

REFLECTIONS ON THE PSALMS PERSONAL TO CHRIST.

IN the following pages it is sought specially to consider those Psalms in which the Spirit presents to us that which was *personal* to our blessed Lord. There are many expressions in other Psalms which apply to Him partially or wholly ; but those only which have Him for their subject form the chief consideration presented to the reader, though connecting links are introduced. It may be said that the chief subject of the Book is the varied experiences of the godly remnant of Israel, as distinguished from the ungodly nation.

It must be remembered that the nation of Israel was composed of those who by their birth, and by circumcision, derived their origin from Abraham ; and before God and before men they held the responsible place of the " people of God." It was of all importance for them to trace their genealogy to the root of promise, that is to say, to Abraham. No question was then raised as to their being " born of God."

It was on the entire failure of the priesthood as representing the people before God (and through whom alone they could approach Him) (1 Sam. ii. 12-17), that Hannah's thanksgiving prayer comes before us, in which her utterances by the Spirit speak of the poor being raised up out of the dust, and of the ~~wicked~~ being silenced in darkness.

Thus a *godly remnant* is distinguished. It is interesting to see that in Hannah's mind this distinction in Israel between the "saints" of Jehovah and the wicked is associated with His giving strength unto His King, and exalting the horn of His Messiah. Hence we find in the Psalms how intimately the history of the remnant is connected with David. Men of faith were drawn to him when in rejection. So the blessed Lord, of whom David was a type, drew around Himself the godly in Israel, those baptized of John in Jordan, confessing their sins.

The nation, as such, lost its link with God dispensationally, when the ark was taken captive, and God delivered His glory into the enemies hand. It was not brought back until David, God's anointed king, placed it in a tent on Mount Zion. The unfaithful priesthood, the sons of Eli, and Eli himself, died; and Ichabod, "the glory is departed," was written on Israel. The anointed king, raised up by election and grace, is now God's resource, and Israel's hope and deliverer, and the priest had to walk before him (1 Sam. ii. 35). It is this remnant, separated from the nation, and in spirit associated with Christ, as well as walking in the fear of the Lord, which is finally owned by Jehovah as the nation (Isa. lxvi. 5; Hosea ii. 1). In this latter passage, "the brethren," (those thus owned by the Spirit of Christ, Matt. xii. 50), are distinctly called "Ammi," *My people*, while "Lo-Ammi," *Not My people*, was written on the nation.

Psalms i. and ii., which form in some sort a preface to the Book, present these two subjects to

us. In the first we find a godly remnant, such as Zacharias and Elizabeth, who were "righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless" (Luke i. 6); in the second we have Jehovah's Messiah. It was the election of David as king which manifested the enmity of the mass of the nation under Saul against Jehovah and His anointed (verse 2).

The consideration of the Psalms which speak of Christ *personally*, but prophetically, naturally leads us to begin with Psalm ii. When He presented Himself to Israel according to prophecy and promise, it was John the Baptist who by his ministry had prepared His way before Him, and the godly remnant became manifest through being baptised of him in Jordan confessing their sins; now Jesus identified Himself with this remnant, being also baptised of John. There are very many Psalms which do not speak of Christ personally, but in them we can trace His Spirit producing feelings and utterances proper for the godly in the varied circumstances in which they are found. They have to suffer both the enmity of the ungodly, and also the chastenings of Jehovah upon the nation, because of its iniquity and departure from the Lord, the result often of association with the idolatrous nations around them; yet the godly were encouraged to look in faith to Jehovah, as a covenant God, and thus to find the sympathy and help of the Spirit of Christ; this is found in the Psalms. The association of the evil generation of Israel with the heathen was brought to a head, through God's overruling hand, at the cross; there they said, "We have no king but Cæsar,"

and Psalm ii. 1 and 2, is quoted by the disciples assembled together (Acts iv.), as fulfilled, in that Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together against God's holy servant, Jesus.

God's anointed King, then, is the subject of this Psalm. It must here be borne in mind that "the gathering of the peoples" to Shiloh had been foretold (Gen. xlix. 10), and that it had been further said that the Most High "set the bounds of the peoples according to the number of the children of Israel" (Deut. xxxii. 8). These peoples are regarded here as those who consulted together "against the Lord and against his Anointed." But in the presence of such an upheaval of the nations, the prophetic Spirit announces that "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision." It is Jehovah, He who calls things that are not as though they were, who Himself decrees: "I have anointed My King upon Zion, the hill of My holiness." And that Anointed One, whatever men may think, is thus addressed by Jehovah, "Thou art My Son, I this day have begotten Thee." It is thus that the One born of the virgin in the time fixed by the Lord is saluted by Him. One sees how great is the light which shines for the Jewish remnant in this Psalm for a day yet to come.

In John xvii. the Lord does not ask for the world, but His request was for those the *Father* had given to Him; but this Psalm invites Him to ask of *Jehovah* for the nations as His inheritance, but this waits till the Lord's petitions for those given to Him of His Father are accomplished, and

the heavenly saints, who now form the assembly, are in the same glory with Christ above. In Rev. ii. 26, 27 the Lord gives to the one who overcomes the wickedness of the present association of that which belongs to Christ with the idolatrous world, to have rule over the nations as He received from His Father. In this Psalm this rule belongs to the Messiah, and the gracious invitation goes out to the kings and judges of the earth to "kiss the Son," before they are compelled by a rod of iron to submit to Him. The blessedness is declared of all those who have their trust or refuge in Him. It will be noted that *the government* of this world is placed, according to the decree of Jehovah, in the hands of the Son, God's King in Zion. The effect of this rule and government of the earth will be, that every thing which has breath will praise Jah. His supremacy will produce a universal Hallelujah on earth (Psalm cl.).

PSALM VIII.

We have already seen that Jehovah has declared His decree touching His Son (Psalm ii.), born in due time, and anointed *King in Zion*, the mountain of Jehovah's holiness. In the mind of the Spirit *the earthly* inheritance of the Son is there in question, *Zion* being the centre. But in Psalm viii., while Jehovah's name is excellent in all the earth, it is as having set His glory *above the heavens*. There *we* know that Christ has ascended, "far above all heavens, that He might fill all things" (Ephes. iv. 10). These two things are evidently placed together in the Psalm: glory above the

heavens, and Jehovah's Name excellent in all the earth. Those heavens, the work of His fingers, the sphere where the order and power of Jehovah are displayed, the Psalmist here *considers*; he views them according to the divine order, and not spoiled, as are the things on earth, by man's hand. They are the witnesses of the faithfulness of Jehovah in regard of the new covenant (Jer. xxxi. 35, 36). There cannot be a greater contrast than "glory set above the heavens," and "the mouth of babes and sucklings;" yet from their mouth Jehovah "ordained strength." In Matt. xxi. 16 the divine answer to the adversaries of Jesus came from the mouth of children, crying, Hosanna! The testimony to the *Son of David* was thus upheld *on the earth*, but now the setting of the Son of Man in glory above the heavens is the answer to His humiliation here.

The vision of Ezekiel (chap. i.) reveals to us a kind of chariot-throne, and over the heads of the living creatures and wheels, the firmament (Gen. i. 6, 8), and *above the firmament* the likeness of a throne, and as the aspect of a man above upon it (verse 26). In the New Testament it is Jesus who occupies that glorious place, and we have the privilege of beholding the glory of the Lord with unveiled face. The contemplation has a transforming effect (Heb. ii. 9; 2 Cor. iii. 18). As we now turn our eyes to the heavens, we see a light far beyond that which detained the Psalmist's gaze.

The question asked in Psalm ii. was, Why such opposition of men to Christ? but in Psalm viii. it is asked, What is man that God should be mindful of him? The word "man" in this question

denotes the feeble and fallen race of mankind. The same question, "What is man?" is asked in Job vii. 17. Why should God set His heart on him, a feeble, dying creature? It is indeed wonderful that God should indite a book of forty chapters about one such man. Does it not show His interest in him? Once more the question is asked by the Psalmist, Why should God be so patient any longer with his evil? (Ps. cxliv). In Psalm viii. the question receives its answer in the "Son of man" (Adam). We are carried back in thought to Adam (Gen. i. 26), "And God said, Let us make man [Adam in Hebrew] in our image, after our likeness." It is evident here that the creation of Adam was the subject of the counsel of the Godhead, with the object in view of his having the dominion spoken of in this Psalm, but we are carried in this Psalm beyond Adam and the place of dominion accorded to him. It speaks to us of that which is beyond man's fall, whereby the creation was subjected to vanity. In the divine counsels the entire universe is subjected to the "Son of Man."

We have already seen that Psalm ii. predicts fallen man's opposition to God's King, and Jehovah's wrath and displeasure in consequence, but God's counsel with regard to man is not given up. He establishes those counsels, according to His full intent, in the Son of Man exalted and glorified. This precious subject is developed by the Spirit in Heb. ii. The answer to the question as to the Son of Man is found in Jesus crowned with glory and honour, whilst waiting to have all things put under Him.

Here we may note that our blessed Saviour constantly speaks of Himself as the Son of Man. Only once (John iv. 26) does He say that He is the Christ, and in Matt. xvi. 20 He charges His disciples to tell no one that He was the Christ; He was about to suffer as Son of Man. He had ever the consciousness of being the loved Son of the Father (John iii. 35), but He was equally in the consciousness that all the thoughts and purposes of God as to man reposed in Him, hence He early speaks of Himself as "Son of Man" (John i. 51), passing in His thoughts, we may say, from Psalm ii. to Psalm viii., for it is the Spirit of Christ that speaks in both Psalms. And again, when Jesus shows the necessity of His death—"the Son of Man *must* be lifted up"—it is in order that the divine counsels touching "life eternal," "promised before the world began," might have their accomplishment (John iii. 14; Titus i. 2).

In Heb. ii. the Spirit shows, that though the Jewish economy was administered for Jehovah by angels, yet that the habitable earth *to come* is put under the Son of Man according to this Psalm. The *habitable earth* to come in all its extent stands in contrast to the land of Israel. That is why in John i. 51, as a consequence of the Son (the Word) having become man, the angels no longer occupy themselves with Jacob (Gen. xxviii. 12) and the old covenant, but with the Son of Man. Psalm xcvi., which the Apostle quotes in Heb. i., speaks of the angels (gods) worshipping the first begotten when brought by God into the world. It is beautiful to see how the Spirit of prophecy could

express *in one single sentence* the marvellous fact that all things according to the counsels of God are subjected to the Son of Man. We get the development of this sentence in Heb. ii. and 1 Cor. xv. In the former passage the Spirit speaks thus, "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; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man." The Son of Man has thus acquired the rights of redemption over the whole universe of God. And in Rev. v. the angelic hosts gladly own His worthiness to receive all that is put into His hands, for He is *God's Lamb*, as well as Son of Man.

We see also in 1 Cor. xv. 27, 28, the immense significance given by the Holy Spirit to the quotation of the same sentence. The reign of the Son of Man in His mediatorial Kingdom continues until death, the last enemy of God and man, is destroyed, and "the Son" Himself then retains for ever the place of man, though always the First-born, in subjection, as He was upon earth, to the Father; that God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost may be all in all.

Our meditation on this Psalm would not be complete unless the quotation which we find in Eph. i. 22 were noticed. The Apostle speaks of "the exceeding greatness of the power" of God, which He wrought, not in forming man from the dust of the ground, as in Gen. ii., but in raising a Man from the dust of death, and making Him to sit at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power. Thus it is not

a question of the dominion given to Adam over the inferior part of the creation of which he was head, but of Christ raised from the dead, and *all things* put under His feet; and note also, that it is not *government* or dominion which is before the mind of the Spirit, but Headship; and this Headship of Man is never spoken of as given up, though always the Son is in subjection to the Father; it is the eternal blessedness of man.

