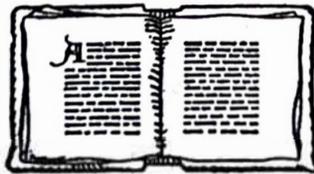


MUSINGS
IN THE
PSALMS

BY
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FOREWORD



IN the companion volume of this little book, "Christ in the Psalms," the reader will find a key to the entire collection of one hundred and fifty psalms. It has been remarked that what is usually called "The Book of Psalms" is, in the Hebrew Scriptures, a Pentateuch of five books, divided as follows: Ps. 1 to Ps. 41; Ps. 42 to Ps. 72; Ps. 73 to Ps. 89; Ps. 90 to Ps. 106, and Ps. 107 to the end. In this connection, it is helpful to notice that with distinct design in the contents of each, all are connected with God's earthly people. This fact remembered will preserve us from applying them indiscriminately—as so often is the case—to Christians. It is, however, fully recognized that we may legitimately take up many as giving the experiences of a child of God; and in thinking of human experience, this is practically the same at any given time. Yet how different is the spirit inculcated in Christianity to that of the imprecatory psalms! The godly remnant, under the frightful persecution which will characterize the last phase of Gentile oppression (see Matt. 24: 15, 22), will rightly call down the judgment of God on their enemies, and God will answer their supplication by the complete overthrow of Gentile power (see Ps. 46: 6). But how opposite was the spirit of our blessed Lord, "Who when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered He

threatened not, but committed Himself to God that judgeth righteously" (1 Pet. 2: 13). Paul wrote to the Philippians: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2: 5).

It is helpful to notice that the predominating titles used in each book are in beautiful accord with the character of each. In the first (Ps. 1-41), the people are viewed as in the land, under covenant relationship, therefore it will be found that "Jehovah"—in our translation LORD, in large capitals—occurs two hundred and seventy times. In the second book (Ps. 42-72) the nation is viewed as under Gentile oppression, driven out of the land for their sin; here the title changes, and "Elohim" is the predominating title, occurring about two hundred times. In the third book (Ps. 73-89) Israel's history is sketched from its commencement to the establishment of the millennium. Here, the titles are mixed, but Elohim predominates.

The ninetieth Psalm commences the fourth book, and gives most comprehensively Jehovah's connection with His people. This title occurs one hundred and seven times. The fifth book (Ps. 107-150) contains chiefly "Hallelujah" Psalms. Here "Jehovah" occurs two hundred and sixty times. Jehovah has resumed His covenant name and place, with the remnant nation returned to the land.

"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord (Jehovah), my Strength and my Redeemer" (Ps. 19: 14).

Names and Titles Used in the Psalms

1 1 1

ONE of the greatest helps in studying the Psalms will be found in a proper understanding of the various titles and names used throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, and also, where the Psalms are titled, a right translation of the original. Few (if any) could more competently give this than the late George V. Wigram.

From "A Comprehensive Concordance," edited by J. B. R. Walker (1883), we extract the following:

"A work requiring years of arduous labor and large pecuniary outlay was carried on in preparation of 'The Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance.' The editor was George B. Wigram, with S. B. Tregelles and B. Davidson as collaborators. Over ten years of work was expended upon it. Begun in 1830 it was published in London, 1843. The account given in the preface of the labor and pains taken to secure fullness and accuracy, is a graphic narration of a task so exacting and prolonged that few men would dare undertake it. To the same indefatigable laborer, Biblical scholars are indebted for the "Hebraist's Vade Mecum," published in London in 1867, a valuable verbal index to the Hebrew and Chaldee Scriptures."

An article published in 1869, "A Study of the Psalms," by G. V. W., reads:

"Thankful as we ought to be for the Authorized Version of the Bible, *it is not part of its excellency that the very names used*, and the various characters

10 NAMES AND TITLES USED IN THE PSALMS

under which Divine glory is presented in Scripture—those of Elohim, El, Jehovah, Jah, Shadday, Adonay, etc., at times each found alone and at times in combination together—*have not been marked*. And perhaps as a natural result of this, headings have been put to chapters which lead to confusion between the Church and Israel, and between the gospel to us and mercy to Israel hereafter. It is the persuasion that if anyone searched out the force of these names and read the book of Psalms in the light which these names cast upon it, light would arise to them such as they have not now, which has led to the present paper; and let me say that to read Scripture in the presence of the Divine glory is a different thing from reading it in the light of our own private feelings and experiences. *All Scripture is about the Lord Jesus, in one or other display of His glory.*

If the translators of our Authorized Version had not appropriated 'lord,' 'Lord,' 'LORD,' to other uses, I should have been satisfied to have used 'lord' for 'Adon' in the singular, 'Lord' for 'Adonim' in the plural, and 'LORD' for 'Adonay.' But as they have bespoken these terms, it may be better to mark the three words in question, in some other ways.

'JAH'—This word occurs forty-three times in the Psalms and where used is printed LORD, just as the word 'Jehovah' ordinarily is.

'SHADDAY'—It is always rendered in the Authorized Version by the term 'Almighty.'

'GNEILION' occurs fifty-three times in the Old Testament, of which twenty-two are in the Psalms. As an appellative it means 'high.' I see no reason for not being satisfied with the good old fashion, 'The Most High.'

NAMES AND TITLES USED IN THE PSALMS 11

For facility of reference I will arrange the names alphabetically, according to the English, and their meanings.

Adon, lord in power.

Adonim, Lord as owner.

Adonay, LORD as in blessing.

Elohim, creatorial power.

El, victorious power.

Eloah, used to mark off the individual, who is the
True One from all pretenders.

Gnelion, the High One.

Jah, poetical form of Jehovah.

Jehovah, a Name for relationship in blessing, between the self-existent 'I Am,' and Israel."

*Untranslated Hebrew Words Used in the
Titles of Some of the Psalms*

From "Handbook to the Old Testament,"
W. Scott, p. 238.

- Aijelesh-Shahar (Ps. 22)The hind of the morning.
Alamoeth (Ps. 46)Virginals.
Al-taschith (Ps. 57, 58, 59, 75) Destroy not.
Degree (Ps. 120-134)To go up, ascend.
Gittith (Ps. 8, 81, 84)The wine-vat.
Higgaion (Ps. 9: 6)Meditation.
Jonah-Elem-Rechokim (Ps. 56) The dove dumb (among) strangers.
Mahalath (Ps. 53)Disease.
Mahalath Leannoeth (Ps. 88) ..Bitter disease.
Maschil (Ps. 32, 42, 44, 45, 52, To instruct.
53, 54, 55, 74, 78, 88, 89, 142)
Michtam (Ps. 16, 56-60)Golden (psalm).
Gnal Muth-Labben (Ps. 9) ..
Neginah (Ps. 61)A stringed instrument.
Neginath (Ps. 4, 6, 54, 55,
67, 76)The stringed instruments.
Nehiloth (Ps. 5)The pipes.
Selah (Ps. 3: 2, 4, 8, etc.) . . .Pause.
Sheminith (Ps. 6, 12)Eight-stringed instrument.
Shiggaion (Ps. 7)Wandering ode.
Shoshannim (Ps. 45, 80)The lilies.
ShushanThe lily.
Shushan Eduth (Ps. 60)The lily of the testimony.

Musings in the Psalms

PSALM THREE

1 1 1

PSALM 3 anticipates, doubtless, Messiah in association with the godly remnant of Israel, suffering under oppression and violence, in the last days. They are looked at as having common interests and opposed by the ungodly, but, while trouble multiplies, trust is in Jehovah and deliverance is found. "Salvation is of (more correctly, from) the Lord."

But it is sometimes helpful to consider some of the Davidic psalms in their natural setting, and notice the circumstances under which they were written. In this we are often helped by consideration of the titles. The occasion which led David to write this psalm we read was, "When he fled from Absalom, his son." 2 Sam. 15 records this sorrowful story. David, the

king, had gratified his heart's desire and brought back his son in unrighteousness. From the moment Absalom returned to Jerusalem he became a thorn in the side of David, and plotted to wrest the kingdom from his father. In 2 Sam. 15: 6 we read that he succeeded in stealing the hearts of the men of Israel.

What a series of crises overwhelmed David at this time! What a bitter drop in David's cup of sorrow must have been the treachery of his much-loved son! Over the brook Kidron, with a few faithful followers, weeping as they went, passed the rejected King. It was the very spot that the blessed feet of our beloved Lord trod, centuries later, with the little band of His disciples. The men of Israel had forsaken their king. David was told their hearts were after Absalom. But the cup of sorrow was not yet full. David ascended the mount of Olives "weeping as he went up." A messenger arrived with news of Ahithophel's treachery; David's bosom friend had joined the conspirators! Still more bitter was the thought, expressed perhaps in the cursing of Shimei, "There is no help for him in God" (Ps. 3: 2)—God seems to have forsaken him!

Are there not moments in all our lives when circumstances seem combined against us, when "Sorrows like sea-billows roll;" a crisis reached when there is no apparent way of escape, and the enemy would suggest to our hearts of unbelief, "There is no help in God?"

