ps. 44:3,6,7; Prov. 21:30-31. The Psalmist sums up with the statement: "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we will remember the name of Yahweh our God" (Ps. 20:7).

"A mighty man is not delivered by much strength" — The fate of Goliath illustrates that fact (1 Sam. 17:4; 45-49).

VERSE 17

"A horse is a vain thing for safety" — The horse, in Scripture, is the symbol for Egyptian pride, arrogance and war. It was then invariably used for battle and not domestic work; but in Israel the ass was used for normal transport or labour. In that light, consider Ps. 20:7; Prov. 21:31; Ecc. 9:11; Isa. 14:7-10; 30:16; Matt. 26:53.

VERSE 18

"Behold, the eye of Yahweh is upon them that fear Him" — The exclamation, *Behold* always signifies to take heed in a special way; bear in mind what follows. The statement is cited by Peter in 1 Pet. 3:12, but what is most important is not the citation, but the lessons drawn by the Apostle from it. Peter presents a most powerful exhortation based upon

the recognition of Yahweh's oversight. He states that if we do, in fact, believe the statement of the Psalmist, it should find expression in action such as he describes in vv. 8-22. We need to acknowledge that God is on our side, and respond with such faithful action as will please Him. This verse is the key to this Psalm.

"Upon them that hope in His mercy" — It is not enough to "fear"; fear and reverence must be matched with the positive response of hope. See Ps. 31:24; 34:11-16; 147:11. The word "mercy" as used here does not denote forgiveness of faults, though it may include such. It implies the tremendous privilege of personal relationship with Yahweh. It is from the word *chesed*, and is frequently rendered as *loving-kindness*. But it apparently means more than that, and Hebraists find it difficult to properly express its meaning. A cognate word is translated "holy" in Ps. 86:2, but in the margin it is given as "one whom Thou favourest". The word is expressive of that intimate Father-child relationship that is established between Yahweh and those who embrace His truth. In normal relationships, it expresses the unique feeling that parents have towards their children, the invisible bond that unites them together, because as their children they are a manifestation and extension of the parents' love for each other. An even greater relationship is established between a believer and Yahweh when the former enters into covenant with the Latter through Christ, and changes his life accordingly. We need to acknowledge and treasure that relationship; to see in it the source of present, and hope of future benefits, and to endeavour to live worthy of it. True sonship requires that. The Hebrew term *son of* signifies "filled with". A son of God is one filled with Him through the Word; a son of Belial is one filled with worthlessness. Abraham was told to offer up "his *only* son Isaac"; but in fact Isaac was not his "only" child. He was his "only son" in that he alone manifested the worthy characteristics of his father. A Son of God will do likewise.

VERSE 19

"To deliver their soul from death"

— Yahweh has the ability and power to do this even now, through in His wisdom He does not always do so (Heb. 11:35). Ultimately, however, though the resurrection, these words will prove true. In anticipation thereof let His children express their praise of Him for this great hope of their calling.

"And to keep them alive in famine"

— The incidence of famine is not a matter of caprice, but the with-holding of Divine blessing. Men call it the law of nature; the truth sees it in a different light, and recognises the granting or with-holding of rain as the blessing or punishment of heaven. Note the language of Ruth 1:6.

Confidence vv. 20-22

Yahweh is praised for the assurance of help in time of need.

VERSE 20

"Our soul waiteth for Yahweh"

— It does so because He is the only source of true help. See Ps. 27:14; 62:1,2,5,6. Because of the failure of the people to do that, Israel suffered (Ps. 106:13).

"He is our help and our shield"

— The Hebrew for "shield" is *magen*, a small shield designed to turn the thrusts of the enemy and easy to manoeuvre to protect any vulnerable parts of the body. It is therefore a defence and a protection. To the guardianship of Yahweh will the faithful turn rather than seeking confidence in the flesh.