Note again, that in the first creation, the man was formed after the things were created over which he had dominion; but the new creation begins with a Man raised from among the dead, and in that creation everything has its origin from the raised and exalted Man, who also gives character to it. Christ is Head *over all things*, but Head *to the Assembly*, which is His body; it is thus viewed as the fulness of Him who fills all in all. Being "complete [or filled full] in him" (Col. ii. 10), those who form the assembly can be the fulness of Christ. As the drops of dew receive and reflect the rays of the sun, thus making each drop to reflect its glory, so also will the myriads of saints, bearing the image of the heavenly, shine in, and reflect the fulness of the glory of Christ, the exalted and glorified Son of Man.

PSALM XVI.

This Psalm has been compared to a stake placed in the centre of those Psalms which describe the feelings and exercises of Israel when in the midst of the rising tide of evil. It must be remembered that government, placed by God in the hands of

Noah after the Deluge, was afterwards established in Israel, the law of God and His testimony having been entrusted to them. Again, later on that *government*, after having been taken away from Israel, was given to the Gentiles. Nebuchadnezzar was the first king who exercised the *authority* committed to the Gentiles, although *the testimony* of God was still with His ancient people, by means of prophets and the Scriptures. Such a state of things existed still when our Lord Jesus Christ was born.

In Matt. xiv., the character which Gentile dominion had in the midst of Israel comes before us. Herod *the King*, united to an adulterous woman, slew the witness of Jesus. In chap. xv., the religious heads of the Jewish nation, who were responsible to maintain *the testimony of God*, transgressed His commandment by reason of their tradition. We have thus a striking picture of the apostasy of Gentile government, and of the Jews from the testimony of God. Now our Lord had to walk in the midst of such a state of things. Psalm xvi. describes that which was for Him the path of faith and confidence in God.

We find the same state of things in two preceding Psalms. Psalm ix. speaks of heathen or Gentile power which had "destroyed cities; their memorial perished with them" (compare Isa. xxxvii. 13); nevertheless Jehovah, the Most High, maintained the right and the cause of the remnant in Israel, while in Matt. iii. Christ associated Himself with that remnant, as in this Psalm He does in Spirit. They cry, "Arise, Jehovah . . . let the heathen [or Gentiles] be judged." In the following

Psalm it is again said, "Arise, Jehovah! . . . forget not the humble [or afflicted]" (verse 12). The fact that the wicked in Israel persecuted the poor or afflicted shows the state of the nation itself. Afterwards, in Psalm xi. there is the cry, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" In Psalm xii. it is said, "The godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men." These faithful, who trusted Jehovah, were as foundations, and they failed. But here we find the promise, "Now will *I* arise, saith Jehovah." In Psalm xiii. there is the cry, "How long?" "Shall my enemy be exalted over me?" (compare Luke xviii. 7, 8). In Psalm xiv. the fool says in his heart "there is no God." But God takes note of it, from heaven Jehovah (Israel's God) looks down on the children of men (be they Jew or Gentile). He declares, "there is none that doeth good, no, not one." The Apostle Paul quotes this passage as a reason for setting forth the righteousness of God in Christ (Rom. iii.). Psalm xv. anticipates the blessed moment when righteousness and truth will be found on the holy hill of Jehovah, but to-day they are only found in Christ, and in those that are His.

God knows how to reply to the cries of distress of His people, and how to find the means also to bring about their blessing. He does it by Christ. The two principles—faith and righteousness—which we find continually in the Psalms, are now fully revealed as being in Christ. Eve abandoned the path of righteousness through want of confidence in God. Faith brings God into the circumstances, whatever they may be. For example,

Psalm iii. 3 regards Jehovah as a *shield* against the fiery darts of those who said of David, "There is no help for him in God." In Psalm ix. 9 faith turns to Jehovah as a *refuge* in times of trouble, "They that know Thy Name will put their trust in Thee." But in Psalm xvi. there is the positive confidence and joy of faith in Jehovah because of *what He is Himself*.

Now the Holy Spirit produces such feelings in the souls of the godly, knowing that man responds but slowly, so as to find his delights in the blessed God and in the way to Him. The saints to-day can still walk in the same path. The Apostle Paul speaks to the Philippians of the "joy of faith," and Peter writes, "Whom having not seen ye love, in whom though now ye see Him not, *yet believing*, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." It shows how both these apostles had drunk into the mind and spirit of Christ.

There can be no doubt that this Psalm refers to Christ *personally*, to Him who was "the author and finisher of faith" (Heb. xii. 1). None but He, as He entered on the path of faith described in this Psalm, could have said to Jehovah, "My goodness extendeth not to Thee" (verse 2). When here, Jesus said, "There is none good but one, that is God" (Mark x. 18); but in this Psalm the Spirit has written these words for Him: "My goodness;" a divine Person He was, but having become man, and entered the path of faith, He did not take the place of equality with God which belonged to Him, but of dependence and faith. It is very wonderful and blessed thus to contemplate Jesus. Having "emptied Himself," He took

the place of a servant, and said to Jehovah, not, I am Lord (*Adonay*), but "Thou art Lord" (*Adonay*). He had also, when upon earth, a place where the joy of faith was found,—that is, in the midst of God's elect people. "To the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent," as He esteemed them to be, He said, "In them is all My delight." In the record of faith given to us in Heb. xi., we have these two aspects of faith. In Enoch there was one who "sought out" *God*, and walked *with Him*, having the testimony before he was translated, for his own joy of faith, "that he *pleased God*." Again, in Abraham there is another example of the blessing to be enjoyed in communion with God while in the path of faith. His tent and his altar spoke of pilgrimage and communion, while of him Jehovah thus speaks (Isaiah xli. 8), "Abraham, My friend." On the other side, Moses by faith chose the path of suffering with *the people of God*, "esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." The Spirit of God thus links the choice of Moses with the utterance of Christ prophetically stated in this Psalm.

As to the saints—the elect and the excellent—in whom Christ found all His delight, they were truly those whom He would lead in the path of faith, showing to them in His own path how worthy *God is* to possess the confiding trust of *man*. But Jesus only is the perfect expression of it. How precious that it is so! It is the truth expressed in the first verse of this Psalm which the apostle uses in Heb. ii. 13, to show that the Sanctifier and the sanctified are all "of one." We may say, with reverence,

that the Spirit of Christ in verse 4 resents any turning of heart to any other than to Jehovah; the names of such He would not take upon His lips. It is this apostasy from God which is so fatal. See the warning in Heb. iii. 12. Jesus well knew that His Father was worthy of confiding trust from the heart of man, even as He Himself always welcomed the faith of any poor sinner who sought to draw from the fountain of the grace of God that was in Himself; the heart of Jesus was open ever and always to faith.

There had been a foreshadowing of verse 5 in Jehovah's word of old to Aaron: "Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them; *I am thy part and thine inheritance* among the children of Israel" (Num. xviii. 20), and a wealthy portion it was. The tribe of Levi, which was under the hand of Aaron, shared in that heritage. Yet it was a gift, and not the free choice of Aaron. But Christ speaks absolutely for Himself as having come into the world: "Jehovah is the portion of mine inheritance." He would have no portion here, the creatures He had made had holes and nests, but the Son of Man had not where to lay His head. Taking Jehovah for the portion of His inheritance, He speaks of it as "a goodly heritage," and how true it was that Jehovah maintained the lot which He had chosen. Foreseeing the moment when His poor disciples would be scattered, and leave Him alone, Jesus said, "I am not alone, for the Father is with Me." Ever the Son in the bosom of the Father, and yet having no home in this world, He found His meat, as an obedient Man, in doing the will of His Father.

“ I will bless Jehovah who giveth me counsel ” (verse 7). We read of Israel otherwise : “ They waited not for His counsel ” (Ps. cvi. 13). For that reason God had “ to humble them and suffer them to hunger . . . that they might know that man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord ” (Deut. viii. 3). In keeping the word and testimony of Jehovah there is great reward. Jesus would not make stones bread, for He had no word from the mouth of His Father to do it, and angels came and ministered to Him. Again, it is instructive to see how Jesus waited for His Father’s counsel—two days—before going to Bethany—to the house of sorrow. Notwithstanding the death of Lazarus, and the sorrow of his sisters, sorrow which He made His own as He wept with them, waiting for the counsel of His Father was the means of manifesting the glory of God, and bringing resurrection and life to light, as subsisting in Himself.

His reins also instructed Him in the night seasons (verse 7). By that I understand that *His* thoughts intimately accorded with the counsel of Jehovah His Father. How much we have need to be “ filled with the knowledge of God’s will ” (with Christ it was always so), “ in all wisdom and spiritual understanding,” in order to be able to “ walk worthy of the Lord unto all well-pleasing.” Not only did Jesus set Jehovah always before Him, but He could not be moved because Jehovah, His Father, was at His right hand ; as He said when here, “ He that sent Me *is with Me* ; the Father hath not left Me alone, for I do always those things *that please Him* ” (John viii. 29).

We have to bear in mind that Jesus is the One that leads in the path of faith. He is the Shepherd who goes before the sheep, reposing always when here in His Father's love, and in the care of *His* right hand, so that He could indeed say, "Therefore My heart is glad, and My glory rejoiceth." In this passage the Spirit of Christ uses language which without doubt can be applicable to the circumstances of the godly remnant when "waters of a full cup are wrung out to them." Hence in Psalm lxxiii. the Spirit of Christ indites this expression for the faithful, "Nevertheless I am continually *with Thee*, Thou hast holden me by my right hand" (verse 23). This lesson is learned in the sanctuary of God, and the One who has gone before the sheep teaches it. The Spirit of God also, down here now that Christ is on high, by the Apostle Paul exhorts the Philippians to "rejoice in the Lord *always*" and to "be careful for nothing." By His passing through death the Lord has opened to His own that path of faith which ends in the presence of His Father—where He now is. Having taken part in flesh and blood, and being found in a condition similar to ours, this "Holy [or godly] One," whose confidence was in God His Father, could say, "*My flesh* also shall rest in hope, for Thou wilt not abandon My soul to Hades, nor suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption." Although it was not possible that He could be holden of death, yet in the blessed assurance of hope He waited for the third day, when the glory of the Father raised Him from the dead. This confidence of His Father's love gladdened His heart when all around was the sorrow of death.

The Scriptures make but little mention of the joys of heaven, or of the pleasures which are found there. Such things are not communicable by human language, so I gather from 2 Cor. xii. 4. In the third heaven Paul heard unspeakable words which it was not possible for man to utter. The Spirit of God knows how to help us to seize the bearing of the expressions which we find in this Psalm, as also of those from other Scriptures which follow: "So shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. iv. 17); "Then face to face" . . . "then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Cor. xiii. 12); "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John iii. 2); and other passages also. Yes, the Spirit can beget in us a very just idea of that time when the voice of Jesus shall lead the praises of every family in heaven and on earth; and when He shall fill the universe of God with the divine glory and blessing; and when He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied. Then He will rest in the intimacy of the love, which found its perfect expression in His death for His own. That love flows from the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit through all generations of the age of ages, but human language and thought are limited, yet the Apostle Peter speaks of a *joy unspeakable*, rejoiced in now, and full of glory (1 Pet. i. 8).

PSALMS XX AND XXI.