But while *others* might suggest that God had forsaken David, faith rose triumphantly above the suggestion of the enemy! David says, "But Thou, O Lord, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of my head" (ver. 3). And in the confidence that faith begets, he retired into the presence of God, and there breathed out in prayer his soul-agony, and had the consciousness that he was heard. "He heard me out of His holy hill" (ver. 4). Having committed his cause to God, the heart of David rested in perfect peace. "I both laid me down and slept; I awaked: for the Lord sustained me." Thus it must ever be if, in childlike faith, we draw near to our God and Father. Are we not exhorted: "Be careful about nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the *peace of God*, which surpasses every understanding, shall

guard your hearts and your thoughts by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4: 6, 7, *N.T.*). What a privilege is ours! What a blessed exchange! *Our cares, His peace*—that peace "which surpasses every understanding" — garrisoning (taking possession of) our hearts and minds.

"'Mid conflict be Thy love our *peace!*
In weakness be Thy love our strength!
And when the storms of life shall cease,
And Thou to meet us com'st at length;
O Jesus, then these hearts shall be
Forever satisfied with Thee."

With renewed strength David "mounts up with wings as eagles." In the confidence begotten in the presence of God, he comes forth unafraid. He had said, "How are they increased that trouble me" (ver. 1). He now says, "I will not be afraid of *ten thousands* of people, that have set themselves against me" (ver. 6). Blessed indeed to be able to say, "If God be for us, who against us?" To Paul the word was, "My strength is perfected in weakness." It is as we express our dependence and weakness in prayer and supplication, that we realize that God is *for* His people. The end of all God's *ways* with His saints we find in the

last verse, "Salvation (deliverance) is from the Lord," and, "Thy blessing is upon Thy people."

Our blessed God and Father would teach us to look to Him alone in every circumstance; deliverance is from Him only and whatever may be the exercises and trials through which the saints may pass, His thoughts are always thoughts of blessing.

"Blessed thought, my Father careth,
Careth for His child;
Bids me nestle closer to Him,
When the storm beats wild.
Though my earthly hopes be shattered,
And the tear-drops fall,
Yet He is Himself my solace,
Yea, my all in all."

PSALM TWENTY-THREE*

1 1 1

THIS gem of song, rich in its setting, placed as it is between the psalm of the cross (Ps. 22) and the psalm of the kingdom glory (Ps. 24), contains the most blessed and complete picture of happiness and satisfaction possible.

Luther used to compare it to the “nightingale”—a bird of small size and not attractive, but whose melody is thrilling.

It contains but six verses, but many a costly library could be better spared than this short song. Those fond of disputing authorship (merely occupied with the letter of the Word) have challenged, without any reason, the popular assignment of it to David. Who so fitted

*A note by the late J. N. D.: “Psalm 23 is so ordered by the Spirit as to apply to a dying Christ, or a saint who follows His footsteps, or the preserved remnant. It does not consider the sufferings as from God, or from man, nor those of the faithful, save as mere facts and occasions of Jehovah’s care. Its subject is, Jehovah...My Shepherd...the constant, unfailing care exercised by Him.”

to write of shepherd and sheep as the one who, from his earliest youth, tended and cared for his father's flock? God reminded David that He took him from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over His people, over Israel (2 Sam. 7:8).

We often speak of the "Shepherd Psalm," but there are really three in this setting. Psalm 22 is the "Good Shepherd Psalm." In John 10 the Lord says, "I am the Good Shepherd, the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep." Psalm 23 is the psalm of the "Great Shepherd" (Heb. 13:20). In the psalm which follows (24) we have the "Chief Shepherd" appearing in glory (1 Peter 5:4).

It will be readily conceded that, in its primary application, Psalm 23 is the voice of the Messiah. He, as Man, fully identified with the remnant of Israel, owns Jehovah as Shepherd. That which was the comfort of the Messiah will be the support and comfort of His people in days of darkness, when the shadow of death is upon them.

But in John 10 the Lord speaks of Himself as the "Shepherd of Israel," "the Good Shepherd" who gave His life for the sheep, and not

for Israel only, but for the "other sheep not of this fold," of whom He said, "Them also I must bring and there shall be one *flock*, one Shepherd" (John 10:16). Here through grace *we* can claim a part, and appropriate this lovely psalm and make its expression of confidence our own.

The *Person* of Jehovah and not what He *gives*, is the comfort of the heart. The Blessing, and not the blessing, is the theme of this beautiful song. It begins with a note of confidence: "The Lord is *my* Shepherd." The Lord, Jehovah of the Old Testament, Jesus our Lord of the New Testament, the Blessed Man of Psalm 22, who took the sinner's place, and bore the sinner's judgment upon the cross. The Forsaken Man of that psalm is the risen, exalted and glorified Man of Psalm 24. This Blessed One, faith can say, is *my* Shepherd. But to intelligently use these words it is essential to know the meaning of that agonizing cry of Psalm 22, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" We must be able to look back to the cross as the place where the Saviour-Substitute bore our sins, drinking the cup of judgment in all its bitterness for the one who

trusts Him, before we can say, "The Lord is *my* Shepherd."

With such a Shepherd, whose love is unchanging, and whose care is infinite, the psalmist can confidently say, "I shall not want." This surely is no small thing in a world of need, where everything is transient and bears the stamp of death! But with such a Shepherd, faith cannot be *over*-confident; and the assurance flows, not from what *we* are but from what *He* is. His faithful love can never fail His own.

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures ('pastures of tender grass'), He leadeth me beside still waters," or as the alternative reading beautifully says, "waters of quietness."

There is no unsatisfied desire, for "He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry with good things." No *hungry* sheep will lie down in green pastures, but the *satisfied* sheep lies down to ruminate. Spiritual blessings are His people's portion, the "finest of wheat" is the food given to His sheep, and so He delights to fill the soul with a satisfying portion and cause us to rest in His love.

But "waters of quietness" too are His providing, so that we not only have *plenty* but also *peace*.

"Peace, perfect peace, with sorrows surging round,
On Jesus' bosom nought but calm is found."

"He restoreth my soul." Another translation reads, "He reviveth my spirit." Who is there among the Lord's people that has not, at times, grown weary of the way? Circumstances may sometimes weigh us down, and the spirit grows faint. But He, blessed be His name, knows our weaknesses, and His "strength is made perfect in weakness." Our moment of extremity is His opportunity.

Then, alas, we are sometimes like Israel who forsook "the fountain of living water, and hewed them out cisterns, that could hold no water." Perhaps we have turned to the world in our folly, seeking satisfaction of heart in the things of earth, and our disappointed hearts have found the waters of Marah bitter indeed.

"I tried the broken cisterns, Lord,
But, ah, the waters failed!
E'en as I stooped to drink they fled
And mocked me as I wailed."

Our best times, spiritually, are moments of danger, unless we are kept near the Lord, for the enemy ever seeks to mar any little testimony to Him. Think of those favored disciples listening to that marvelous discourse of John 14, 15 and 16, and after closing that blessed season of communion with singing a hymn, that very day they forsook Him and fled. "Yet He abideth faithful," and the Shepherd restores their souls!

"He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake." Oh, to know more of *His* leading, that our feet may run in the way of His precepts and glorify His name.

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me: Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." How many have found support and comfort in these precious words when passing through dissolution! But this assurance is needed at all times, for we are all walking "through the valley of the shadow of death;" indeed, it is what this world is to the believer. Death's stamp is upon everything here, but we know the One who has taken His lonely, solitary way, and met death in all its

terror. *Now* the sting has gone, and the grave is robbed of victory for the believer; only the shadow remains, and on the other side of the valley is everlasting sunshine—a morning without a cloud! And we can say, “I will fear no evil, for *Thou art with me.*” What more can we wish? His company is our support. However dark the way, and narrow the path, He is with us, and the goal is sure.

Does the enemy intimidate the sheep (for we know what timid creatures sheep are, easily frightened) faith can add, “Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.” The rod is used by the Eastern shepherd for defence, and the staff to guide into the fold. The believer can ever count upon protection and guidance until home is reached.

But there are enemies in the way, difficulties to be overcome. What of these? “Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over.” Our Shepherd is our Helper and can protect and guide, sustain and feed, in spite of all that the enemy may seek to do. Further, He anoints the head with oil (the oil of gladness, Ps. 45:7), and the

heart filled to overflowing runs over, like an overflowing cup. How often did we seek, in those dark days of unbelief, to fill our hearts with the vain things of this poor world, only to find as Solomon said, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit and no profit under the sun" (Eccles. 2: 11). The heart never satisfied, the conscience never at rest, the cup never filled, is the unvarying experience of this world's votaries. Until the heart finds safe anchorage in the love of the Good Shepherd, there never can be an overflowing cup.

Then the future is as certain and sure as the past. The psalmist closes with these words of triumph: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

The heart is confident in Jehovah Himself, so that all the circumstances of the way, the powers of evil, and our own inherent weakness, are but the occasion for the display of Jehovah's power.