VERSE 21

"For our heart shall rejoice in Him"

— A believer is able to rejoice in Yahweh under any circumstances because in Him he will find the strength to surmount any problem. To "rejoice" is a true feature of worship, and of real praise. David appointed Psalms for this purpose (1 Chron. 16:7-10); Hannah rejoiced at being granted a son (1 Sam. 2:1); Mary did so when told she was appointed to be the mother of Messiah (Luke 1:47-50); the Apostles did

so in that they were accounted worthy to suffer for Christ's sake (Acts 5:41); Paul and Silas sung songs in prison (Acts 16:25); and the Apostle later wrote to the Ecclesia of the city in which he was imprisoned calling upon its members to rejoice in the Lord (Phil. 4:4). It is a good habit to cultivate, and one acceptable to Yahweh.

"Because we have trusted in His holy name" — See Ps. 5:11-12; 25:2; 125:1. The word "trust" is expressive of confidence in the name of Yahweh. The Hebrew word signifies *to seek shelter* therein. "The name of Yahweh is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe" (Prov. 18:10). To shelter in that name is to manifest its qualities; which is a sure way to spiritual success. It is to put oneself confidently in the way of salvation: "We have access by faith into this grace (favour) wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God", declared Paul (Rom. 5:2). So the

Psalm concludes with an appropriate prayer.

VERSE 22

"Let Thy mercy, O Yahweh, be upon us" — See note on v. 18. To seek the Name of Yahweh is to find entrance into His family.

"According as we hope in Thee" — See Ps. 31:1,24; 119:49-50; Matt. 9:29; Rom. 5:4-5. The Psalm concludes with an exhortation and a warning. The extent of favour recipients receive of Yahweh's mercy or *chesed* is conditional by the measure of the hope we place in Him. Praise and worship must be reciprocal. As we receive benefits from Yahweh we should respond with words and ways that are honouring to Him, cause Him pleasure, and reciprocate His goodness towards us. Then we will enjoy the fraternal communion of heaven. HPM

A Contrast

The earth presents many sad sights to those who have eyes to see. Where truth should be exalted for the hope and salvation of perishing man, we see contradictory creeds and bitter conflict. Instead of a generous distribution of the earth's bounties amongst her children, we see millions toiling in hunger; instead of peace and prosperity, we see war preparations and oppressive taxation. We see also wealth concentrating itself into the hands of the few — the poor growing poorer; willing workers unemployed; despairing men rising in rebellion. Alas! Alas! Is there no prospect of relief? There is. From these sad sights turn we to a picture, bright and beautiful, drawn by God in His infallible but neglected Word. In this we see Christ once more among us, ruling as KING OVER ALL THE EARTH (Zech. 14:9; Rev. 11:15) — one law (Is. 2:3) — one religion (Zech. 14:16,17) — no war (Ps. 46: 8-10) — no miscarriage of justice (Jer. 23:5) — no mismanagement (Isa. 11:1-5) — no tyranny (Is. 29:20) — no complaining in the streets (Ps. 144:14) — the poor and helpless cared for (Ps. 72:4) — the earth yielding her increase (Ps. 72:6) — grateful hearts everywhere (Ps. 113: 2,3). To share in this future blessedness is the hope of the only, true Gospel — the Gospel of the Scriptures. All who come within its sound receive a message and an invitation from God. Let us not shut the door against Him.

A Hymn of Thanksgiving and Praise (Psalm 34)

The life of a man of God, bounded by the weakness of flesh, is one of peaks and shadows. Sometimes he figuratively finds himself on the heights in close communion with Yahweh, basking in the light and warmth of truth; at other times, inconsistently plunged into gloom and depression with the consciousness of sins committed, moved by circumstances to act out of character with his convictions and calling. But even in those circumstances, when the fault is of his own making, the hand of Yahweh is ever ready to be extended to assist him if he seeks His aid and care. Then, faith lifts him out of the depths, and above the evils that surround him. By experience he learns once again the fact that he does not put his trust in Yahweh in vain. So it was with David when circumstances drew from him the expressions of gratitude, thanksgiving and praise that are found in Psalm 34.