THESE two Psalms should be read together, the one is the answer to the other. The first speaks of a "day of *trouble*," the second of "glory in

Jehovah's salvation." We have not before considered this day of trouble, but in Psalm xvi. we have contemplated *His delight* in the saints that were in the earth, and of His anticipations beyond death of joy in God's presence, and of pleasures for evermore. But there came a time, towards the close of His pathway here, when Jesus said, "Now is My soul troubled." The hour of the travail of His soul was before Him, when His sufferings and death would be the birthplace of a new generation for His eternal glory; deep was the sorrow as He said, "Father, save Me from this hour" (John xii. 27). And again, "This is your hour and the power of darkness" (Luke xxii. 53). At the commencement of His pathway the Lord sought the company of those in Israel who had turned to Jehovah through the ministry of John the Baptist. But here (Ps. xx.) the same remnant are viewed as bearing Him company in "the day of His trouble." It is true that as they followed Him in the way "they were amazed," and though He went before them, "they were afraid" (Mark x. 32). Yet they clung to Him, and this Jesus acknowledged, saying, "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations" (Luke xxii. 28). And again, we see this affection for Jesus in the words of Thomas, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him" (John xi. 16).

In this Psalm the Spirit directs the godly remnant of Israel in their desires, and this is very blessed; "Jehovah answer thee in the day of trouble, the name of the *God of Jacob* protect thee" (compare Gen. xxviii. 15; Jer. xxx. 7). Help comes from the sanctuary of God, and God's

foundation in the holy mountain of Zion is strength for Messiah in the day of trouble ; but mark, it is the remnant who thus speak to Him. Three desires follow as the Spirit indites them :—

1. That Jehovah would remember all His offerings, and accept His burnt sacrifice.

2. That Jehovah would grant Him according to His heart, and fulfil all His counsel.

3. That Jehovah would fulfil all His petitions.

Be it so that Peter and John and the other disciples little understood the meaning of such desires, until Christ opened their understanding after His resurrection (Luke xxiv. 45), and the Holy Spirit was given after His ascension to teach them all things ; yet they are written for us also, and specially for a generation to come, whose hearts will be opened to learn the sorrows of Jesus (Zech. xii. 10). In a certain sense it is with us still the time of “ the sufferings of Christ,” “ the glories ” are not come (2 Cor. i. 5 ; 1 Pet. i. 11), though personally *He* is glorified. It is the sacrifice of Jesus, who by the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, which is ever a sweet savour before God ; and whether it be the saints of old time, or the Assembly, or Israel in the day to come, or the great multitude of saved Gentiles, their blessing is founded on the constancy of that one offering being ever before God. This was figured in the daily burnt offering on the altar of old. The ordinance of the altar was : “ The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar, it shall never go out.” Even when Israel were asleep, the sweet savour of the burnt offering went up to God (Lev. vi. 9, 13). God alone appreciates the value

of that sacrifice which is ever before Him. The new heaven and earth—the universe of bliss—has for its immutable foundation the work done on Calvary.

In verse 4 the godly remnant continue their request that Jehovah would give to Messiah “according to Thine own heart, and fulfil all Thy counsel.” We have already seen (Ps. xvi.) that Jehovah gave Him counsel down here. It is a proof that the heart and thoughts of Jesus were in perfect harmony with the heart and thoughts of the Father, and also that the Father’s heart and thoughts found their expression in His beloved Son. This mutuality is expressed in the words, “As Thou Father art in Me, and I in Thee” (John xvii. 21). When Jesus said to the leper, “I will, be thou clean,” and touched him, the Father’s heart went with those words and that touch. And again, when He said to the dying robber, “To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise,” the lips of Jesus spoke the *grace of God* to that “first disciple of the cross,” as he has been called.

And cannot we think with reverence, that as the disciples heard the petitions of Christ, such as are recorded in John xii. 28, and specially in John xvii., and again in Gethsemane, the thought of their hearts would be in spirit that which is said here, “Jehovah fulfil all thy petitions;” only that the Lord had taught *them* the name of Father. Moreover, we see how the Lord valued the company of His disciples, the remnant of that day; this is shown in His words, “With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer” (Luke xxii. 15). At Bethany also He

accepted the love which entertained Him as a Guest. The shadow of the cross was over Him, the day of trouble, and He knew and owned that the disciples loved Him (John xvi.), though they slept in Gethsemane and fled when He was betrayed into the hands of men. In this Psalm, also, His Spirit goes beyond the feebleness of their thoughts, and leads the remnant to rejoice in the Lord's Anointed being saved out of the day of trouble (compare Isaiah xlix. 8; Heb. v. 7). Jehovah has heard Him, not out of Zion (verse 2), but from the heaven of His holiness; Jesus has been raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, that is to say, by "the saving strength of his right hand," and this the godly remnant *now* knows. All confidence in the flesh is brought down (verse 7). Peter would have used the sword for his Master's help, but God is now known as He who has raised Jesus (1 Pet. i. 21). "Jehovah our God." The name of "Jesus" is found in the words, "Save Jehovah." Israel will find their King in Jehovah the Saviour, that is, in Jesus. The Assembly knows Him besides as Lord and Head (Col. i. 18).

Psalm xxi. gives the full response to the utterances of Psalm xx. The morning of joy breaks for the King after the night of weeping. He greatly rejoices in Jehovah's salvation. On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, Jesus emerged from the whole scene of sin and death and sorrow into the light of resurrection joy and glory. His salvation is ours. Resurrection was part of the great plan of God for bringing blessings to man. Hence we read in verse 6,

“Thou hast set Him to be blessings” (margin)—this One who has been heard and saved out of death. See something of the extent of blessing in Luke xxiv. 46, 47. It is very precious to contemplate the Lord taking part in flesh and blood—the condition in which the children given to Him were found—and to see also how He is interested in those for whom He has presented “the request of his lips” according to the perfection of “his heart’s desire.”

It is *as Man* that He asked life of Jehovah His Father. Of the Eternal Word we read, “In Him life was,” but to the Son come as man *it was given* “to have life in Himself,” that as the last Adam He might communicate it to men. As Head to men in resurrection life He was given “length of days for ever and ever.” We find in this the intimation, as also in Psalm cii. 27, “Thy years shall have no end,” that Jesus retains the place of Man for ever. Never will He give up the relation into which He has entered with those whom He has associated with Himself in God’s salvation, whether in heaven or on earth. “His glory is great in thy salvation.” With what a countless multitude will He surround Himself on the morning of the resurrection, all glorified and bearing the image of the heavenly One; but not only will heaven be filled with the heirs of glory, the earth below will reflect that glory (see Isaiah iv. 5 and lx.); there is also His own personal glory, He has re-entered as Man the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, the sweetness being that it is given to Him by His Father, and He so receives it as the Son loved of the Father, and yet

as having become Man according to the divine counsels.

In this Psalm His glory does not go beyond the Royalty of the Kingdom, of the King, and of the glory that belongs to Him as King; but it is precious to see that He receives it as that which accompanies the salvation of Jehovah, "Honour and majesty hast *thou* laid upon Him." Two results follow from this exaltation of the One who suffered and was rejected. A day of blessing, "Thou hast set him to be blessings for ever," (margin) and a day of wrath. Psalm xxii. speaks of a time when He was forsaken of God, but now in resurrection-glory we read, "Thou hast made Him exceeding glad with Thy countenance." This is for His own delight, and though the blessings contemplated in this Psalm are earthly and flow down without interruption from the king—the Root and Offspring of David—yet the passage doubtless is so worded by the Spirit that we may include the idea of heavenly blessings as subsisting in Him (Ephes. i. 3) who has gone from the sorrows of Calvary into the light of His Father's countenance—putting believers into His own place before His Father and God (John xx. 17). Jehovah, Most High, possessor of heaven and earth, will never suffer the One who trusted Him in sorrow, the One who lived on account of His Father, to be moved. Earthly blessing is thus assured.

On the destruction of His enemies I will not enlarge. Judgment is God's strange work, and He will cut it short in righteousness; but it must take place not only to secure the glory of Him who

was humbled and rejected here (John v. 22, 23), but also in order that Jehovah may be exalted in His own strength (verse 13), and that the saints may sing and praise His name. "The Son of Man shall gather out of *His Kingdom* all that offends and works lawlessness, and cast them into a furnace of fire." The blessed Lord Himself then brings *the Kingdom of the Father* into view: "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." He is the Sun of righteousness for this earth, and the heavenly saints shine in His likeness.

PSALMS XXII. AND LXIX.

THOUGH Psalm xxii. comes before us in the middle of the first Book, and Psalm lxix. towards the close of the second book of Psalms, yet it may be profitable to consider them together, as they both refer to our Lord's sufferings for sin on the cross. Each one of us has a life of responsibility to God *upon this earth*, and that responsibility is measured according to the privileges conferred by God upon each; but besides this, after the life of responsibility is over, there is the question for each, of ability to stand *in the presence of the glory of God* when heaven and earth have passed away. For a sinner dying in his sins this is impossible. And this is not a time question, but an eternal one. Now this eternal question has been for ever settled for the believer in the death of Jesus. He who knew no sin was made sin for us when hanging on the cross and suffering the judgment of God against sin. Of this Psalm xxii. speaks. But

besides this, there may be, and often is, a retributive and governmental dealing of God with men while on earth on account of sin, and men and Satan may be used of Him in carrying out these righteous ways. So it was with David; he was eternally forgiven, but in this world the sword was never to depart from his house. It is wicked men who are Jehovah's sword (Ps. xvii. 13). The history of the nation of Israel, set in privilege by God, illustrates specially this governmental dealing of God on account of their sins against Him. Their captivity in Babylon, and present blindness and dispersion, are the result of His retributive ways with them. The Lord Jesus entered into this character of suffering also. Hence the Holy Spirit by the prophet writes these words specially for Israel: "With His stripes we are healed" (Isa. liii. 5). Yet both characters of suffering were together, and necessarily so, upon Jesus on the cross. So it is said in the same chapter that Jehovah made His soul "an offering for sin" (verse 10), but Psalm lxix. speaks of the governmental ways of God because of the foolishness and trespasses of Israel.

Though sufferings at the hands of men are found in Psalm xxii., yet the first verse, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me," hangs like a thick black cloud (shutting out from His soul every ray of light from God's countenance) over all the sorrows and sufferings from men, and giving to them a character that none could know but Christ Himself. The reason of this forsaking and bitter cry is found in verse 3, "But thou art *holy*." The claims of righteousness are not so much

before us here, as the intrinsic holiness of God's nature which must of necessity *exclude* sin from His presence. This exclusion Jesus knew when "made sin." For the mere creature this exclusion would be eternal, and hence eternal misery. Into the depths which the soul of Jesus knew when forsaken of God no human thought can penetrate: faith looks on with adoring wonder at the riches of God's grace. The word "Why?" on the lips of Jesus was no calling in question of this only way (because God's way and as infinite as Himself) of eternally settling the question of sin; yet the words "Thou hearest not" show us how completely Jesus knew and felt that He was abandoned of God, but when the darkness of those three hours, which stand alone in the history of eternity, had passed, and the Holy Sufferer said, "Thou hast heard Me from the horns of the unicorns," the way was opened for the declaration of the name of a Saviour God and Father by Him who was thus heard.