"Goodness and mercy . . . all the days of my life." We cannot *always* count upon the constancy of our dearest friends; but this we know, the goodness and mercy of the Lord can

be counted upon until the end, and the *end is but the beginning*. "We shall dwell in the Father's house forever!

"For the path where our Saviour is gone
Has led up to His Father and God,
To the place where He's now on the throne;
And His strength shall be ours on the road.

Till then, 'tis the path Thou hast trod
Our delight and our comfort shall be;
We're content with Thy staff and Thy rod,
Till with Thee all Thy glory we see."

PSALM TWENTY-SEVEN

1 1 1

THIS beautiful psalm, the third of a series (25, 26, 27), gives the blessed ground of the soul's entire confidence in God. Primarily we find in these three psalms the remnant, whose experiences and exercises cast them upon God, to find, in a way hitherto unknown, the fulness and sufficiency of divine grace. The psalm itself divides clearly into three parts. In verses 1-6 we find the confidence of the saint in God whatever the circumstances; in verses 7-12 we see the soul in distress, crying out for mercy; and lastly, verses 13, 14 show, renewed confidence in God in spite of oppressors and false witnesses. The Lord Himself is the confidence and joy of His people; the soul's longing is after Jehovah.

The psalm beautifully begins with an expression of entire confidence, "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?" Light, salvation and life are found in God Himself. It was He who com-

manded the light to shine out of darkness. His character as "light" does not repel the believer, but rather enhances the consciousness of security. The shining of the light brought out of darkness and chaos at the beginning; salvation surely out of a scene of ruin. Life was thus begun, imparted by God Himself, giving it His own character.

With Jehovah as light, salvation and life, of whom shall the soul be afraid? Enemies may increase, foes may multiply, an army may encamp, determined to wipe out all resistance, war may be waged, but the soul is calm in the midst of hatred, conscious that God is *for* His people. This confidence will be blessedly manifested by the godly remnant, when under Gentile oppression in the tribulation period. He will then prove Himself strong on behalf of those who fear Him and overthrow every opposing enemy. Confidence in God brings perfect repose, and the heart desires a deeper, fuller knowledge of Himself. "One thing," says the psalmist, "have I desired of the Lord." What singleness of eye is here! Paul, in a later day, wrote the Philippians, "One thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and

reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Scripture says, "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." How necessary then that the child of God have *one* purpose, *one* desire!

The psalmist, however, not only *desired* one thing, but he adds, "that will I seek after." We may have right and commendable desires, but lack that spiritual energy which marked the psalmist and, in a later day, the beloved apostle who could say, "I *press* toward the mark."

One precious feature in the Psalms is the frequency of longing expressed after God. To the godly, there was no place to compare with the sanctuary, and deep longing is expressed frequently for Jehovah's dwelling-place. The soul desires to know God as He has been pleased to reveal Himself. The tabernacle, and afterward the temple, was the place of God's manifested presence. The Ark of the covenant was there, and concerning it Jehovah said to His servant Moses, "There will I commune with thee," and, "There will I meet with thee." So the psalmist desires to *dwell* in the house of

the Lord, "to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His temple." Only one whose heart is at rest in the presence of God could entertain such a desire! If the conscience is not at rest, the immediate presence of God could never be desired; such glory would act as in Isaiah 6 where the presence of the thrice-holy God caused the prophet to cry, "Woe is me, for I am undone," until the live coal from the altar of sacrifice had touched his lips. Sin must be put away, the soul cleansed, conscience purged, ere one can bask in the sunlight of God's presence.

And this deep longing on the part of an Old Testament saint, let us remember, was in a dispensation of partial revelation. As yet God had not been fully revealed; it was only twilight and not the full blaze of complete revelation! And yet there was the deep spiritual longing for greater nearness to the blessed God. How this should admonish us as we realize how complete is the revelation now possessed, and how near is the place given to the believer in this dispensation, so that we are bidden to "come boldly unto the throne of grace" through the rent veil.

“To enquire in His temple,” says the psalmist. Nearness to God is the place of divine communications, and here the heart would abide. Of necessity the soul who thirsts for God will seek in the revelation He has given, under the guidance of the “divine anointing,” those “deep things of God” given to the feeblest of His people for their enjoyment. “All things are yours,” says Paul in writing to the Corinthian saints. How small a portion of our heavenly inheritance have we yet enjoyed!

In verse 5 the writer dwells upon the security which the presence of God ensures. The primary application is unquestionably to human enemies. These he does not fear, his heart is inditing a good matter and sings praises to Jehovah.

It is equally true for us that as we know the blessedness of the sanctuary, we are delivered from spiritual enemies, and everything in the world assumes its proper proportion; worldly entanglements are shunned, and the soul walks in the light and truth.

The next section, verses 7-12, is a sudden transition where the cry of distress is heard instead of exultant praise. This is character-

istic of the Psalms, and is easily understood when we remember the difference of dispensation. There is, however, a note of confidence still. How could the God who had encouraged him to seek His face fail him in the time of testing? Impossible! Every earthly prop may give way, father and mother forsake, but God? Never! He would never put to shame those who trust Him. The greater the soul's extremity, the more would His tender mercy and loving-kindness be manifested. He still cares for His own, blessed be His grace!

The spirit calmed, while still in the midst of enemies, the psalmist continues, "Teach me Thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path because of mine enemies." If sensible of our weakness and need, we shall be afraid of a path of our own choosing, and desire like him to know Jehovah's way. In the path of *His* will, we can ever count upon His grace and power.

The last section, verses 13 and 14, forms a beautiful conclusion. Here we find renewed confidence in God in spite of enemies and oppressors. Doubtless these verses speak of the condition of the faithful remnant, their ground

of hope amidst the distresses through which they will pass: "I had fainted unless I had believed, to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." Turning to Jehovah and counting upon His goodness the soul's confidence is strengthened: "Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart. Wait, I say, on the Lord." Here is the resource of faith, whatever the difficulties and trials of the way. Every circumstance is an occasion for waiting upon God and proving the truth of the words, "My grace is sufficient for thee." And as we wait, our courage may well be increased, and confidence of heart is strengthened.

The happy conclusion of the whole matter is in the final words: "Wait, I say, on the Lord."

"Oh, whither could we flee for aid,
When tempted, desolate, dismayed,
Or how the hosts of hell defeat,
Had suffering saints *no mercy-seat?*"

PSALM THIRTY-TWO

1 1 1

PSALM 32 is Pauline in character, being quoted by the apostle in the Epistle to the Romans (chap. 4: 6-8).

It undoubtedly expresses the condition of the godly remnant of Israel who, however, will only know full forgiveness and acceptance when they look upon Him whom they have pierced, in whom they will find deliverance.

The psalm, however, has a far wider application as describing the blessedness of forgiveness and non-imputation of guilt. The title "Maschil" means "giving instruction," and the first two verses are the thesis of the psalm.

The first word "blessed," or "happy," indicates the subject of the instruction, so we may say that the psalm instructs us "how to be happy."

Happiness is not the result of excusing, palliating or covering sin. When David, the writer, did this he describes his experience. Jehovah gave him no rest. He says, "When I

kept silence my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long; for day and night Thy hand was heavy was upon me; my moisture was turned into the drought of summer." It seemed as though, whether awake or sleeping, the hand of God was heavily upon him. At the close of the words quoted, we find the untranslated word "Selah," which means "pause," or "consider." And what need there is that we do so. Unconfessed sin and a hardened conscience can only bring unhappiness and soul-misery.

But it is well when the soul, burdened with a sense of guilt and need, realizing the futility of trying to cover sin and hide transgression, says like the psalmist, "I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord." "There is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared." Thus the humble are encouraged to draw near to God, the One who alone can bless. And this psalm will encourage the godly remnant to confession in a later day.

Here then is the true secret of happiness. "I *acknowledged* my sin unto Thee and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, *I will confess* my transgressions unto the Lord; and Thou

forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.” Sin acknowledged, transgression confessed, brings forgiveness. With this guile is gone from the heart, there is the sense of non-imputation, and, as Paul points out in Romans 4, the soul is justified and righteousness reckoned on the principle of faith. This second part then, ending with verse 5, gives the blessedness, or happiness, of the forgiven man.

The next section, to the end of verse 7, strikingly shows the blessed *results*. There is entire confidence in God; no storm can disturb the soul's foundation. “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.” Further, God has become the soul's refuge. The One who once was feared (slavishly), the forgiven and justified saint is now able to joy in (Rom. 5:11). “I flee unto Thee to hide me.” God has become the Deliverer, and faith can say, “If God be for us, who against us?” (Rom. 8:31). He preserves, blesses and guides His own. “Songs of deliverance” fill the heart, for perfect love has cast out fear. The day of weeping is over and joy has come with the morning.

In the next section, verses 8, 9, God Himself

speaks: "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with Mine eye. Be ye not as the horse or mule which have no understanding, whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee." Here God purposes to "instruct and teach," leading in the right way, but He says, "I will guide thee with Mine eye." This necessarily involves nearness, communion—a close walk with God. We could only be guided by the eye of one with whom we are in fullest sympathy and fellowship. Blessed guidance! The Lord would not have His people constantly curbed and guided by circumstances. We are not to be as the horse or mule, held in by bit and bridle, but rather like Abraham who enjoyed holy intimacy, and of whom God could say, "My friend."