Background to the Psalm

We are left in no doubt as to the circumstances that drew forth this beautiful hymn of thanksgiving and praise. They are epitomised in the superscription appended to it: *A Psalm of David, when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he departed.*

The only problem about this title is that the King's name was Achish as the margin states, and not Abimelech; and this is sometimes advanced as a Biblical error.

But not so. *Abimelech* (*my father-king*) was apparently used as a title by kings of Gath, as an appellative added to their own names (see Gen. 20:2; 26:1). Perhaps it is incorporated in the title to the Psalm to emphasise the temporary fears of David, reminding him that as Yahweh was his Father-king; he need not seek a substitute on earth.

This occasion in the life of David reminds us once again that the most courageous men of faith were some-

times encompassed with fears and weaknesses common to all humanity, and had to battle with these as we all must do. The historical record is outlined in 1 Samuel 21:20-15.

David's Fear

David with Jonathan his friend, had received incontrovertible evidence that Saul was determined to slay him. Safety lay in flight. In haste David made his way to Nob to the north east of Jerusalem where the Tabernacle had been set up, seeking the assistance of Ahimelech the priest. On the pretext that he was engaged in the King's service, David sought food and weapons from the priest, and was granted some of the shewbread and the sword of Goliath.

But this had tragic repercussions as David learned later (1 Sam. 22:22). Present at Nob that day was the godless Doeg, an Edomite in the service of Saul, and one prepared to do the bidding of his master in order to curry his favour. This presented an ominous threat to David.

He realised that Doeg would apprise Saul of his presence, and that the deranged king would exert every effort to find and destroy him.

David was very young; perhaps about 20 years of age. His fear of Saul was increased by the presence of Doeg. Lonely and despondent, seemingly surrounded by enemies, depression got the better of him. He sought for a place beyond the scope of Saul to harm him.

But where? A sure refuge would be with the Philistines, the bitter enemies of Saul. David decided on that course of action. It was a desperate strategem to make, and one fraught with the greatest peril, for the Philistines recognised David as the intrepid antagonist who had slain their champion, encompassed their defeat, and won many a skirmish against them. Nevertheless, disbanding the few retainers with him (1 Sam. 21:5), David made his solitary way into the heart of Philistine territory.

David Among The Philistines

His arrival at Gath was viewed with astonishment by the Philistines. It aroused their doubts and fears. On the other hand, Achish seems to have received David with confidence. Perhaps he saw in him an opportunity to defeat Saul by fomenting civil war in Israel through Saul's most skilful commander and hated rival. He welcomed David to Gath, though the inhabitants viewed him with suspicion:

"Is not this David, the king of the land? Did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?" (1 Sam. 21:11).

These words reveal how much the Philistines knew of the internal affairs of Israel. They saw in David the successor to the throne. They had doubtless learned that he had already been anointed to that end.

This placed him in gravest peril. Hearing the Philistines speaking in that way, David "laid up these words in his heart, and was sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath" (1 Sam. 21:12).

The Proverbs declare: "the fear of man bringeth a snare, but whoso putteth his trust in Yahweh shall be safe" (Prov.

29:25).

Though a man of faith, the circumstances which David had himself created, made him "afraid", and this natural weakness of the flesh caused him to adopt a stratagem designed to take Achish off guard. At the same time, he did not overlook the real Source of help: Yahweh. The superscription to Psalm 56, composed in relation to the same incident, reveals his innermost thoughts at this time: the reliance he put in Yahweh:

Mine enemies would daily swallow me up;

**For they be many that fight against me,
O Thou most High.**

What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee;

In God I will praise His word,

In God I have put my trust;

I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.

(Psalm 56:2-4)

In the same Psalm, David describes the way in which the Philistines among whom he moved spied upon him:

**Every day they wrest my words,
All their thoughts are against me for
evil,**

They gather themselves together

They hide themselves,

They mark my steps,

When they wait for my soul (vv. 5-7).