But I turn now to Psalm lxix. I have spoken of the captivity of Babylon and the present scattering of Israel as illustrating the governmental and retributive dealings of God with that nation. Then we read in Isaiah xl. of God comforting His people, for Jerusalem had received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins. Now this rendering to Jerusalem double was in no sense atonement, Christ alone could do that; but it is because of atonement that God can righteously speak to the heart of any sinner, and make good His purpose of grace while maintaining His glory. But we read another thing, "In all their affliction He was afflicted" (Isa. lxiii. 9). We get an

illustration of this blessed truth in the Lord's tears over Jerusalem (Luke xix. 41-44). Was He not afflicted as the words of God's retributive dealing were spoken by His lips? Was it said of Israel, "They shall look unto the land; and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to darkness" (Isa. viii. 22)? And did not Jesus know the anguish of Gethsemane (for He was not there making atonement), and experience the hour of man's wickedness and the power of darkness? Was He not reckoned among the transgressors? (Luke xxii. 37, 53). There is retributive dealing with sin in *this world*, and thus God maintains His righteous government in His ways with men (see Col. iii. 25). The present dispensation is one of grace, but it reigns through righteousness, and teaches those who taste it to live soberly, righteously, and godly. At the same time, because God's righteousness has been vindicated in the cross, He exercises patience and longsuffering, and His goodness leads to repentance.

Though Israel was the nation in which the governmental dealings of God in this world were specially exercised, and the Assembly of God has a heavenly calling, yet the saints who compose it are down here in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, and so come into the governmental dealings of God. Peter applies Ps. xxxiv. 12-16 to Christians (1 Pet. iii. 10-12) omitting the last clause of verse 16. In Heb. xii. we have also the chastening of God for our good, that the peaceable fruit of *righteousness* may be produced; and again in 1 Cor. xi. there is the discipline of the

Lord for disregard of the holiness of His presence. There are also instances of some being delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. This goes very far, even as in the Old Testament it will be the case with Israel; they will experience Satan's power in the awful tribulation of the last days. Isaiah speaks of them, "Thou shalt be brought down, and speak *out of the ground*, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust" (chap. xxix. 4)—as those in the very article of death. Psalm cxvi. 3 describes such a state: "The sorrows of death encompassed me, and the pains of Hades got hold upon me." It is God's way of bringing the flesh to annihilation, that the living God may be their hope and resource. The remnant will find from this sixty-ninth Psalm and other Scriptures, that the One they pierced is the One who has righteously bowed to the holy retributive government of God, and been numbered *among the transgressors*, but has been saved out of it. Thus He will in spirit sustain them, while the chastening takes its course, with the sense of deliverance, as He was delivered. But for this the atonement of Psalm xxii. must, so to speak, go hand in hand with this governmental anger of God. The effect for the *Christian is*, when under the governmental dealing of God for allowed evil, a deep, very deep sense of the grace and love of Christ as having been smitten on account of the evil of God's people, which sustains the soul in the chastening, while producing the humbled state which casts the soul afresh on that favour in which grace has set it.

Now in Psalm xxii. we see Jesus in unutterable sorrow, but forsaken of God. *Alone*—save that the glory of God in His hatred of sin was there in that dark and dreadful hour. The presence of God was there indeed in judgment, yet hiding His face from Christ. God and Christ settling the question of sin in wrath and judgment for eternity. Hence the *final* condemnation of the lake of fire corresponds with the *last act* of the day of atonement, the burning the carcasses of the sin offerings without the camp (Lev. xvi. 27). But in Ps. lxix. we see Jesus, *not alone*, though He had in grace taken the place of being “smitten of God” (verse 26). We see Him in company with others “whom *Thou* hast wounded.” There will be an *overflowing* scourge pass over Israel (Isa. xxviii. 15), it will reach to the neck (chap. viii. 7, 8); and Satan, the serpent, will cast out of his mouth water as a flood to carry Israel away (Rev. xii. 15), but into these sorrows Christ has entered. His cry is, “Save me, O God, *for the waters* are come into My soul” (verse 1). But besides this, scorn and reproach and hatred were heaped upon Him by those who were His enemies wrongfully. He was a stranger unto His brethren, and an alien unto His mother’s children—the ungodly in Israel. Israel bore the name of Jehovah, and yet dishonoured it, and it was for the God of Israel’s sake that He bore reproach. Yet in verse 6 He prays that the remnant who waited on God (such as Peter and John) might not be ashamed for His sake. He was not hiding, but confessing the sins of guilty Israel as His own on the one hand, and zealous for the holiness of God’s house on the

other ; and there was the perfect giving of Himself up to the maintenance of the character of the God of Israel in His righteous dealings.

But there is no forsaking of God in this Psalm. It speaks of Gethsemane (where Jesus felt about sin as it ought to be felt), rather than of the *darkness* of Calvary, though verse 21 took place on the cross. *His prayer is in an acceptable time*, for there is “*multitude of mercy with God and truth of salvation.*” The forsaking of Psalm xxii. opened the door of mercy and salvation ; and thus with a broken heart, and no comfort from man, He turns to Jehovah His Father : “*Hear Me, Jehovah, for thy loving-kindness is good, turn unto me according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies, and hide not Thy face from Thy servant.*” Then He asks for indignation and wrathful anger (comp. Isa. x. 5; Dan. viii. 19 for this term) to be upon those whom Satan had used to persecute the One who had been smitten for His people’s sake by Jehovah, and those whom He had wounded, though men used of Satan were the instruments of their grief.

It all issues in the salvation—the righteous salvation — of this suffering One, and in His praising Jehovah with a song. The end is earthly blessing ; the remnant, whose sorrows Jesus had entered into, *the servants* of Jehovah, should have possession of and dwell in Zion, the centre of blessing on earth (Isa. lxv. 13–16).

PSALM XL.

I RETURN now to Book I. Psalm xl. has in it the confession of sins (ver. 12) as in Psalm lxix.,

but it is not so much God's governmental dealing with those who stood in relation to Him (Amos iii. 2), as the establishment of the will of God in the person of One who could entirely trust Him, and who only sought His Father's pleasure.

Psalms xxxviii. and xxxix. form a prelude to this Psalm. Verse 1 of Psalm xxxviii. is identical with verse 1 of Psalm vi. But in this Psalm the request, "O Lord, rebuke me not in Thy wrath," is followed by the sense of being actually under the chastening hand of God because of iniquities: "*Thine* arrows stick fast in me, and *thy* hand presseth me sore . . . for mine iniquities are gone over my head, as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me." Such is the language of the godly remnant; though personally upright, they bow under the guilt of the nation. Their experience is much the same as that of Job (Job vi. 4; vii. 5); but the Spirit of Christ in the remnant does not answer again, as did Job (ver. 13, 14), nor justify themselves (ver. 18), but it leads them to turn to *the Lord* (vers. 9, 15); and this is very blessed, producing the uprightness of heart which confesses the sin that brought the chastening.

In Psalm xxxix. the remnant are still under the sense of the stroke and blow of God's hand (vers. 10, 11), but there is no sinning with the tongue, as in Job's case, though the wicked is before them. But they look beyond the wicked; they say, "I opened not my mouth, because *Thou* didst it." There is another experience produced, that "man at his best estate is altogether vanity"; his days are but a handbreath, or as Eliphaz said, "crushed before the moth" (Job iv. 19). He has

the sentence of death in him, a dying man in a ruined condition of things ; he is but a sojourner here, though the Spirit of Christ leads him to say, " A stranger *with thee*, and a sojourner as all my fathers were." This is very beautiful. While Israel were wanderers, God walked with them in a tent, and had no settled place (2 Sam. vii. 6) ; and when God, so to speak, came into His own world in the person of His Son, He was a Stranger and a Sojourner there. The setting aside in death of man and his world leads to the introduction of Christ (Ps. xl.) in resurrection, and the establishment of the will of God, which will introduce the world to come.

The Psalm opens with Christ brought up out of the sorrows of death in resurrection power. He had waited patiently for Jehovah to intervene for Him. He had authority to lay down His life, and to take it again ; but He lay three days in the tomb, and then was raised by *the power of God*. All the Father's glory was involved in raising His own Son out of death, whither He went in perfect obedience and in the confidence of faith. Hence He can say to us, " Blessed is that man that maketh Jehovah his trust " (ver. 4).

As often in the Psalms, the opening verses here state *the result* of the cry for deliverance recorded in ver. 13 : " Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me." The innumerable evils and iniquities of *Israel* which He confessed as His own (*our sins also*, we can say), were those for which He went into " the horrible pit " of death. There is the end of flesh under the judgment of God. There was no guile—no " turning aside to lies "—(ver. 4),

but the full confession of sin in its dreadful character, and yet perfect confidence in Jehovah (ver. 4). It is a great comfort to know that our sins, which we often feel so lightly, were *felt* in all their horror by the Lord in Gethsemane as before a holy God, and the judgment of them borne on Calvary. Moreover, there was *no haste* in God's answer to His cry, and on His part perfection in waiting patiently for that answer. He was raised on *the third* day. I think it will be found that three days in Scripture is a number denoting perfected experience (see Gen. xxii. 4; Num. x. 33; Josh. iii. 2; Luke xiii. 32, 33).

The bringing of Christ from the dead is shown in this Psalm to be fruitful in its results. In contrast to the horrible pit, His feet have been set on a rock—the Rock of Ages which now lifts its head above the waves of death in resurrection power, bringing to us unbounded confidence in the Eternal, the God of resurrection. His *goings* or steps are established in the same power, and this is in contrast to the miry clay. And “hath put a new song in My mouth.” We do not read of any song in Scripture until God had triumphed in the redemption of His people from Egypt (Exod. xv.). In Psalm lxi. 30 there is a song in view of earthly blessing, but this is “a new song” put into the mouth of Him who came to do God's will, and bowed His head in death for God's glory; but He instantly joins the remnant with Himself in saying, “praise to *our God*.” So in speaking of God's wonderful works and His thoughts, He says, “to *usward*,” though it is *He*

who declares and speaks of them. It is *He* who knows and speaks of the thoughts of God, and *He* has given effect to them.

Then follows the setting aside of the Jewish ritual, a system which could not take away sins, but only called them to remembrance, nor could it perfect the conscience. Christ has come in. The peace and meat offerings (ver. 6) God supplants by preparing a body for Him, and the Lord Himself, in His devotedness to God's will, answers to that which was set forth in the burnt and sin offerings, but could not be found in the blood of bulls and goats—His delight to do the will of God at all cost to Himself. All is *perfect*, a perfection attested by the glory into which He has entered, and by the Holy Spirit come from that glory.

With Israel there was failure immediately after the words of the law were spoken to them; consequently, the tables of stone on which God had written those words were never committed to Israel's custody, but were hidden in an Ark, and in due time the Ark was placed in the Holy of Holies. On the mercy-seat which covered the Ark, Jehovah dwelt between the cherubims, maintaining the claims of His own holy will, but from the Ark *there was no voice*. The contrast was in Christ. Jehovah's law was in His heart, but more—*He preached* righteousness in the great congregation, and did not refrain His lips. And again He says, "I have *not hid Thy righteousness* within My heart. I have *declared Thy faithfulness* and Thy salvation; I have not concealed Thy loving-kindness and Thy truth from the great

congregation." And He prays that the same loving-kindness and truth may continually preserve Him. In John's Gospel we read "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," and after chap. vii. the "*truth*" becomes more prominent, so that in chap. viii. its declaration and maintenance brought Him into conflict with the Jews, and at last they took up stones to stone Him. Then what could He do in truth but own the iniquities of Israel, and *that* in grace, for grace came by Him also—the perfect Servant whether in truth or grace, obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

This Psalm and the following bring the First Book of Psalms to a close. The humiliation of Christ (though prophetically stated) is largely unfolded in it (comp. Phil. ii. 6-8), as also the answer of God in resurrection.