The child of God, while here, treads the path of faith, for our way is through the wilderness where dangers and snares abound. But God is our resource and His watchful eye is ever upon us. The path has not been marked out and then left, but in infinite grace and wisdom God Himself watches over and guides us, leading with an eye of changeless love.

But this pre-supposes a heart set upon His will, daily watching at the posts of His doors, taught inwardly what is pleasing to Him and the mind formed by the "true knowledge of God."

Moses could say, "If I have found grace in Thy sight, show me now Thy way, *that I may know Thee*, that I may find grace in Thy sight." The New Testament unfolds this most blessedly, as in Col. 1: 9,10; 3:10; Phil. 1: 9-11 and Eph. 4: 24. How much more blessed is this than being curbed and governed by circumstances! God can, and does, graciously guide by providential ways, but in this there may be no true spiritual growth in the knowledge of Himself, or increase of capacity.

In the two closing verses, God's judicial ways are before us in the blessed contrast: "Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; but he that trusteth in the Lord mercy shall compass him about. Be glad in the Lord, ye righteous; and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart."

This precious psalm commences with happiness, fruit of the knowledge of God in forgiving grace, and ends with fulness of joy, blessed portion of those whose ways are order-

ed by the Lord. Our rejoicing is not to be in our circumstances, but in the Lord. This connects us with the apostle's words to the Philippians, "Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, *Rejoice!*"

PSALM FORTY-SIX

1 1 1

THIS psalm was a great favorite with Martin Luther, and is therefore frequently called "Luther's Psalm." It is stated that in days of darkness and persecution, amid difficulties and dangers, Luther would visit his beloved friend and brother in Christ, Melancthon, and sharing their trials and sorrows the reformer would say, "Let us chant the 46th Psalm, Philip," and thus their hearts would gain renewed strength and confidence in the God whose compassions fail not.

Surely believers never needed more to assure themselves of the love, interest, care and power of God than we do today, when the foundations of the earth seem out of course; and upheavals, political and religious, portend the closing of this dispensation. How necessary, at such times, that the soul be stayed upon God, confident that, "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are

the called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

But first let us look at this wonderful psalm in its primary application; for unquestionably it has in view the great tribulation period through which the remnant of Israel will pass, and, in their distress, prove the sufficiency of God for the deliverance of those who call upon Him.

The title of this psalm is a beautiful one: "To the Chief Musician—for the sons of Korah. A song upon Alamoth." To us, the Chief Musician is the One who said in spirit through David, "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren; in the midst of the assembly will I praise Thee" (Ps. 22:22). The sons of Korah were the descendants of a rebellious father, but spared by the mercy of God (Num. 26:11) to be to His praise. They were the sweet singers of Israel (1 Chron. 6:31-37). Of the untranslated word "Alamoth," another has written, "The plural of the word commonly used for virgin, as in Isaiah 7:14 . . . also, 'the virgins love Thee' (Song of Songs 6:8)." Again, "'For the virgins' (*i. e.*, virgin voices) makes good sense, and accords with modern

singing, as we say, 'for boys' voices'. However, it may be the name of an instrument or tune" (G. V. W.).

By the little Hebrew word "Selah" (pause) the psalm is divided into three sections:

Verses 1-3.—Confidence of the remnant during the time of Jacob's sorrow (great tribulation), and the awful devastation and desolation of the land.

Verses 4-7.—The rest enjoyed in the Millennium, result of God's intervention. The enemy's power described.

Verses 8-11.—Messiah's triumph over the enemy and the affirmation of God's power. Complete confidence expressed in the God of Jacob.

The psalm begins with the utterance which seems to break the silence, "God is our refuge and strength, a very *present* help in trouble." What a stay and comfort will this assurance be to the remnant when the hour of tribulation has come! And how this blessed truth—so much needed by the Lord's people today amid the upheaval of things here, and our tendency to seek an arm of flesh—comforts the heart. "God is our refuge and strength." To "those

who have no might He increaseth strength," and however unequal *we* may be for the conflict, how blessed to know He is for us as our strong tower, where we can be in safety, with almighty power to quiet our fears in the face of numerous perils, and at the right moment "*a present help* in trouble."

"Therefore will not we fear." Happy conclusion!—the reasoning of faith surely. Our God is infinitely greater than all the powers that may combine against His people. "When He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?" (Job 34:29).

What a word-picture we find in verses 2 and 3. Here we have a graphic unfolding of the terrors of "the great tribulation" period. The earth may be moved and mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. That which appeared steadfast and solid is removed, man's will is uncontrolled and carried away by lawlessness and hatred to God and His Christ, and the powers of darkness govern the minds of men; the whole world is in convulsion, government is overthrown, and the nations, in apostasy, cast off all restraint (Ps. 2). If we could multiply the horrors of the late world-war

many times, we would then appreciate a little of what the Scriptures predict for the last days.

And yet, amidst it all, faith can say, "We will not fear!" For moving behind the scenes is the hand of God, bringing blessing out of sorrow, and leading some among the nation of Israel to repentance and restoration.

Shall not we too, in quiet confidence, rest in the love and power of our Father and God, though we may be called upon to witness the breaking up of all we thought stable?

Turning from the horrors of this scene of desolation, and from this storm-tossed world, we find in verse 4 a scene of peace, fertility, blessing: "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God." The storm is hushed, the roar of battle has ceased, and faith is beside the waters of quietness (Ps. 23: 2). There can be no doubt as to the river. It makes glad the city of God (Jerusalem) and is connected with "the holy place of the tabernacle" (see Ezek. 47: 1-12; Zech. 14: 8; Joel 3: 18). That it will be an actual river there seems no room for doubt, but with a symbolical meaning. It will be the evidence that the glory

of the Lord has returned, and from the Lord's presence blessing will flow, not only to the nation of Israel, but to the ends of the earth. Wondrous indeed will be that day of glory and blessing. The presence of God, with His people, must ever give rest: "God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early" (ver. 5).

In just seven words the whole power of man and Satan in those days is described. "The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved." And again in a sentence of seven more words we find the complete overthrow of all opposition: "He uttered His voice, the earth melted."

This section ends with complete confidence: "The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge." And then comes the significant "Selah" — pause and consider this fact.

In the next section we find in verse 8 the *result*, as seen by man. When the Lord shall come forth out of heaven in warrior judgment, at the close of the tribulation, dreadful in majesty, it will be the precursor of terrible happenings. Cities and countries will be demolished and laid waste; vast armies will be

overthrown; earthquakes will devastate. It is the last great conflict, when every opposing element will be overthrown. "He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; He breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear in sunder; He burneth the chariot in the fire." It is a war which alone can righteously bring peace. Thus will the kingdom be established, and peace and prosperity fill the whole earth.

"Lift up thy gates, bring forth oblations!
 One crowned with crowns a message brings;
 His Word, a sword to smite the nations,
 His Name—The Christ, the King of kings.
 Arise and shine in youth immortal,
 Thy light is come, thy King appears;
 Beyond the century's swinging portal,
 Breaks a new dawn—*the thousand years!*"

A voice is heard. It is the voice of God. "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the heathen; I will be exalted in the earth." This is the path for His people. Another has said, "Against this help all effort is unavailing, only we must wait for it. Human efforts shut this help out. It is another kind of resource which is not faith. God may command activity, and faith acts confidently. But this is never man's way. When

the matter is in God's hands, and there is not a duty, then our part is to be still, and we shall soon know that *He is God*. Human efforts only spoil. No human planning is ever right. In His own time and way, God will come in. There *are* duties. When there are, *do them*, but when the power of evil is against us and there is not a duty, the *path is to be still*. Human efforts prove want of faith, and restlessness and planning is mere flesh. Integrity is needed to trust God, because it is God's holy nature which is trusted. The absolute trust is called for when the power of evil is rampant, and endurance till deliverance is the path of the saints" (*J. N. D.*). Nothing can be added, for God is everything and His name exalted.

The soul is again comforted by Divine omnipresence. "The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah." Note the studied use of the word "Jacob" in this psalm. In the life of the patriarch, the one who is spiritually enlightened will be able to trace the fitful history of the nation. God, who was pleased to call Himself "the God of Jacob," the God who could, in spite of constant failure and distrust, be his refuge, will surely be the

refuge of His failing, but then repentant people. And may we not safely conclude that the God who can carry a nation through circumstances that can have no parallel, is well able to sustain each of His own, for whom Christ died, whatever may be the circumstances of the way? "Be still, and know that I am God."

"'Be still,' lean hard, dismiss thy fear,
Remember! 'I am God;' there's none beside.
Father, attend my trembling heart would hear,
And near Thy loving heart would e'er abide."

PSALM FIFTY-ONE

1 1 1

FOUR psalms may fittingly be called Pauline, since in the Epistle to the Romans the writer either quotes verbatim, or evidently refers to a passage, though not verbally identical. These are Ps. 32, upon which we have dwelt, quoted in Romans 4:7; our present psalm quoted in Romans 3:4; Ps. 130, which links with Romans 11:20; and Ps. 143 referred to in Romans 3:20.