Meanwhile Achish placed David under arrest.

David, fearing for his life, feigned himself to be mad. Probably his very presence in Gath was considered as an act of a madman, and he played on this. "He changed his behaviour before the Philistines, and feigned himself mad in their hands, scrabbling on the doors of the gate, and letting his spittle fall down upon his beard".

This statement implies that David was imprisoned ("in their hands"), and scrabbled, scratched or struck, upon the door that shut him in. When the warders came to him, he spoke incoherently, with spittle dribbling down his beard.

Achish was completely deluded by David's action. A madman was useless for the schemes he had in mind! At the same time, he was too valuable to be put to death, for he represented a counterforce to Saul. Best to drive him away:

"Lo, ye see the man is mad; wherefore then have ye brought him to me? Have I need of mad men, that ye have brought this fellow to play the mad man in my presence? Shall this fellow come into my house?" (1 Sam. 21:14-15).

So David escaped from his predicament:

"David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam" (1 Sam. 22:1).

The very terms in which this is stated suggest that his escape was encompassed with difficulty, and only with the help of Yahweh.

David's Hymn of Thanksgiving

As a response, David composed the *Hymn of Thanksgiving* that is listed as Psalm 34.

Added significance is given to its contents when its background is kept in mind. Consider the following expressions:

**I sought Yahweh, and He heard me,
And delivered me from all my fears (v.4).**

**This poor man cried, and Yahweh heard
him,**

**And saved him out of all his troubles.
The angel of Yahweh encampeth round
about them that fear Him,**

And delivereth them (vv.6,7).
These are key verses in the Psalm.

Its Connection With Other Psalms

We have mentioned Ps. 56 in connection with this incident, and the superscription identifies it with such. In fact, three Psalms are devoted to this occasion.

Psalm 56 is a Prayer, seeking divine help in the face of David's predicament.

Psalm 142 is another Prayer acknowledging the help of Yahweh. It was composed when David was "in the cave"

(see superscription), and therefore is aligned with his retreat to the cave of Adullam as recorded in 1 Sam. 22:1.

Psalm 34 expresses Praise because of the deliverance granted.

The trilogy represents Appeal (Ps. 56), Protection (Ps. 142), and Praise (Ps. 34).

Prophetic of Christ

Psalm 34, therefore, primarily is a Prayer or Hymn of Thanksgiving to Yahweh for the manner in which He rescued David in his extremity. Similar overshadowing care was taken of the Lord Jesus Christ whom David foreshadowed. David declared:

**Many are the afflictions of the
righteous;
But Yahweh delivereth him out of them
all.**

**He keepeth all his bones;
Not one of them is broken (vv. 19-20).**

In the final analysis, when these lines are considered in their figurative application, they can only apply to the Lord. For "broken bones" are figurative of sins committed (see Ps. 51:8). But of Christ it is recorded:

"They brake not his legs... For these things were done, that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken" (John 19:33-36).

This is a citation of the Psalm before us. The Lord alone is the sinless one; of all others, like the thieves on the cross, it must be admitted that they have "broken bones" or are actual sinners (see Ps. 51:8).

These background notes on the Psalm will assist to better comprehend the significance of its words, and apply the principles expressed thereby to our own walk in Christ. HPM

What a fine spirit of Godly contentment did David manifest. In all circumstances of life he was pliable to the Divine will, and even when overtaken by weakness was ever ready to submit to Yahweh's requirements when they were revealed. This contentment is what Paul also exemplified. "I have learned", said he, "In whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content". And his further comment for our instruction is: "Godliness with contentment is great gain". It was an attitude of life he had "to learn"; and he did so through the lessons of weakness and evil. To learn and remember this will counter-act our natural tendency to grumble and go about with sour looks at what we may be inclined to regard as weary drudgery and a hard lot, quite out of harmony with the calling of a saint.

— C.J.