PSALM XLV.

THIS Psalm stands as No. 4 in the Second Book—a bright vision of glory and grace and beauty in the midst of circumstances which are specially sad and sorrowful. The utterances of the Spirit found in this Book refer to such a period as David knew when hunted by Saul as a partridge on the mountains; or to his further experience when *driven away from God's city and sanctuary* by the rebellion of Absalom. In the former case, the disobedient and rejected Saul persecuted God's elect king; in the latter, David's sin brought the holy chastisement of God through the rebellion of David's son Absalom. The blessed Lord knew

such a path when the murder of His witness by Herod caused Him to depart into a desert place apart (Matt. xiv. 12, 13); and again, when He went away beyond Jordan, retiring before the wicked malice that was in Jerusalem (John x. 39, 40; xi. 53, 54). Such a moment the Jewish remnant will know in the last days. The Lord foretells it in Matt. xxiv. 15-18 (see also Rev. xii. 13, 14). Psalm xlii. 4-6 refers to this period.

The reader will observe that in this book the covenant name of "Jehovah" is little used. The remnant are far away from the centre of covenanted blessing, and they long to be brought again to God's holy hill and dwelling-place (xliii. 3). This casts them entirely on what God is in Himself, apart from any covenanted relationship with His people. Matt. xv. 21, 28, is an illustration. The Syrophenician woman came to the Lord in the *covenant* name of the "Son of David"—as to that she was an entire outcast—but her faith pleaded the fact that there was mercy in the heart of God for an outcast, and Jesus at once responded to her faith, for He was the expression of what God is in the sovereignty of mercy, as well as the Minister of His covenant (Rom. xv 8, 9). The difference between the use of the covenant name of Jehovah, and of God in His holy Being, may be noted in comparing Psalm xiv. (Book I.) Psalm liii. (Book II.).

Some such experience might be known by the Christian, if through distance from fellow saints, or under the chastening hand of God upon him, he found himself debarred from the comfort and privileges of the Assembly; but whatever the

ways of the Lord in His holy government, God is always known by the Christian as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ; and the favour that rests on Jesus rests on the believer ; no change is possible, for He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

It should be noted also that many of the Psalms in this Book are "for the sons of Korah." We read (Num. xxvi. 11) that when Korah and his company perished, "the children of Korah died not." They lived, and became witnesses of sovereign mercy. Psalm xlv. is one of this series of Psalms. It is an answer to the lament of xlv., another of the same series. The remnant go back to the days recorded by their fathers of God's wonderful works of old, and they claim God as their King (ver. 4), saying, "Command deliverances for Jacob." Instead of deliverance, though making their boast in God, they speak of being sore broken in the place of dragons, and covered with the shadow of death. The keenness of the sorrow was, that they were killed and counted as sheep for the slaughter, because they held to the one true God and were not false to His covenant. The answer of God to their woe is far beyond their expectation. *His Beloved* is presented to their faith. *One fairer than the children of men*, God's King, yet with grace poured into His lips ; *the One in whom God's throne and kingdom would be established*, One who loved righteousness and hated iniquity ; He died for the iniquity He hated, and in that death maintained the righteousness He loved ; therefore has He been anointed with the oil of gladness above His companions.

Such is the picture prophetically presented to the afflicted and oppressed remnant. What a welcome sound must it have been to them, that the King would have *companions* in His kingdom. Such was the thought of the dying malefactor, but he was given to be Christ's companion in Paradise.

The remnant is regarded in a new light altogether, not as linked with their "fathers" and the old covenant, but as attached in grace to the King, the Beloved and Elect of God. "The Queen" is doubtless Jerusalem, but in thought we cannot separate the city from the remnant; Zion's people shall be all righteous (Isa. lx. 21). She is called "daughter," as the child of a new stock, having to forget her own people and her father's house. She cannot clothe herself with the former glories of Israel, now trailed in the dust. Her standing now is in suitability to the King; she is "all glorious *within*, her *clothing* is of wrought gold." Of old, the boards of the tabernacle were covered *within* (the chamber of the King, so to speak) with gold, and *without* also; while the curtains of needlework spoke of the graces of the King, and covered the whole. Such was the King's daughter in His eyes. The suitability of the tabernacle to God's thought was shown by the glory entering into it, and the cloud covering it (comp. Isa. lxi. 10); the suitability of Zion to the King is shown by the gladness and rejoicing which hail her acceptance by the King (comp. Isa. lxii. 3, 5).

"Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children" (ver. 16). It is a new generation, "Israel shall blossom and bud and fill the face of the world

with fruit " (Isa. xxvii. 6). The same resurrection power accomplishes it which made the rod of Aaron to bud and blossom and yield almonds ; and this came to pass after the apostasy of Korah and his company. The rod of Jehovah's strength goes out of Zion, and a willing people is gathered—the dew of Israel's rejuvenescence (Ps. cx.). They are made princes in all the earth, and the peoples universally praise Him who has brought forth in resurrection power this new generation for His own praise and delight, and that to all generations.

PSALM LXXII.

IT may be well to briefly note the subject of the Psalms which intervene between the forty-fifth and the two Psalms which at the close of the Second Book are personal to Christ (Ps. lxix. and lxxii.). The subject of the forty-fifth, the kingdom established in Zion, is continued in the three following Psalms. Zion is the joy of the whole earth as well as the city of the great King. Psalm xlix. is a parable addressed *to the inhabitants of the world*. It shows that though man was set in a certain honour by God, he does not abide, "like sheep they are laid in the grave"; their way is their folly, yet their posterity approve their sayings. What man needs is redemption from the power of the grave, for man is helpless there. God alone can do this, and faith looks to Him.

Psalm l. is the arraignment of Israel according to Deut. xxxii. Moses there summoned heaven

and earth as witnesses, and Asaph does the same here (ver. 4), adding, "that He may judge His people." This alludes to Deut. xxxii. 36, where we read, "The Lord shall judge His people." So Paul, in 2 Cor. v., says, "For *we* must *all* appear before the judgment-seat of Christ"; only for the believer there is no judgment as to his person. In Psalm li. there is the confession *of sin*, specially shown in blood-guiltiness. It is doubtless David's confession, but written for the Jew—guilty of the blood of Christ. The confession is not only of guilt, but the spring of evil in self is laid bare and owned. A broken and contrite heart God will not despise.

Then follows a series of Psalms (lii. to lv.) which are entitled "Maschil," Psalms of instruction, while Psalms lvi. to lx. are called "Michtam," that is, Golden Psalms. Both series largely relate to the dangers and difficulties through which David passed when outcast, and the mercy which he sought and found. God is the "God of His mercy who shall prevent him," who shall "come to meet him" (lix. 10, 17). All that he passed through becomes the occasion of fuller confidence and hope, and this is written for those in like case in the last days. Psalms lxi. to lxx. are chiefly Psalms of David, they are personal to him, even as the hope of the remnant is in David, God's anointed and elect King, that is, in Christ. In Psalm lxviii. the enemies of Israel are spoken of as God's enemies; and while "the chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels," yet it is prophetically told that *Man* in the person of Christ must ascend on high, having led captivity

captivity, and broken the whole power of Satan, and received gifts—they are bestowed on man, not on angels—that Jah Elohim might dwell among those who had been rebellious.

I have spoken of Psalm lxxix. ; it depicts the entering of Christ into the sorrows of Israel under the chastening hand of God, though men are the instruments of it. The more the Blessed One was seen *to be for God*, the more was He persecuted. Even when the deep waters had come into His soul, they gave Him gall for His meat, and in His thirst they gave Him vinegar to drink.

Psalm lxxi. is preparatory to lxxii. ; we might read 2 Sam. xxiii. 1-7 in connection with it. David is dying out and the light of the morning is breaking in the Son of David. It represents in connection with David the old age of Israel, but God who had shown them great and sore troubles would revive them, and bring them up again from the depths of the earth (ver. 20). David merges, so to speak, in Solomon (comp. 1 Kings i. 39 and 1 Chron. xxix. 22), for Solomon began to reign during David's life. Then follows David's prayer for Solomon (lxxii.), and with its fulfilment the prayers of the son of Jesse end. He has nothing more to desire when Jesus reigns in righteousness and peace. Blessing for the whole earth is secured by righteous government ; but it is not the full rest of God where evil is not, that is, when God is all in all. What room is there for evil when the blessedness of God fills the universe ?

The Psalm opens with “Give *the king Thy judgments*, O God, and *Thy righteousness* unto

the *king's son*." This reference to the king and the king's son shows how David is merged in Solomon. We have also the principles of his reign, "*Thy judgments*," and "*Thy righteousness*." In Exodus xviii. there is, at the mount of God, an anticipation of this righteous kingdom. Jethro's counsel in verse 19 is remarkable; the Gentile takes a leading place as a prince and a priest, and Moses is evidently king in Jeshurun (Deut. xxxiii. 5). He sits to judge the people, and through Jethro's counsel appoints rulers of thousands and rulers of hundreds—"to judge the people at all seasons." It is the righteous government of Jehovah's inheritance. Then the law (Exod. xx.) and the judgments of God (Exod. xxi.) are given to them.

The mountains and little hills of verse 3 are figurative of established and consolidated power. They do not here represent those apparently insuperable barriers to blessing, that is to say, the dominion of the Gentiles (see Zech. iv. 7). They bring peace to the people by means of righteousness. Then the gracious and righteous character of Jehovah, as portrayed in other Psalms,* is seen to be in the King's Son. So also in Luke iv. 18, where the Lord finds the place in Isaiah lxi. and reads it as fulfilled in Himself. The gracious Spirit of Jehovah rested upon Him, though not then as reigning in glory, but in the obedience of One whose ear was wakened morning by morning that He might know how to help the weary with a word. This One reigns in glory

* See Psalms cxiii., cxlv., cxlvi., and cxlvii. 1-6.

as seen in this Psalm. Oh, how different from all the pomp and pride of human greatness. We have to note here that it is the millennial *earth* in which this gracious character is exercised; there are no poor and needy in heaven, nor wilderness dwellers, nor enemies to lick the dust.

The earthly dominion of the King's Son is universal, and as the result of His rule, *men* (not merely Israel) are blessed in Him. The "handful of corn"—the remnant of Israel attached to Christ—and who will then know themselves to be the fruit of the travail of His soul (see also John xii. 24)—flourishes into abundance. His name endures for ever, and all nations call Him blessed.

The God who has brought about such wonders, is blessed as the Jehovah Elohim of Israel; His name had been one of enduring mercy. It is here celebrated as a "Name of glory," and the anticipation of the Psalm is that the whole earth will be filled with His glory. Numbers xiv. 21 is fulfilled. Amen, and Amen.

PSALM LXXXIX.

THOUGH this Psalm is not so personally applicable to Christ as those we have already considered, yet it speaks of "the sure mercies of David" as centred in a Seed which should endure *for ever*. It is the close of the Third Book—a book which has *Israel as a whole* before the mind of the Spirit. The First and Second Books are occupied with God's Anointed, of whom David was the figure, and those specially attached to Him, as distinguished from the ungodly nation. The first

Psalm makes the difference between the righteous who delight in the law and the ungodly; while the second Psalm brings in Jehovah's Anointed, and the distinction between those who set themselves against Him (vers. 1 and 2) and those who put their trust in Him (ver. 12). Hence it is made manifest that "they are not all Israel which are of Israel" (Rom. ix. 6), and this is maintained in Psalm lxxiii. (the first Psalm in this book), "Truly God is good to Israel, to *such as are of a clean heart*;" they only are really Israel. It must be remembered that "Ichabod" (the glory is departed) was written upon *the nation* when the Ark was taken captive by the Philistines. Jehovah then forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh (Ps. lxxviii. 60), but the sovereignty of mercy came in with David, God's elect king, who pitched a tent for the Ark on Mount Zion, and brought it thither. Zion was according to God's election, and David and Zion and the sovereignty of mercy took the place, in the mind of God, of Shiloh and of the priesthood which had broken down in representing Israel before Him—the people who themselves were not right in their hearts with God, nor steadfast in His covenant (ver. 37). Such is the parable of Psalm lxxviii. addressed to "My people."