The plaintive strain of Ps. 51, this song of the penitent, must at all times find a sympathetic response in the heart, for is there not constant need of self-judgment and confession?—though perhaps we have been preserved from the depths of sin into which David sank, referred to in the title. Thus in perfect wisdom has God indelibly recorded the sad failure of His servant, that we may learn what baseness flesh is capable of when allowed to act unrestrainedly, but learn also the truth of David's words, "A broken and contrite heart,

O God, Thou wilt not despise" (ver. 17). On this side of the psalm we need not dwell; its lessons are obvious. It is abundantly evident that throughout the collection of psalms the Holy Spirit takes up the various experiences, sorrows and trials of David, to express all that the godly remnant will pass through before reaching millennial rest.

This psalm, it has been pointed out by others, has a typical application, and points forward to the sin and restoration of the Jewish people. Confession of sin with entire confidence in God, is most complete. There is the overwhelming sense of transgression and sin in the root—"shapen in iniquity," David says—and at the close reference is made to the "sacrifices of righteousness." There is a close connection with the previous psalm, for in Ps. 50 God (Elohim) addresses those who have made covenant with Him by sacrifice. He is Judge Himself; the heavens declare His righteousness. He testifies against them in order that He may "shine forth out of Zion" (vers. 2). He calls the heavens and the earth to witness the justice of His ways, the heathen are gathered there. From verse 7 God pleads His own

cause. Another* has said: "This psalm brings out the great scene of judgment and celestial glory connected with this—the great summons fulfilled in the coming of Christ, to which, of this part of it, Zion is the center, and in fact to the world here treated of. The whole of these psalms take in the circumstances of the Jews premillennial, *viz*: the real condition after being driven out by Antichrist—without the gate with Christ; thus forced upon 'the place of dragons'—not being in communion with sin. At last, through the intervention of Christ, bursting forth into all the splendor of Christ's coming, in millennial day before the world."

Then in Psalm 51 we have the confession of the remnant. Their sin was against Jehovah alone, the evil was in His sight. No sacrifices could suffice for wilful sin (see Deut. 17: 12; Heb. 10: 26), "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise," so that Jehovah takes Israel (guilty of the death of Christ) on their own ground. He judges their ungodliness. A soul in subjection to God and

* J.N.D.

His word does not offer what He cannot accept, but looks for grace to come in for proper relationship with God.

The psalm closes with millennial glory, "Do good in Thy good pleasure unto Zion: build Thou the walls of Jerusalem."

PSALM EIGHTY

1 1 1

THERE are one or two features in Ps. 80 that are deeply interesting. It is evident that the whole nation is viewed historically, which beautifully accords with the character of the third book (Ps. 73-89). God is here addressed as Israel's Shepherd who leads "Joseph like a flock," and, the psalmist adds, "sittest between the cherubim." The entreaty is, "Shine forth!" This is remarkable, for here God is seen once more in their midst, and He is looked to for deliverance.

It is strikingly beautiful to see that the three tribes, Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh, are named here. They were placed in the order of march, next to the ark (see Num. 10), so that it was immediately before them, and when at rest they were nearest the mercy-seat!

Here, faith waits for the manifestation of Jehovah's power as it was seen originally in the nation. Then there is the cry, "How long

wilt Thou be angry against the prayer of Thy people?" The vine (well-known symbol of Israel), "brought out of Egypt," had been laid waste by "the boar out of the wood,"* and the hedges of the vineyard broken down. God is

* Speaking of the words: "The boar out of the wood doth waste it," an old writer says; "When first I began studying Hebrew, reading through with Dr. Adler, I came across this passage, and I asked how it was that in the Hebrew word, which is rendered "The boar out of the wood," a certain letter of that word was suspended above the rest, and he, though a scholar and great Talmudist, was not clear on the question. It was thought that it might be a central letter of the Old Testament Scriptures, for the copyists had that way of exalting certain letters, thereby marking off divisions of their work. But Dr. Adler, after looking up Jewish literature for light on the subject, gave me the traditional explanation. I should not repeat it, except it had been given by himself. He said that an old Jewish tradition gave the reason as follows: 'What is the cause of all Israel's sorrows? In the old days of great persecution of the Jews, they trace all their troubles back to HIM who hung upon the cross, since it was His professed followers who persecuted them, and acted so wickedly. They said, HE is the wild boar.' So they blasphemously referred it to Christ, and this suspended letter—also an initial letter meaning 'wood'—they said shall be suspended, for they said, 'He shall be hung up suspended upon wood.' To us, what a dreadful thought! It has been copied in every Hebrew version in the Bible Society's publications. I doubt if there is any other reason for suspending the letter."

besought to, "Look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine," and "the branch made strong for Thyself." This "branch" is thought to refer to David's house, but faith adds: "Let Thy hand be upon the *Man of Thy right hand*, upon the Son of Man, whom Thou madest strong for Thyself" (ver. 17). This is very remarkable, for the reference could only be to the One who so often spoke of Himself as the Son of Man, our blessed Lord. Rejected here, heaven has received Him, and the Father has said: "Sit on My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." So faith looks for the hand of God in power through the Son of Man (see Ps. 2 and 8), thus they look for complete restoration, and add: "We will call upon Thy Name. Restore us, O Jehovah, God of hosts; cause Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved."

PSALM EIGHTY-FOUR

1 1 1

THERE are three "Wilderness Psalms," Ps. 42, 63, and 84. The first-named commences (and with Ps. 43 forms the preface of) the second book of Psalms, in which we see Israel under Gentile oppression, driven out of the land, the place of promise; but their faith being in God, and hope in Him, though the covenant name of Jehovah is lost.

In each of these three psalms there is thirst after God, but circumstances differ in each. In the first, the desire was a return to what was lost, and the oppressor daily taunts the soul in the words: "Where is thy God?" It is much more the loss of joy and blessing which the soul had leaned upon, than what is seen in Ps. 63. There too, the psalmist is athirst for God, but for what He is in *Himself*, rather than for blessings received. He was in a dry and thirsty land where there was no water. He begins with, "Thou art *my* God; early will I seek *Thee*." The longing was for Himself, and so while life was full of bitterness, he could bless

God while he lived, for Elohim's loving-kindness was better than life; yea, his soul would be satisfied with marrow and fatness, and his life would praise Elohim. It might be mentioned that only here (Ps. 63: 1) do we find the word translated "longeth," which is really "pineth."

In Ps. 84 we have the same spirit, and the saint is seen longing for fuller communion with God. It is the desire springing from a known delight, and not for loss learned, as in Ps. 63. It is well to notice that this is one of the "Korah" psalms, of which there are eleven, and addressed, "To the Chief Musician" (see Heb. 2: 12), upon "Gittith" (the wine-vat), possibly referring to the joy of harvest, or maybe, as some think, a musical instrument. The psalm suggests the position of one who had served by course in the work of the tabernacle (or temple, 1 Chron. 24), now returned to his ordinary everyday circumstances, but looking back with intense longing to a communion once enjoyed within the sanctuary. In contemplation, his thoughts are given expression in the opening words: "How beautiful (or, amiable) are Thy tabernacles, O Jehovah of Hosts!"

The first man walked in innocency in the garden of delights, a dwelling-place prepared by God Himself; and there the Creator visited him, communing with him; but man is now called and privileged to dwell in God's tabernacle, His house, to find a home there by sovereign grace, and taste the joys that belong there, and this becomes the home of the soul. (see John 14: 2, 3; Eph. 2:19-22; 1 John 3: 24; 1 John 4: 16-21.)

This psalm, occurring in the third book (73-89), in spirit views Israel once more at rest in the dwelling-place of the Lord of Hosts. He is seen as enthroned in Zion (the center of the nation's hopes), and they as happy in His presence who is the "God of Jacob." There is a return to the former joy of God's dwelling-place, and therefore in *spirit* it shows their complete restoration.

But the personal element is strikingly instructive, and the psalm full of beauty. The speaker continues: "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for Thy courts, O Jehovah; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living El."

In the next verse (3) the first part is a parenthesis ("Yea, the sparrow hath found a

house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young), so that the remaining part connects with the end of verse 2, *viz*: "Thine altars, O Jehovah of Hosts, my King and my Elohim." The soul faints, the heart longs, cries out for the living God and His altars.

The first section of the psalm closes with an expression of satisfaction: "Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house; they will be still praising Thee." And so will it be with the remnant of Israel, when the days of wandering are over; such will be their portion. Their constant joy will be to praise. This is blessing, perfect and complete; the heart is in perfect rest and peace. In the second section (verses 5-8) the blessedness of Jehovah as a very present help is realized: "Blessed is the man whose strength is in *Thee*." Whatever may be the circumstances, the assurance is, "My strength is perfected in weakness." In the remaining portion of the verse, the italics are better left out; "the ways" are Jehovah's ways. The path is a "valley of Baca" (*weeping*), but the very sorrows of the way may be turned into a source of refreshment and joy, as we see in the remaining por-

tion of the verse, "the rain filleth the pools." And as the soul *proves* in trial the sufficiency of grace, spiritual strength is multiplied; and as to the end, "Each one will appear before God in Zion" (*N.T., J.N.D.*). This is the place of royal deliverance in grace.

Verses 9 to the end form the last section. Here Elohim is His people's shield, and they plead their cause for Messiah's sake; "Look upon the face of Thine Anointed." This is the link now between Him and the people, and not the *law* which, alas, they had so sadly broken. The heart of the saint learns to value the presence of Elohim; a day in His presence is better than a thousand, and to be in any feeble measure linked with His interests is better than ease and comfort with the wicked.

Moreover Jehovah Elohim is light (a "sun") and protection (a "shield"), and He will give *grace* for every step of the way and *glory* at the end. No *good* thing will He withhold, and the thought of what Jehovah of Hosts is, makes him add: "Blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee."

The psalm is lovely in character, and full of encouragement to the child of God at all times.

PSALM EIGHTY-SEVEN

*“Glorious things are spoken of thee,
O city of God”* (Ps. 87: 3).

1 1 1

THUS wrote the psalmist of Zion as the eye of faith viewed God's chosen city. It is the celebration of Zion as the scene of manifested glory.

Two glories are linked with it, His foundation and those who belong to it. “His foundation is in the holy mountains;” it is immovable, the purpose of God must inevitably stand fast.

“The Lord loveth the gates of Zion,” His chosen city; and its future glory is ensured, for He says, (Ps. 132: 14). “Here will I dwell for I have desired it.” But the psalmist adds (in verse 4), *“This man was born there.”* This surely is an allusion to the coming King, not perhaps as to His first coming in lowly grace (though He was one of Zion's children), but when God in grace establishes the New Jerusalem He will be firstborn, and “the Highest Himself shall establish her.”

Today, while freed from the domination of the Turk, the city of God remains—as she has been for so many centuries—a city of desolation, over which is written the expressive word “Ichabod” (“the glory has departed”).

The guilty city is still “Baca;” want and woe still characterize her; the descendants of Ishmael still mock the rightful heir; but the day hastens of her glorious deliverance, and Jerusalem shall soon be *the joy of the whole earth*.

Futile will be the efforts of the Zionists and Gentile powers to restore the guilty city to her former greatness; the clock of prophecy must be started by mightier power than that of the kings of the earth.

Another stroke of judgment must fall upon the apostate nation from the hand of the God whom Israel has outraged. Tribulation without parallel in her history will be meted out during that awful last week of Gentile supremacy, when under oppression the remnant cry for deliverance will be heard, and “God shall help her, and that right early” (Ps. 46:5). Blessed indeed to contemplate, that in the very scene where every possible indignity and scorn was poured upon the Holy Person of our bless-

ed Lord, honor and glory shall be accorded Him as King of kings. "Yes, in the city where He once was the "song of the drunkard," the place where He was humiliated, mocked and scourged, reviled, spat upon, where He gave His "back to the smiters and His cheek to those who plucked off the hair," and where the infuriated mob derisively cried, "Hail, King of the Jews;" *there*—yes, *there*—He shall yet be exalted and loyally welcomed! Homage, obedience and praise shall be accorded Him and the shout of a glad people shall resound through the streets of the eternal city, "Let the King live forever!"

"Israel's race shall then behold Him,
Full of grace and majesty;
They who set at naught and mocked Him,
Pierced Him, nailed Him to the tree,
Now in glory, now in glory,
Shall their great Messiah see."

Graphically Zechariah portrays the coming of this glorious Person (chap. 14), and tells us that the very place where those blessed feet last trod (Acts 1:12) shall be the first to respond to His touch at His coming, and "at evening time it shall be light" (Zech. 14:7). "The Lord shall

be King over all the earth; in that day there shall be *one Lord and His Name one*" (ver. 9). In that day, every other name shall be forgotten—He shall be supreme.

Filling David's throne, righteousness, peace and joy shall flood the whole earth, and the blessing of His beneficent rule shall radiate from Zion to the ends of the earth, and, "The government shall be upon His shoulder; and His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Here language fails to express the greatness and glory of that wonderful scene in which He shall be preeminent over all.

Surely all this fills our hearts with adoration, for the blessed One whose glories will then be revealed, is the One our hearts have learned to love and whose blessed Person we adore.

But we await with joyful expectation that glorious prior moment, blessed consummation of all our hopes, and for which He waits in patience, when as Bridegroom He shall claim His Bride, co-partner of all His coming glories. Lord, haste that day!

PSALMS NINETY & NINETY-ONE

1 1 1

A STRIKING portion of the book now lies before us, commencing with Ps. 90, whose title is: "A prayer of Moses the man of God." This heads the fourth book of the Pentateuch of Psalms, and it is easy to perceive that the covenant title of "Jehovah" is characteristic, occurring 107 times. In this book we see God's ways manifested in the world in righteous government; but the Jews are the center, and Messiah the One through whom, and in whom, all God's counsels are accomplished. We shall find that Elohim brings in the Only-begotten as the Man of His counsels and delights.

Psalm 90 is deeply interesting and singular. Moses, by the Spirit, looks forward and recognizes the long desolation in which man had involved himself, yet in faith says: "Thou hast been our dwelling-place from generation to generation." He (*El*) was the everlasting God, before the world was; time was nothing to Him, "a thousand years . . . but as yesterday

when it is past, and as a watch in the night." Verse 3 seemingly refers to the race, "man," and connects with Genesis 6:3, but the unchanging faithfulness of God says, "Return, ye children of men." This is addressed to individuals. Then Israel's defection comes out: "We are consumed by Thine anger;" their days were passed under His displeasure; but although He is absolute in power, that power was not arbitrary. Holy moral government it must be; and so he adds: "Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee, our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance." This goes beyond open faults; Israel is seen before Him ruined and in misery—terrible and humbling the condition surely!

Moses prays in the sense of that condition; and his prayer is marked by the fact that men's days were shortened and spent as vanity, that they may learn the wisdom of turning to God. "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts to wisdom." Thus Moses, by the Spirit, puts the creature in his place, and gives to God, His. Jehovah is impleaded, "Return...let it repent Thee concerning Thy servants," thus casting the people entirely upon

mercy. "O satisfy us early with Thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days."

Here we see the true faith of relationship with God and recognition of His government upon earth, and the heart cries out: "Let the beauty of Jehovah our Elohim be upon us; and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it" (ver. 19).

Psalm Ninety-one follows most appropriately the previous one, and is one of the interesting series of Dialogue Psalms, of which there are several. It is a Messianic psalm, and from it Satan used the words found in Matthew 4:6.

First, the voice of the Spirit is heard in ver. 1; "He that dwelleth in the secret place of *Gnelion* shall abide under the shadow of *Shad-day*" (*Translation by G. V. W.*).

In verse 2 the voice of the Messiah replies: "I will say of Jehovah, He is My refuge and fortress: My Elohim, in Him will I trust."

In what follows (verses 3-8) the voice of the Spirit is heard again, another (J. N. D.) has said: "Doubtless this is true of every godly Israelite, and they are in view, but led by the

Spirit of Jesus, the one perfect faithful One who took the place indeed."

In the next part of the dialogue (vers. 9-13), another voice is heard; and the same writer has said: "This seems to be the address of the Spirit in the remnant, to Christ, verified in the blessing on the remnant. Thus this is addressed to the Messiah, 'Because Thou hast made Jehovah, which is *My* refuge, even Gnelion, Thy habitation, there shall no evil befall Thee, neither shall any plague come nigh Thy dwelling.' Then comes that portion imperfectly quoted by Satan to our Lord in the temptation; imperfectly, because the most important clause was left out, 'To keep Thee in all Thy ways.' Coming into the world He said, 'I delight to do Thy will, O My God.' It was not *merely* that His will was subservient, but our blessed Lord had no will but that of the One He came to glorify. That which follows in the psalm (vers. 14-16) is the answering voice of Jehovah. All is viewed on earth, and as we know, Messiah, Son of God, relinquished all title to this deliverance, and in perfect obedience and submission, trusting the Father implicitly, took a path which necessarily connects

with those deeper purposes of God, only to secure in a fuller and more blessed way the fruit of all that is here, for those who shall follow Him in the same path of trust in Jehovah upon earth. Atonement was necessary, which of course necessitated His resigning personally the blessing described, so that others might walk in that path, in which of course He could have personally walked without it."

There is a beautiful series from Ps. 90 to 101 inclusive:

- Ps. 90, 91. Messiah the hope of Israel is before us, and the Only Begotten is brought into the world.
- Ps. 92. Jehovah is praised.
- Ps. 93. Jehovah reigneth.
- Ps. 94. Jehovah takes vengeance.
- Ps. 95. The Jews are called to be ready to meet Him.
- Ps. 96. A call to the Gentiles.
- Ps. 97. Jehovah cometh in clouds.
- Ps. 98. Jehovah has wrought deliverance for His people.
- Ps. 99. He has taken His place between the cherubim.
- Ps. 100. The Gentiles are called to partake in Israel's joy.
- Ps. 101 gives the principles on which the government of the earth will be carried out by Jehovah's King.