It should further be remembered, that Israel (as distinct from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin) were not involved in the rejection of Christ personally. They had clung to the house of Saul, and followed the rebellion of Absalom, and were ready to revolt from David on the King's return after the death of Absalom (2 Sam. xix. 41-xx. 1).

The actual revolt from the house of David was in Rehoboam's day, a chastisement from God on the unfaithfulness of Solomon, but none the less was it the rejection of "the sure mercies of David." Yet in the end, though their land is overrun by the Assyrian, the One born in Bethlehem to be the ruler in Israel, whose goings forth were from everlasting—"this one shall be the peace when the Assyrian shall come into our land" (Micah v. 2-5). Israel must find their deliverance in the house of David.

Ruin under law is depicted in Psalm lxxxviii. There is a cry *to God* out of the ruin in verse 1, but the Psalm ends in darkness; it is followed by mercy in lxxxix. But to go back a little; the gifts and calling of God are without repentance, and Psalms lxxx. and lxxxii. refer to this. The new moon (lxxxii. 3) is a "season" belonging to Israel. The moon that had waned turns its face again to the sun. In Psalm xxii. 22 the godly remnant are owned by Christ as "My brethren." He had refused all relationship according to the flesh (Matt. xii. 46, 50), and stretching out His hand to His disciples, He owned them as brethren—those who did the will of His Father, and that will was to come to Him. His resurrection enabled Him to bring them into relationship with Himself, and with His God and Father (John xx. 17). Then in verse 19 these same "brethren" are viewed as assembled on *the new ground* of His resurrection, and He comes into their midst as the risen and life-giving Head. Rejected by Israel, and separated from all link with the nation after the flesh by death,

His brethren now form the assembly. His presence is there.

In Micah v. we read of the nation: "They shall smite the Judge of Israel upon the cheek . . . therefore will He [God] give them up." That is their present condition, until a new generation is brought forth, then "His brethren" are no longer added to the assembly but, "return to the children of Israel." It is the day spoken of by Hosea (chap. ii. 1): "Say to your *brethren*, Ammi," that is, "My people," for Lo-ammi (Not my people), had been written upon *the nation*; but the *brethren*, not the adulterous nation, are "My people." "He shall cause them that *come of Jacob* to take root; Israel shall blossom and bud and fill the face of the world with fruit" (Isa. xxvii. 6).

Another point comes out in this Third Book. Besides the enmity of the nation itself against what is real and of God, so that at the close they are found miserably connected with the Antichrist, and consequently with the putting down by him of the worship of the true God (read Ps. lxxiv. in connection with Dan. viii. 11 and ix. 27); there are the nations who make inroads into *God's* inheritance, as faith still calls it—the nations who proudly say, "Where is their God?" as in lxxix., while Psalm lxxvi. might aptly apply to the destruction of Sennacherib's host. It is in Zion God is known, and there His power was manifested in Hezekiah's day, and will yet be manifested in the last crisis of Israel's history. Psalm lxxxiii. is the culmination of this hostility by the confederated nations joined with the Assyrian in the last days, "Come, let us cut them off from being a nation."

But the result is that "Jehovah" (Israel's God) "is known as Most High over all the earth."

There are in this book beautiful Psalms of encouragement for this remnant of Israel. Psalm lxxvii. shows that God's way with them is "in the sanctuary," that is, according to His own holiness, and also "in the sea," where no trace of His footsteps can be known. Psalm lxxxiv. is the contrast to lxxiv., where all true worship was broken down, but the tabernacles of God are now the soul's delight. Psalm lxxxv. shows that God's salvation is near to those that fear Him, that glory may dwell in their land. In lxxxvii. we have Jehovah's sure foundation; it is in the sovereign grace which established Zion (comp. lxxviii. 68). None of the nations around had such a city. God's worthies, with Christ as their Head, were registered as of Zion. His springs were there.

It will be noticed that in this book there are no Psalms personal to Christ until we reach Psalm lxxxix. It is a Psalm of Ethan the Ezrahite—an instruction—the remnant of Israel are therein taught to celebrate the mercies and faithfulness of Jehovah according to sovereign and unconditional promise made to David. In ver. 19 the holy (or *mercy*) One—in whom the "mercies" of verse 1 are secured—is spoken of in vision by Jehovah; help is laid on One that is mighty, of whom David was but a figure.* Christ is thus brought in personally. The structure of the Psalm runs thus: verses 1 to 4, the unconditional

* Compare Ezekiel xxxiv. 24, 25; xxxvii. 24, 25.

covenant of mercy and faithfulness made to David. Verses 5 to 18, the Being and character of the One who makes the covenant. Note specially verses 8 and 14. In the first, read "Jehovah Elohey Sabaoth! who like Thee? Strong, Jah!" (absolute existence), "and Thy faithfulness is round about Thee."

In verse 14, His character, "Righteousness and judgment are the foundation of Thy throne, mercy and truth shall go before Thy face." Verses 19-37 refer evidently to Christ, of whom, as before said, David was a figure. Compare verses 19 and 20. "Thou spakest of Thy 'holy one,'" and "I have found David My servant; with My *holy oil* have I anointed him"; that could hardly be Samuel's horn of oil (1 Sam. xvi. 1). Then verses 38-45 show the casting down of David's natural line, and into this, as cut off in the flesh, the Spirit of Christ entered (see verses 50, 51). In verses 46, 51, there is the cry of faith in connection with this profanation of David's crown. "How long, Lord?" and "Lord, where are Thy former loving-kindnesses [or mercies] which Thou swarest unto David in Thy truth?" For the casting down of David's natural line could not break Jehovah's covenant, nor alter what had gone out of His lips. Thus in 2 Sam. xxiii. 5, among the last words of David we read, "Although my house be not so with God, yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, *ordered in all things and sure*; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although He *make it not to grow*." It is just this that we find at the end of the Psalm, things are at a standstill with the house and throne of

David, and death takes its course. Hence the path of the Anointed led through reproach and death. Yet the Psalm and this Third Book close with, "Blessed be Jehovah (the ever existing One) for evermore. Amen and Amen.

While the earthly promises to David are in abeyance, *we know* that Jesus has been crowned with glory and honour in heaven, and greater thoughts and purposes have been brought to light. The assembly of the First-born who are registered in heaven is being gathered, and many sons are being brought to glory. Through them, as being in association with Christ, the light and glory of resurrection and of the heavenly Jerusalem, will be reflected in Zion upon earth. The glorious things spoken of the city of God on earth will have their fulfilment, through Zion being linked in a wonderful way with the effulgence of the heavenly city.

The Fourth Book will show us the bringing in of the First-begotten into the world, and that the One who was once in the reproach of Israel's rejection of Him, is Himself the Jehovah of eternity, the One whose mercy and faithfulness endure for ever (Ps. cii. 27).

PSALM XCI.

WE have seen in Book Three that the restitution of Israel *as a nation*, according to God's electing love, and the promise made to the fathers (Deut. vii. 6-8), is entirely dependent upon the mercy and faithfulness of God. The proposal to make of Israel a holy nation for Himself on the ground

of their obedience (Exod. xix. 5 6) had been entirely frustrated, and "Ichabod" written on them. Then electing grace came in by David, the servant of Jehovah. The sure mercies were linked with him, and this became the test of faith. These mercies are in abeyance for Israel, though secured, as we know, in the resurrection of Christ (Acts xiii. 34). Faith in the remnant says, "How long?" The answer of Psalm xc., the first of the Fourth Book, is that "a thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday," that is, in the sight of Him who is "from everlasting to everlasting." Then we have the contrast of man to this eternal God, he returns to dust. "Thou turnest man to destruction" (literally "to crumbling"). Israel is still before the mind of the Spirit, they had not kept the covenant of Jehovah, nor *made Him* their dwelling-place (yet *He was* their dwelling-place), and had been turned to this crumbling condition. It was only for Jehovah to say, "Return," and they would be revived. But note here, that whatever their privileges, they go into the lot of men. "Thou turnest man (Enosh) to destruction, and sayest, Return ye *children of men*" (Adam). In verse 13 this word "Return" is addressed to Jehovah, with the cry of faith, "How long?" continued. It is followed by a quotation from Deut. xxxii. 36. The former part of that verse we have seen quoted in Psalm l. 4; here we have the succeeding part, Jehovah "shall repent Himself for His servants." Note here "His servants"; the remnant has that character (Isa. lxxv. 9). They pray to be satisfied with *His mercy*—early, or "in the

morning" (comp. Ps. xlvi. 5, marg.); and that *His* working for them, not their works, may appear, and His beauty be upon them. Then the work of their hands would be established. Of this we have a figurative example in Exod. xxxv. 21, 22, a ruined people who were enjoying mercy, had become a willing-hearted people, and their work was established (Exod. xxxix. 42, 43). See also a willing people in association with the heart of David (1 Chron. xxix. 6, 9, 14).

In Psalm xci. the Spirit of prophecy makes an oracular statement—that "he who dwells in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." "Most High" is the name of the supreme and universal potentate to whom both *heaven and earth belong* (Gen. xiv. 18-20). Melchisedec, King of peace, and King of righteousness, the mysterious priest of this supreme potentate, blessed as from the Most High Abraham to whom the promises had been made. Thus Abraham was in the *secret* of the Most High, though God had not entered into relation with Abraham in that name; it belonged to Melchisedec. To Abraham God made Himself known as "the Almighty." It spoke of One who was able to accomplish every promise, though everything on which flesh could lean might be laid low in the dust. Resurrection power was His, which could deliver from death or out of death (2 Cor. i. 9, 10).

In verse 2 some one responds to this oracular statement thus: "I will say of Jehovah, He is my refuge, and my fortress, my God, in Him will I trust." It is evident that the One who speaks

is identified with *Israel*, for Jehovah is the Name in which God made Himself known to Israel (Exod. vi. 3-6). Who then is this One who makes Jehovah His confidence? It can be no one but the Messiah of Israel. To Him the prophetic Spirit declares that in the midst of all the dangers that surround mankind, and turn the children of men to destruction, He should be preserved, for under Jehovah's wings should be His place of trust, and He should be covered with His feathers (comp. Matt. xxiii. 37).

Verse 9 shows that this One (Messiah) knew the secret place of the Most High; but here we may ask who it is that addresses Messiah? Who is it that says, "Jehovah *my* refuge" to Him? Surely it is *Israel*, of whom Moses, the man of God, could write: "Lord (Adonay), Thou hast been *our dwelling-place* in all generations" (Ps. xc. 1). Moses there speaks in the name of, and for, Israel, and in this ninth verse Israel owns that Messiah had made *their* dwelling-place *His* refuge, and the Most High His habitation. They had *not* done so, and because He had done it, no evil could come nigh such a retreat; the angels of Jehovah's power were charged as to this blessed dependent, yet sheltered, man. It was into the place of independence and pride that Satan sought to tempt the blessed Lord Jesus, using this scripture in a way quite opposite to the mind of the Spirit, as if the angelic host were charged as to One that could doubt Jehovah's care, instead of One who ever confided in Him. To have cast Himself down would have been to leave, by the very act, His *secret place of habitation*.