PSALM ONE HUNDRED & SEVEN

1 1 1

ATTENTION has already been called to the fact that the five books of Psalms correspond in character of contents to the five books of Moses. This being so, the last book (107-150) has its counterpart in the book of Deuteronomy, where we find the rehearsal of God's ways with Israel.

This book is prefaced by what is really a complete Deuteronomy in this psalm reviewing, as it does, the history of the people. It is divided into five sections. Verses 1 to 9, where the people are viewed as *wanderers* in the wilderness. In verses 10-16 they are *rebellious*. In verses 17-22 the foolishness of the people is *deprecatd*. In verses 23-32 they are seen as traffickers in the world, and adding to their sorrows. The remainder rehearses God's ways in goodness and mercy.

At the close of each section of the psalm it will be noticed there is a rejoinder: "Let *them* (Israel) give thanks unto Jehovah for His

loving-kindness and for His wondrous works to the children of men" (*J. N. D., N. T.*). The theme of the song is the unfailing faithfulness of Jehovah, and may well be restored Israel's theme, when once more in the land. That this point is reached is evident from verse 3: "And gathered them out of the countries, from the east, from the west, from the north, and from the south." They are redeemed from the hand of the enemy, and celebrate the enduring mercy of God forever. It will be remembered that, "Give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, His mercy endureth forever," was the blessed expression of faith in the time of David, and again in Ezra, when the foundation of the temple was laid. It is Israel's well-known song (see 1 Chron. 16: 34; 2 Chron. 5: 13; Ps. 118; 136: 1, etc.; Jer. 33: 11).

While the psalm necessarily speaks of their restoration, we may take it as a review of all God's ways with His people. "They wandered in the wilderness." How forcibly these words bring to mind those forty years of testing! In Deuteronomy 8: 2 they were bidden to remember *all* the way God led them, to humble and prove them, to know what was in their hearts,

whether they would be obedient to His commandments or no. Alas! How well we know the result! In the following chapter of Deuteronomy (ver. 6) Moses says: "Thou art a stiffnecked people." Yet it was in these very circumstances they proved what a God was theirs! "They cried unto Him in their trouble, and He delivered them out of their distresses." And "*He led them by the right way.*" And so it ever is for the child of God at all times. Faith can say, "Our sufficiency is of God." It is the *longing* soul He satisfies, and the *hungry* He fills with good.

How the next section describes their history as recounted by Stephen! Their rebellious hearts had little appreciation of all God's goodness, and in government He allowed them to go into bondage. Yet in their distress they cried to Jehovah and He saved them out of their distresses, brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and broke their bands asunder.

"Fools" are the next class—foolish, because so slow to learn lessons God would teach! They are lessons all must learn, of our own frailty and nothingness and God's infinitude. But in

their trouble and distress they too cry to Him, and He saved them out of their distresses.

Next, we see them immersed in commerce, but finding no rest among the nations. They were to find none for the sole of their feet, and their life should hang in suspense (Deut. 28: 65). Yet when the final and unexampled trouble shall overtake them, spoken of by Jeremiah (chap. 30: 4-7), and they are at "their wits' end," having no might, no power, "Then they cry unto Jehovah in their trouble and He bringeth them out of their distresses." He will make the storm a calm in the day of their deliverance; and bring them "unto their desired haven."

The last section (vers. 33-43) is very beautiful, setting forth the great result of God's government and plenteous mercy, and His unchanging faithfulness toward His people. It speaks of their chastisement after their return to the land of their fathers, but mingles mercy with judgment, "blessing them so that they are multiplied greatly," adding also the humbling of man's pride: "He poureth contempt upon princes," but "sets the poor on high from affliction, and maketh him families like flocks."

How entirely the goodness of God is rehearsed here! The psalm ends with the words: "Whoso is wise, let him observe these things, and let them understand the loving-kindness of Jehovah."

PSALM ONE HUNDRED & NINETEEN

1 1 1

CERTAIN interesting features in the collection of Psalms are well worth noticing.

Firstly, several are acrostic; Ps. 24, 34, 37, 111, 112, and 145 are so in measure, though not as perfectly acrostic as Ps. 119.

Secondly, several are in dialogue form. Ps. 91 is evidently so, also Ps. 32.

Thirdly, there are eleven "Korah" psalms: 42, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 84, 85, 87, and 88. We read in Numbers 16 of the signal judgment which fell upon Korah and his fellow-conspirators, when "the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up." But we find in Numbers 26:11 that God tempered mercy with judgment, for we read: "Notwithstanding, the children of Korah died not." These, as we find in 1 Chron. 6:22-37, became the leaders of Israel's praise, and it is beautiful to find these eleven psalms dedicated to them.

Psalms 119 is one of the most remarkable in the whole collection. It will be noticed that it is divided into twenty-two sections; these are

octaves, for each contains eight stanzas. Each of the octaves, and also each stanza, commences with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet in its order. These letters are placed at the head of each division in our translations.

It is evidently a song illustrating the power and importance of the Word of God, and is connected with Israel's departure from God and return; each section giving a different phase of the exercise of heart, and certain portions necessitate the law being written in their hearts, as we read (Heb. 8: 10) will be the case in a coming day.

Throughout the psalm we read of Jehovah's "word," His "law," "statutes," "commandments," "judgments," and "precepts;" and since all are His mind made known, we may designate them all in the one name, *viz.*, WORD.

Ps. 119 is the third psalm commencing with, "Blessed is the man." In Ps. 1 the blessedness of the godly man is dwelt upon, while here we see the secret of godliness, the mind and ways are governed by the Word. Ps. 32 describes the blessedness of forgiveness, and guidance, of walking with God when the wanderer (Israel) is restored. In this connection it is

instructive to notice that, at the end of the first book, the one is "blessed" (Ps. 41:1) who "considers the poor" (man), whether it be the Blessed MAN of Ps. 40, or those who walk in His steps in any measure. It has been pointed out that "Ps. 1 supposes blessedness under God's government, making good all His will toward the just, while the reverse seemed to be true." If we apply this to our Lord in incarnation, we see that to the eye of man all failed as far as earth was concerned. He could say, "I have labored in vain, I have spent My strength for nought and in vain, yet surely My judgment is with the Lord and My work with My God" (Isa. 49:4). Heavenly blessing, righteousness and redemption have been established, instead of national blessing. So the truly blessed are those who understand the place and position of the One who "became poor"—the truly poor Man (see Ps. 41:1).

We have then, in the first section, the blessedness of those who *walk* in the law of Jehovah, His testimonies, and precepts. It presents the great principle of what follows throughout the psalm.

In the second part we have the *cleansing*

power of the Word. How important this is! A service carried on by our gracious Lord, as in Eph. 5:26, with regard to His own. The Word hidden in the heart preserves from sin (ver. 11).

The third section views the godly looking to Jehovah, and keeping His Word. The law of Jehovah is the *delight* and *comfort* of the poor remnant held in "contempt and reproach" by their enemies.

In the fourth part we see the *quickenning* and *enlarging* power of the Word. The writer prays that he may not be put to shame, that he might run unhindered in Jehovah's ways.

In the fifth we see the *establishing power* of the Word.

In the sixth is its *strengthening power*. He desires courage before those in authority, that he might speak of Jehovah's testimonies.

In the seventh section, the Word is his *comfort* and *stay*; his *song* too in his pilgrimage.

Then in the eighth, Jehovah and His Word was his *portion*. Even in the night-watches the heart would still praise for Jehovah's faithful judgments. His companions were those who feared Jehovah. How important is this!

The ninth section is *retrospective*. Jehovah has dealt well with His servant according to His Word; he sees the wisdom of Jehovah in affliction, recalling his heart, that he might learn His statutes. The psalmist appraises the words of Jehovah as better to him "than thousands of gold and silver."

The tenth section speaks of the Word as a *guide* and *comfort*. This has two parts. First, Jehovah is Creator and Sustainer, and the writer looks to Him for guidance. Second, he says: "I know Thy judgments are right, and that Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me." So he looks for tender mercies to come unto him that he may live.

In the eleventh, the Word is *unfailing*, and in pressure under trial and enemies without, he would still hold fast the faithful Word.

The twelfth section declares the Word is *eternal*: "For ever, O Jehovah, Thy Word is settled in heaven." What a resting-place is this! Nothing can disturb or destroy. How blessed, in such a scene, to have that which eternally abides!

Out of this soul-exercise comes a true estimate of everything under the sun: "I have seen

an *end* of all *perfection*," and in quiet confidence faith says: "I am Thine."

Thirteen, we have the *preciousness* of the Word: "Sweeter than honey." Through it the psalmist gained spiritual perception, and learned to hate all that was contrary to holiness.

In the next part (fourteen) the psalmist finds it "*a lamp*" and "*a light*," Jehovah's testimonies were his heritage.

In the fifteenth section we have the *formative* power of the Word. His hope is in the Word and Jehovah is his hiding-place and shield. He looks to Him, for he says: "Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe."