The adversary was defeated by scripture, and He who defeated him will yet trample him under His feet.

In verse 14 Jehovah speaks Himself : “ Because He hath set His love upon Me ”—with reverence we may say, Faith wrought by love—“ therefore will I deliver him ” ; this took place in resurrection, it was there that this dependent Man was shown the salvation of God. He who in the midst of all circumstances of wrong and evil, of sorrow and rejection, said, “ I thank Thee, Father ” (Matt. xi. 25), and showed that His retreat and dwelling-place was in His Father’s love, has been set on high and honoured. Compare John xiv. 30, 31 : “ The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me, but that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do.” It is blessed on the one hand to see the dependent Messiah as hidden in Jehovah’s care, and so passing through death—committing His spirit to His Father’s hands, the Father whom He loved ; and on the other to see Him, as in John’s Gospel, going into death, and passing through it (in the same love to His Father) in the power of eternal life as the Son of God, and doing what none else could do, “ pouring out His soul unto death ” (Isa. liii. 12) ; or as in John xix. 30, giving up His spirit, after pronouncing “ It is finished ” on the work He had accomplished. Here we bow and worship in the sense of that which is unknowable as to His person ; and yet what is not unknown to the worshipping heart is the truth of the Son of God as bowing to death, and yet being the

eternal life that was with the Father and manifested to us.

The Sabbath for this poor earth follows in Psalm xcii., and in the after Psalms of this Fourth Book, this One who has been cared for through death and exalted, is seen as coming and reigning.

PSALM CII.

THE Epistle to the Hebrews affords us a divine commentary on the subject of this Fourth Book of Psalms. We read in chapter i. 6, “And again, *when He bringeth in the First-begotten into the world*, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him.” The quotation in this verse is from Psalm xcvii. 7, where the LXX. translate “gods” by the word “angels”; the Holy Spirit in Hebrews i. accepts and uses this translation. The subject then of the series of Psalms xcv.–ci. is the bringing by Jehovah of the First-begotten into the world, not in humiliation, but in power and glory; for the Epistle to the Hebrews contemplates Him as having seated Himself in the Majesty of the heavens. The Psalm we are now considering brings to light this marvellous truth, that He who was in humiliation here, and cut off in the midst of His days, is Himself Jehovah—“the Same”—yesterday, to-day and for ever. Hence in Psalm xcv., where Israel is exhorted to worship and bow down before Jehovah their Maker while it is called to-day, the coming of this First-begotten is in view. He *is* Jehovah their Maker. In Psalm xcvi. we read that Jehovah comes (ver. 13), and the nations—the families of the peoples—are told to

give Him the glory of His Name. In xcvi. this First-born is actually coming in the glory of Jehovah ; He is Lord of the whole earth, and also the Most High above all the earth ; the heavens declare His righteousness, and all the peoples see His glory, and the angels are told to worship Him. In xcvi. He has come and gotten the victory, and all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of Israel's God. In xcix. He is, as of old, seated between the cherubim, and the holiness befitting His presence is celebrated. In Psalm c. Israel comes before Him with joy as His people and the sheep of His pasture ; the Psalm concludes with the refrain peculiar to Israel's praise, "Jehovah is good, His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endureth to all generations." Psalm ci. sets forth the principles on which a greater than David would order His house, for God had promised to build David a house (2 Sam. vii. 11)—the faithful dwell with Him, and those perfect in the way serve Him.

The tone of this Fourth Book now changes from the bright vision of the coming of the First-born into the world, and reigning in the glory of Jehovah, to His down-stooping and humiliation in the days of His flesh, and to the overwhelming sorrows into which He entered because of Jehovah's indignation and wrath against Israel. If He partook of flesh and blood in order to take up the seed of Abraham, He must bear their griefs and carry their sorrows. He must be cut off out of the land of the living, and be stricken for the transgression of Jehovah's people. In His death the generation of evil receives its judgment, and is

morally brought to an end, while healing is through His stripes.

In Psalm lxxxix. 19 Jehovah spake thus in vision of His Holy One, "I have exalted One chosen out of the people." Hence in cii. 10 this afflicted and overwhelmed One says, "*Thou hast lifted Me up,*" but then adds, "and cast Me down"; as in lxxxix. 44, "Thou hast cast His throne down to the ground." In cii. 6, 7, *the desolateness* of His sorrow is figuratively stated—the reality is seen in Gethsemane, "Could ye not watch with Me one hour?" This He said to His three favoured disciples; and shortly after they all forsook Him and fled. Verses 8–10 show us how fully He drank of the cup of Jehovah's indignation against Israel (Isa. v. 25), and the days of His flesh are like a shadow. The contrast is in ver. 12—a quotation from Exod. iii. 15: "This is My name for ever, and this is *My memorial unto all generations.*" It is in the truth of this everlasting Name of Jehovah that "He will arise and have mercy upon Zion"; but note this wonderful mystery, that it is this humbled suffering One who utters this hope of Israel and the nations, and prophetically says "The set time is come." He can utter the thoughts of the Eternal as to the time being come for Jehovah to appear in His glory, and to regard the prayer of the destitute One, but adds, "and not despise *their* prayer"; it was written for the generation to come, and the people that shall be created, who will praise Jehovah—He who looks down from heaven upon the earth to hear the groans of the prisoner; to loose those appointed to death; to declare the

Name of Jehovah in Zion, and His praise in Jerusalem.

Now we may ask, Who is it that appears in Jehovah's glory? (ver. 16), and further, Who could declare Jehovah's name in Zion? The competency to do this could only be with One who was, and is, Himself Jehovah. We have seen in the former Psalms the bringing of the First-begotten into the world, yet when He comes, He comes "the Son of man in the glory of His Father"; and He who declares the name of Jehovah in Zion for the earthly people, is the One who speaks as from the horns of the unicorns, saying, "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren" (Ps. xxii. 22); and this He did actually in resurrection (John xx. 17; see also xvii. 26), to those who have their portion with Him in the Father's house. Here it is Jehovah's name declared in Zion, for Israel is the people in whom the holy ways of God's governmental dealings are made good by One who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. The Name was made known to Moses at the burning bush; yet the bush was not consumed, because Jehovah was in it. Hence Israel will speak out of their sorrows in the coming day, "Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, yet they have not prevailed against me" (Ps. cxxix. 2). And again, "Jehovah is for me . . . what can man do unto me?" (cxviii. 6).

Now is uttered the marvellous truth as to the Person of this afflicted One who speaks in the name of Jehovah, for He is Jehovah, and yet pours out His complaint before Him. "He

weakened My strength in the way [the path of humiliation which He trod here], He shortened My days; I said, O My God, take Me not away in the midst of My days." Jehovah, by the Spirit, answers His complaint. "Thy years are throughout all generations." Not only so, but the Spirit recognizes Him as existing before generations began. "Of old Thou hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Thy hands"; but more, He abides when the heavens and earth, having served their purpose in the display of the thoughts and holy ways of God, shall be changed, and there will be a new heaven and a new earth. But He who does it all is "The Same"! The same in creation, the same in humiliation, the same in millennial glory, the same in a new heaven and earth. Hence it is further said to Him: "The children of Thy servants shall *abide*, and their seed shall be *established before Thee*." In the eternal state there will still be the heavenly and earthly families. "The Assembly," adorned as a bride for her husband, will be the tabernacle of God, in which He will dwell; and "the people" of God on the earth established before Him.

This Psalm introduces the blessing of Psalm ciii., where we have the further communication of Jehovah's name to Moses after the breakdown of Israel under law (Exod. xxxiv. 6). Well may they bless Him whose mercy is from everlasting to everlasting. In Matthew ix. 2-8 is given us a picture of earthly blessing; sins forgiven, disease healed, and sent to his house. In Psalm ciii. 3 we have sins forgiven, and diseases healed—another

proof, did we need it, that Jesus was Jehovah. Then in Psalm civ. we have the earthly home of the millennial saints, this earth as God created and ordered it, and praise going up to Jehovah from it, while the sinners are consumed out of it, and the wicked will be no more. The New Testament affords additional light; that the groans of creation will be hushed by the manifestation of the sons of God. The two concluding Psalms of this Book record the faithfulness of Jehovah (cv.), and the unfaithfulness of Israel (cvi.), so that mercy can alone be their plea.

PSALM CX.

IN the close of the Fourth Book, the prayer is uttered: "Save us, O Lord our God, and gather us from among the nations, to give thanks unto Thy holy name, and to triumph in Thy praise" (cvi. 47). To this in David's day "all the people said Amen, and praised Jehovah" (1 Chron. xvi. 36). It was the earnest of a future day, when "the multitude of mercies" will lead the remnant to reiterate the prayer, and the prophetic Spirit blesses Jehovah in the name of Israel, and adds, "Let all the people say, Amen, Hallelujah." Consequently, in Psalm cvii. (the first Psalm of Book Five), the redeemed of Jehovah, whom *He has gathered* from the countries—from the east and from the west, from the north and from the sea, give thanks to Jehovah because His loving-kindness endures for ever. This Psalm recounts the various ways in which lovingkindness had been exercised to gather this saved remnant,

and it concludes, "Whoso is wise, let him observe these things, and let them understand the lovingkindnesses of Jehovah" (new trans.). We have thus a clue to the subject of this Book. The people are prophetically regarded as re-gathered to the land—those whom He has redeemed; but we learn from Zechariah xii. that it is *after* the Lord has wrought deliverance for Israel, that they will look on Him whom they have pierced, and mourn for Him. They will pass through the deepest exercises of soul, accepting the guilt of the nation, so that families and individuals mourn in solitude.!

Of all this Paul was a pattern; in him was shown forth the whole longsuffering for a pattern to those who should *hereafter* believe (Israel is specially in view) on Christ to life everlasting. Paul was snatched out of the hand of the enemy on the road to Damascus. *He saw Jesus*—the One whom he had pierced (for he was in full consent to the deed of Israel), and then for three days he did neither eat nor drink, so deeply did his soul drink in the sense of the sufferings of Jesus, and then he learnt the lovingkindness and mercy of God. While in a special way he was a pattern to Israel of this mercy, yet each one of us who has come into the arms of mercy, and has there learnt the lovingkindness that has drawn us into the knowledge of the God of all grace, has had to learn ourselves and our badness—all that made it necessary for Jesus to die for us—and that His death has brought us into the favour of God.

The re-gathering of Israel through Jehovah's lovingkindness will be the fulfilment of Jer. xxxi.

3 : “Jehovah hath appeared from afar unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.” Then (ver. 18) Ephraim is said to bemoan himself; it is the time of Jacob’s trouble; but he shall be saved out of it. It is then that Jehovah makes a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, writing His law on their hearts; the utterances of Psalm cxix. speak of this action of divine mercy on their hearts; their iniquity is forgiven and their sins remembered no more. Psalm cviii. pursues this theme of lovingkindness with the praise of a fixed heart, and Jehovah is praised among the peoples and nations on account of His mercy. The land is claimed in its full extent—God will give it to them.