Sixteenth, he desires Jehovah's intervention and deliverance. The psalmist esteemed His Word as right. Others had set it aside, and he says, "It is time for Thee, Lord, to work." Here we have *dependence* on the Word.

In the seventeenth the *wisdom* of the Word is his song: "Thy testimonies are wonderful." By the Word was light and understanding: "Rivers of water run down from my eyes, because they keep not Thy law." How good it is to feel things as they affect God!

In the eighteenth section we find the *purity*

of the Word is the theme, and the writer says, "Therefore Thy servant loveth it."

In the nineteenth the Word is *confidence in trial*. In deep distress, both day and night, the Word is his comfort and hope. He is able to say, "Thou art near."

In the twentieth section, the Word is a *stay* at all times, and *true* from the beginning.

In the twenty-first section we have the *preciousness* of the Word. His heart rejoices at it, and he praises Jehovah for His righteous judgments. He adds, "I have *kept* Thy precepts."

In the last section *the Word is everything* to the writer; in every verse there is some reference to Jehovah's mind made known. Finally he owns, "I have gone astray like a lost sheep." But he looks to Israel's Shepherd to seek him, and pleads, "I do not forget Thy commandments."

Another has said, "The psalm is the moral development of the hearts of those that fear God in circumstances prophetically brought out in Psalm 118."

PSALM ONE HUNDRED & THIRTY-TWO

1 1 1

IN the fifth book of Psalms there are fifteen "songs of degrees," commencing with Ps. 120. The title is capable of two interpretations. It has been pointed out that the fifteen run in triplets, in each case on the ascending scale; and nowhere is this more apparent than in the last three. Then Ps. 122 would indicate that these "songs" were chanted as the tribes journeyed to the "place of His Name" (see ver. 4; Deut. 16: 16). Another (*G. V. W.*) has written: "Fifteen songs of degrees, giving the process and way of their being brought back in peace into the presence of Jehovah." It is interesting to read the first two psalms of this series in the light of this statement. In the one hundred and twentieth psalm the cry of the godly remnant in the land to Jehovah is heard. The time of this, it would appear, will be when the last hostile power (see Dan. 8: 25) will oppress. Following this (Ps. 121) Jehovah is their help, the Maker of heaven and earth, who

never slumbers nor sleeps. "Jehovah is thy Keeper," will be their assurance, and will preserve in whatsoever circumstances the godly may be found. It is a beautiful psalm and full of comfort to the child of God *at all times*.

The last three of the series are exceedingly precious and full of instruction for all God's people.

The one hundred and thirty-second may be titled, "The Song of the Ark," for this is the theme of it. Here, the Holy Spirit calls to Jehovah: "Remember David and all his afflictions." He is doubtless a type of the Great Sufferer, and, as we have remarked, David is frequently used to express the suffering pathway of Christ and the godly remnant. Here David forms the root and fruit of Israelitish hopes, but through Him who is the Root and Offspring of David.

It is blessed to notice the trend of David's thoughts. "All his afflictions;" these were not few or light. Constantly pursued by his relentless enemy, Saul; hunted, "as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains" (1 Sam. 26:20), having no respite from persecution, it would seem natural if David had pray-

ed for relief and rest, but it is not of this he speaks. There could be no rest for David, while that which meant so much to Israel, the *Ark* (pledge of the covenant and of God's rest), was in the enemies' hands. It is an interesting study to go back to Exodus 25 and trace through to Ezekiel the references to the ark of the covenant, that which was the center of the entire system of Judaism. From the reference to Ephratah (which is really Bethlehem), David's birthplace, and afterward, according to prophecy (Micah 5:2), the place where Christ was born, it seems that David was early instructed by his parents in the importance of the ark. He says, "Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah," and throughout his life it would appear that the desire which filled his heart was that he might be the honored instrument in its recovery. From earliest days he evidently secretly set his heart on that which was dear to the heart of God, and this God honored. Is not this the reason why David is spoken of (in Acts 13:22) as: "A man after Mine own heart which shall fulfil all My will"? Through the apostasy of Israel the ark was lost, but David in perfect sympathy with the mind of God

ceaselessly sought it, conscious there could be no rest for Jehovah until the ark was in its habitation.

David says: "We found it in the fields of the wood." It was found at Kirjath-Jearim, meaning, "city of woods." With the ark found, David's first thought is worship. There is no hesitancy in his mind as to *where* it should be; intelligently David placed it in Zion, and invited Jehovah to take possession. His rest, broken by apostasy but recovered through grace, is reached at last; blessed portent of a coming day! It is no longer as in the wilderness: "Rise, Lord, and let Thy enemies be scattered;" or, "Return, O Lord, to the many thousands of Israel" (Num. 10: 25-30); but, "Arise, O Lord, into Thy *rest*." This is answered in verses 13, 14, "The Lord hath chosen Zion. . . . This is My rest for *ever*; here will I dwell, for I have desired it."

In each case we see the answer far surpasses the desire, since it brings in Jehovah's own purpose and the desire of His own heart. David had prayed: "Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness, and let Thy saints shout for joy. For Thy servant David's sake turn not away

the face of Thine Anointed" (vers. 9, 10). The answer is found in verses 15-17. The priests shall "be clothed with salvation, and her saints shall shout aloud for joy."

Further the purpose of God in relation to the Coming One is unfolded. The horn of David is to bud, and "a lamp" (a light) is ordained for His Anointed, and "On Himself shall His crown flourish." God goes far beyond the thoughts of David. It is the Messiah, as in Ps. 2, in Zion, and glorified in the Church ("On His head shall His crown flourish"). Beautiful it is to notice that it was there they first said, "His mercy endureth forever." The faithfulness of God will bless the people, notwithstanding their unfaithfulness. "He cannot deny Himself" (2 Tim. 2: 13; see also Rom. 11: 29).

PSALM ONE HUNDRED & THIRTY-THREE

1 1 1

WITH the ark in its appointed place and the recognition of God dwelling between the cherubim, we have in this psalm the power and blessedness of unity.

Primarily, this unity will be manifested in the restoration of Israel, when no more they shall be two peoples in the land; “Ephraim will no more vex Judah, nor Judah envy Ephraim,” but by the power of the Holy Spirit, and in grace, they shall be a united people. “Behold, how good, how pleasant a thing, the dwelling of brethren together in unity” (*N. T., J.N.D.*). This will be blessedly realized and manifested when there will be one nation in the land. Ezekiel 37: 16-28 in type gives this fully, showing there will be no longer a stick of Ephraim and a stick of Judah, but they will dwell together as brethren—one stick in His hand.

The principle of this is most instructive. Another* has said, “Its comprehensiveness and

*J. N. D.

indefectiveness is a great thing, for if there be brethren and *not* united, the very necessity of their love causes sorrow. Their being brethren is as a root of bitterness to their soul. 'The precious ointment' must go 'to the skirts of the garment,' or 'the head' itself could not be happy or content. The oil that was there would be the witness that it was *not on the skirt*, but now the uniting power of divine love, in Christ, shall gather them in this unction from the head into unity, and like the copious dew of Hermon's blessing falling upon the mountains of Zion." "For there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life forevermore."

PSALM ONE HUNDRED & THIRTY-FOUR

1 1 1

WITH an existent Spirit-formed unity, and consequent blessing on the establishment of Zion as God's center, in Ps. 134 the servants of the Lord are bidden to bless the Lord in the Sanctuary.

This is the psalm of worship. The One who made heaven and earth, the Creator of all things, is called upon to bless out of Zion, the center of grace, the place chosen by Jehovah. Sinai and its mount of terror is no longer in view; all three psalms center in Zion from whence every blessing will flow. It is interesting to note that in Ps. 132 we see the King, in Ps. 133 the Priest, while Ps. 134 brings in both, for in this we have both blessing and praise.

PSALM ONE HUNDRED & FIFTY

1 1 1

THE last psalm is a beautiful pæan of praise, forming a fitting finish to the entire collection of songs (or psalms). If we recognize that throughout the book the ways of God are expatiated upon, how fitting it is that the close should end in universal praise. Such will be the grand climax of all His ways, when every created intelligence shall unite in rendering to our blessed God, the thanks due to His holy Name. We can divide the psalm into four sections:

Verse 1. *Where* He is to be praised: (1) In His dwelling-place; (2) the firmament of His power.

Verse 2. *Why* He is to be praised: (1) For His mighty acts, for what He has done; (2) according to His excellent greatness, *i. e.*, what He is in Himself. Do we not sometimes forget the latter?—dwelling almost exclusively on what He has *done*.

Verses 3-5. *How* He is to be praised: Everything is inadequate to set forth His excellencies.

Verse 6. *Who* are to praise Him: "Let everything that hath breath praise Jehovah."

"The whole creation joins in one,
To adore the sacred Name
Of Him who sits upon the throne,
And to exalt the Lamb."

It has been aptly said: "It is a loud chorus-like termination, full of power and energy, suited to the Jewish state and temple service." The close of the book, very fittingly, is "Hallelu-Jah."

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