In Psalms cix. and cx. the prophetic Spirit brings to Israel’s notice two things: First, that when Messiah came to them in grace (as the Minister of the circumcision for the truth of God), He found among them hatred and opposition to Himself; and Judas lent himself, as tempted of Satan, to be the instrument of their malice. Peter (Acts i.) quotes verse 8 as applying to Judas; and with him in view the Lord said, “*One of you shall betray Me.*” The godly remnant of the latter day will learn that they are part of that Israel which “persecuted the poor and needy man, and slew the broken in heart.” This Psalm, as from the lips of Christ Himself, will bring before them the details of this wickedness. Finally, Antichrist will be found as the head of the apostate generation. The remnant will take it to heart, as

in Zech. xiii. 6. They will say, "What are those wounds in Thy hands?" Then He shall answer "Those with which I was wounded *in the house of My friends.*" They will further learn the marvellous truth, that at the same time Jehovah's sword awoke against the One that was His fellow. Thus atonement was wrought for them. Secondly the re-gathered remnant will awake to another fact. That David's son was David's Lord, and called to sit at Jehovah's right hand until His foes were made His footstool (Ps. cx. 1). This will be pressed upon their spirit, that David's Son—Jesus—was called to sit at God's right hand when He had been rejected by the nation. It must have been an awful discovery for such an one as Paul to make, that the One he persecuted was in heavenly glory, and wielding the power of the right hand of God. But the remnant will learn further from this Psalm that which passed between Jehovah and His Christ in the day of His rejection. Compare Psalm cix. 31: "Jehovah shall stand *at the right hand* of the poor and needy, to save him from those that condemn his soul"—with Psalm cx. 1: "Sit thou *at my right hand.*" Then Jehovah decrees that from the place of His rejection, the sceptre of His might should go forth, and He is bidden to rule *in the midst of His enemies.* Alas for those who are found in the place of enemies!

But (ver. 3) there will be *a willing people* (comp. Cant. vi. 12)* in the day of His power and of His holy glory, and (as in Ps. xlv.) instead of fathers

* "Ammi-nadib" means "willing people."

there will be children—the dew of Israel's youth—a new generation. Further, as to this rejected but exalted One, Jehovah had sworn and would not repent, “Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec (comp. Heb. v. and vii.). At the right hand of the Majesty on high He has been thus saluted by God. We know that this Melchizedec Priest ever lives to make intercession for those who are partakers of the *heavenly calling*, now that He is sitting at God's right hand. It is the same blessed Person who gives efficacy to the prayers of saints *from the earth* (Rev. vii.).

This Psalm further speaks of Him as Lord (Adonay) at the right hand of Jehovah. So Peter speaks of Him (Acts ii. 34–36). There He awaits the day when He will strike through kings in the day of His wrath, and judge among the nations. He smites the head of some great and proud country, as Assyria of old (Nahum i. 1–3).

In verse 7 the Psalm goes back to the day of His humiliation—not to His treatment as rejected by men, but to the refreshment given to Him by His God and Father through men. He found it by the well-side at Sychar (John iv.), and in the company of His poor and oft-failing disciples; they were in His eyes the excellent of the earth, in whom was all His delight. The dying malefactor also ministered comfort to Him on the cross, when comforters He had none. Thus “He drank of the brook in the way, and with what joy does He now lift up His head!—no longer bowed in humiliation—while He waits to see fully of the travail of His soul and to be satisfied.

PSALM CXLV.

THIS Psalm bears the title, "A Psalm of praise. Of David." It records prophetically the fulfilment of Psalm xxii. 25, "My praise is from Thee in the great congregation." It has an interlocutory character, the remnant of Israel responding to the utterances of their Messiah as He leads their praises, preparatory to the final chorus of praise from the earth to Jehovah. Hence Psalm cxlvi. opens with "Hallelujah." This prophetically anticipates, it seems to me, the voice out of the throne (Rev. xix. 5), saying, "Praise our God, all ye His servants, and ye that fear Him, small and great" (comp. Ps. xxii. 22, 23). The voice of a great multitude responds to this voice of Christ—"Hallelujah." The response there is from a heavenly company; they utter a further joy that the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. This shows that this heavenly company is not the Church, though they are saints of the high or heavenly places, and rejoice that the Lamb has got His bride. The earth really waits for the lead of heaven. We find the praise of the earthly saints in the five last Psalms, concluding with this: "Let every thing that hath breath praise Jah. Hallelujah!"

The three Psalms which follow cx. are also Hallelujahs!—cxi. and cxii. are a couplet, both being acrostic Psalms, each half verse beginning with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet: cxi. celebrates Jehovah in His works, while cxii. is responsive. (Compare vers. 4 and 9 in each Psalm.) It shows the character of the righteous

man *upon earth*. He has been formed in righteousness by delighting greatly in Jehovah's commandments. Paul quotes verse 9 with regard to the bounty of the saints (2 Cor. ix. 9). The blessed will of God is known to the saints of the Assembly by their "subjection to the gospel of Christ." On the one hand they drink in *the grace* of Christ, and on the other they behold His glory, and are changed into the same image. In Psalm cxiii. Jehovah's name is to be *universally* praised. He is celebrated as dwelling on high, but humbling Himself to raise the poor from the dust and to make the barren woman (Israel) to have once more a house and children.

Psalm cxiv. goes back to Israel's deliverance from Egypt, and to Jehovah's having established His earthly sanctuary and dominion among them. At the close His presence is found with them, and the earth feels it, as the sea and Jordan did of old. Hence in cxv. the remnant say, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy and for Thy truth's sake." They can now triumphantly ask, "Wherefore should the heathen say"—as they had done before *continually* (Ps. xlii. 3)—"Where is now their God?" They have an answer to the taunt—"Our God is in the heavens: He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased," while their idols could do nothing, they were only the work of men's hands. Hence the two families of Israel are called on to confide in Jehovah, "their help and shield," with those also who feared Jehovah—this would include godly Gentiles. The house of Israel, the house of Aaron, and those that fear

Jehovah are blessed *of Him*. The last verses of the Psalm show that they are to have the inheritance of the earth. Compare verse 17 with 1 Thess. iv. 13-18. This latter is the Christian's portion. Consequently Psalm cxvi. celebrates deliverance from actual death, though they had been compassed by the sorrows of death. Paul quotes verse 10 (2 Cor. iv. 13) because now all God's thoughts *for us* are made good *in resurrection*. Psalm cxvii. Paul further quotes in Rom. xv. 11, to prove that the Gentiles would glorify God for His mercy. Compare Exodus xviii. 9-12. Mercy shown *to Israel*, and known by the Gentile (Jethro), leads to the Gentile blessing Jehovah for all His goodness done to Israel, and to the confession that Jehovah was greater than all gods.

Psalm cxviii. demands consideration. The Lord quotes verses 22 and 26 as applicable to Himself, while the words in verse 25: "Save, O Jehovah!" are but the translation of the word "Hosanna" uttered by the multitude when Jesus rode into Jerusalem as Son of David. The Psalm opens with the constant formula of Israel's praise, and the families of Israel and Aaron, with those that fear Jehovah (as in Ps. cxv.), are exhorted to utter it. Jehovah, whom they thanked, was *for them* (comp. Rom. viii. 31), who then could be against them? *Men* (the nations, ver. 10) had encompassed them; but now, not in their own strength, but *in the name* of Jehovah they would destroy them. In verse 13 another enemy had thrust sore at them, *that they might fall*. Who could that be but *Satan*—himself a fallen angel? Jehovah became their salvation. Then in verse 18

they recognize that *Jehovah* had used their sorrows for their chastening; but as with Job (chap. ii. 6), they had not been given over to death. In verse 23 this godly remnant own *the Lord's doing* in making the Stone rejected by the builders the head of the corner; it was marvellous in their eyes. Salvation and prosperity were theirs in Him whom they now bless as having come in *Jehovah's Name* (Matt. xxiii. 39). The ungodly nation had refused Him who came in His Father's name, and they will receive one who will come in his own name, as the Lord had forewarned them (John v. 43). It will be noted that in verses 5-21 one person speaks, but it is the Spirit of Christ speaking for Israel.

I have already referred to Psalm cxix. Then follow the "Songs of degrees" (cxx. to cxxxiv.). They give the successive experiences of the people, from their sojourn in Meshech until they dwell together in unity in Zion, and bless *Jehovah* in His sanctuary. Psalms cxxxv. and cxxxvi. conclude the series. The former unites (vers. 13, 14) *Jehovah's name* revealed to Moses *at the bush*—the everlasting I Am (Exod. iii. 15), and the faithfulness of *Jehovah's ways at the close* prophetically declared in Moses' song (Deut. xxxii. 36). cxxxvi. is the chorus to cxxxv.

Psalms cxxxvii. to cxliv. form an interesting series recounting past sorrows, divine searchings, confidence in *Jehovah*, the worthlessness of men, and the happiness of the people whose God is *Jehovah*. How often the loss of privileges revives the soul to the sense of their value! The songs of Zion recount the everlasting lovingkindness of *Jehovah*.

How could they sing of that in Babylon to those who held them captive? There they wept as they *remembered* Zion (comp. James v. 13). Psalms cxli., cxlii., cxliii., are special utterances of *prayer* just before all turns to *praise*. But these experiences show "the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God." So Paul speaks in Romans xi. 33, as he unfolds the issue of God's ways with Israel, through which mercy reached the Gentiles, and through which Israel as a whole will be saved.

Now in Psalm cxlv. Messiah, the beginning (Prov. viii. 22), the continuance (Isa. lxiv. 5), and the end of all the ways of God (Ps. cii. 27), leads the praise of Israel. "I will extol Thee, my God, O King, and I will bless Thy name for ever and ever." He it is who before had voiced the sorrows and prayers of His people by His Spirit. In verse 3 He celebrates *the greatness* of Jehovah (comp. Ps. cl. 2). "Praise Him for His *excellent greatness*. Here Messiah speaks of this greatness as "unsearchable." The Spirit uses this word twice more in Scripture; God's *judgments*, according to which all His ways are ordered, are "unsearchable" (Rom. xi. 33); and the riches proclaimed to us as being in Christ are "unsearchable" (Eph. iii. 8). *Generations* praise Jehovah's work and declare His mighty acts (ver. 4), but *Messiah* speaks of the glorious honour of His majesty; and *men* speak of the might of His terrible acts, while Messiah *declares* His greatness. Israel answers (ver. 7) by abundantly uttering the memory of His *great goodness*; they sing of His righteousness.

In verse 8 the character of Jehovah, as proclaimed to Moses (Exod. xxxiv. 6) when all had failed on Israel's part, is now fully owned as Messiah leads the praise. He had been abundantly good to *them* in the past, but His goodness extends to *all* in this millennium of goodness; His tender mercies are over all His works (comp. Rom. viii. 21; Rev. v. 13), while those who have specially been the subjects of His tender mercy, bless Him. This godly and graced remnant speak of His glory, talk of His power, and make known to the *sons of men* His mighty acts, and the glorious Majesty of His everlasting kingdom, now administered by the Son of Man (Dan. vii. 14). In the following verses Messiah and the godly remnant celebrate the gracious character of Jehovah in His government on earth. Those that love Him are in His keeping, while the wicked are destroyed (comp. Ps. civ. 35).

The Assembly—being associated with the fulness of blessing in Christ Jesus on high, and knowing love that passes knowledge, and conscious of an infinity of blessing above all that we can ask or think—*through Christ Jesus*, gives glory to God through all the generations of the age of ages (Eph. iii. 21). Israel's praise is millennial. This present earth will have its Hallelujahs, and this beautiful Psalm concludes with Messiah speaking the praise of Jehovah. He so maintains it that praise does not fail; all flesh joins in response to the utterances of Messiah's mouth, and blesses Jehovah's name for ever and ever.

The last five Psalms are Hallelujahs! The Book of Psalms opens with "Blessed is the *man*."